

## The School Lunch Tray: June 9, 2021

Dear School Sponsors of Child Nutrition Programs:

The School Lunch Tray contains the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) weekly e-mail notifications for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs. This week's topics are listed below.

- 2021-22 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Grant Announcement: Applications due June 21, 2021
- Coming Soon: Nutrition, Allergen, and Ingredient Information for USDA Foods in Schools
- Where to Find USDA Foods Product Information
- Resource Roundup: USDA's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Resources

Please review and share with appropriate staff members. Thank you.



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### 2021-22 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Grant Announcement: Applications due June 21, 2021

The CSDE's [FFVP Grant Announcement](#) provides information regarding the 2021-22 FFVP grant opportunity. The FFVP provides funding to serve a variety of free fresh fruits and vegetables to all children in participating schools. **This grant funded program is different from the USDA Foods DOD program.** The goals of the FFVP are to:

- create healthier food choices;
- expand the variety of fruits and vegetables children experience;
- increase children's fruit and vegetable consumption; and
- make a difference in children's diets to impact their present and future health.

The CSDE will accept completed applications online until close of business on **June 21, 2021**. If you have any questions, please contact Andy Paul, Associate Education Consultant, at [andrew.paul@ct.gov](mailto:andrew.paul@ct.gov) or 860-807-2048.

**Submission Process:** The 2021-22 FFVP Applications must be completed and submitted via the Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs ([CNP System](#)); therefore, you must have an ID and Password to access the system, or you must connect with a district staff associate with current access. The [Instructions for Submitting the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program \(FFVP\) Grant Application](#) describes how to enter and submit your completed application. **Applicants must complete and upload the [Application Certification form](#).** The [FFVP Area Eligibility List](#), [FFVP Site Eligibility List](#), and [FFVP Residential Child Care Institution \(RCCI\) Eligibility List](#) are specific to the FFVP grant only, and will assist you in determining which schools are potentially eligible to participate in the FFVP.

For information on the FFVP, visit the CSDE's [FFVP](#) webpage. You must review the USDA's [Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Handbook](#) prior to completing your online application to ensure your application meets the federal guidelines.

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### Coming Soon: Nutrition, Allergen, and Ingredient Information for USDA Foods in Schools

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is working on an initiative to make nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information for select USDA Foods direct delivery products available for states and school districts. Through this initiative, FNS is leveraging an existing partnership with the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Branded Foods Database to use the GS1 Global Data Synchronization Network™ (GS1 GDSN), a global database that makes it possible for vendors to share product information seamlessly, to provide vendor-specific nutrition information to states and school districts. This information will help to inform menu planning decisions and assist school districts in developing menus that are compliant with federal requirements for school meals.

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USDA Foods vendors will be required to submit nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information in GS1 GDSN by December 31, 2021, for select direct delivery USDA Foods scheduled to be delivered beginning January 1, 2022. Fresh produce, most consumer-sized products, and bulk products for further processing are exempt from this requirement. USDA Foods has a [list of products](#) that will be required to be entered into GS1 GDSN.

States and school districts will be able to access this information on the FNS website in a non-editable Excel spreadsheet that will be updated monthly. States and school districts will be able to compare nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information across vendors and will be able to access this information more efficiently. Each material that is required to be entered into GS1 GDSN will contain the following information:

- USDA material code number
- Brand name
- Nutrition facts and serving size
- Allergen information
- Ingredients
- Kosher certification

FNS will host a webinar in late summer to provide more details on this new initiative.

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### Where to Find USDA Foods Product Information

The USDA has three main resources to help school districts find product information for foods on school menus.

- The [USDA Foods Available List](#) is available on the FNS website. This list is updated each year in December and includes every food item available for purchase for the following school year. It contains basic information such as the WBSCM material code and description, the food group it belongs to, form (i.e. canned, frozen, dried, fresh), pack size, and if the product is a whole grain or has a required commercial Kosher certification.
- The [USDA Foods in Schools Product Information Sheets](#) are available on the FNS website. Each product information sheet is organized by food group and can be identified by its USDA Foods description and WBSCM material code. These are useful for menu planning as they provide a more detailed product description, crediting and nutrition information, case yield, and culinary tips and recipes. While it is more detailed than the USDA Foods Available List, it is less detailed and technical than the product specification.
- [Product Specifications](#) are available on the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) website. Products can be searched by food type (e.g., fruits, vegetables, eggs, chicken, and dairy) and form. Each product specification contains detailed information such as grade and size requirements, limits on specific nutrients, ingredients that are included or restricted, which commercial Kosher certifications a product may contain, or if a product is raw or cooked.

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If you need additional information, contact [USDAFoods@usda.gov](mailto:USDAFoods@usda.gov).

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### **Resource Roundup: USDA's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Resources**

This week's Resource Roundup highlights the USDA's resource [\*The Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\): What Does It Mean for Your School or Local Educational Agency?\*](#), and the USDA's [CEP Resource Center](#) webpage. The CEP Resource Center provides extensive resources for parents, teachers, and school officials at the local, state, and federal level to better understand CEP and its positive benefits, along with useful tools to help facilitate successful CEP implementation in your schools.

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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [School Lunch Tray Table Talk](#) webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/TableTalk/SLT\\_06\\_9\\_2021.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/TableTalk/SLT_06_9_2021.pdf).

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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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