

The School Lunch Tray: July 7, 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.

- Summer Outreach and Evaluation for Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Sponsors
- Reminder: Use of the Emergency Noncompetitive Proposal Procurement Method
- New USDA Resource: Offering Smoothies as Part of Reimbursable School Meals **for** Grades K-12
- Resource Roundup: Considerations for Implementing Web-based Applications

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



Summer Outreach and Evaluation for Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Sponsors

Summer Outreach

Districts that are participating in the SFSP or the SSO during the summer of 2021 will be able to utilize the services of the following two partnering organizations who will be assisting with summer outreach and promotion: End Hunger Connecticut! (EHC!) and University of Connecticut (UConn) Extension. EHC! is available to help sponsors promote their summer meal programs by providing free outreach and promotional materials. Their social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, and Instagram, act as promotional and informational hubs for families and communities. EHC! can

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also assist sponsors with robo calls, emails, and provides access to their Summer Meals Web Button for each district's website so families can find the summer meal site locations.

EHC! will also be conducting a week long virtual summer Blitz campaign. For more information, contact childnutrition@endhungerCT.org or contact Katie Pachkovsky, at kpachkovsky@endhungerct.org or Robin Lamott Sparks at rlamottsparks@endhungerct.org.

The UCONN Extension is providing free [Put Local on Your Tray](#) materials for summer outreach utilizing the theme "[Dip into Summer](#)." They will also be sponsoring local Taste Test Pop-Up events at summer meal distribution sites. These events will work with local farmers to promote locally grown fruits and vegetables during the summer months. For more information, please contact Shannon Raider at Shannon.raider@uconn.edu or Alyssa Benoit at Alyssa.Benoit@uconn.edu.

Summer Meals Outreach Evaluation

The UCONN Rudd Center for Policy & Obesity will be conducting an evaluation on summer meals outreach and participation. They will be doing a research study to understand how sponsors are operating their program, and will be interviewing selected food service directors regarding strategies for serving meals and the effective ways sponsors are distributing meals and communicating with households about meal availability.

The Rudd Center will also be evaluating the two outreach organizations (EHC! and UCONN Extension) to assess the impact of the various outreach strategies on summer meals participation. Additionally, the Rudd Center will be surveying both participating and nonparticipating households regarding their experiences with the summer meals program. Note that this evaluation is not an audit or an administrative review of your summer meals programs.

Please contact Marlene Schwartz at marlene.schwartz@uconn.edu if you are interested in participating in this study or if you have any questions.

Reminder: Use of the Emergency Noncompetitive Proposal Procurement Method

It has come to our attention that US Foods has notified school food authorities (SFAs) in some states that "due to labor shortages and warehouse capacity," the company will be unable to serve their school meal programs for the 2021-22 school year. Please reach out to [Andy Paul](#) or [Monica Pacheco](#) if you have received this communication.

As a reminder, SFAs and sponsors may use the regulatory authority found in Federal procurement regulations formerly at 2 CFR 200.320(f)(2), now at [2 CFR 200.320\(c\)\(3\)](#), which allows operators to use the emergency noncompetitive proposal procurement method to negotiate a new one-year contract for school year 2021-2022. This is available to operators who determine that current emergency circumstances exist that do not allow competitive procurements to be completed.

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New USDA Resource: Offering Smoothies as Part of Reimbursable School Meals for Grades K-12

The USDA's Team Nutrition initiative recently released "[Offering Smoothies as Part of Reimbursable School Meals Grades Kindergarten through 12 \(K-12\)](#)," a new training guide for school nutrition professionals. Developed as a complement to [USDA Memo SP 40-2019, Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs](#), this publication includes menu planning ideas, crediting tips for homemade and commercially-prepared smoothies, and sample menus to show schools how smoothies can be offered as part of a reimbursable school breakfast or lunch. It also includes a new standardized Peach and Yogurt Smoothie recipe, and success stories that show how schools around the country have offered smoothies at breakfast and lunch. This publication will be available in Spanish and in print at a later date.

This resource is part of Team Nutrition's [Back-to-School Support Kit](#) to assist schools as they reopen for school year 2021-22. Questions about this announcement may be sent to TeamNutrition@USDA.gov.

Resource Roundup: Considerations for Implementing Web-based Applications

Many districts are implementing software programs that allow households to apply for free and reduced-priced meals online, instead of submitting a paper application. This week's Resource Roundup highlights the CSDE's resource, [Considerations for Implementing Web-based Applications](#). This document assists sponsors with ensuring that the district's web based free and reduced-price meal/milk application and supporting materials comply with the USDA regulations. This includes ensuring that non-required information (such as a student's date of birth, school, and grade) do not block the person completing the online application from submitting the form for processing.

The document also includes important questions to ask when working with the software company to develop the free and reduced-price materials. As a reminder, SFAs must review all web-based materials annually to ensure they are updated (including the USDA nondiscrimination statement) and comply with the USDA regulations.



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_07_07_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.

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