

The School Lunch Tray: August 18, 2021

Dear School Sponsors of Child Nutrition Programs:

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

- CSDE Welcomes New Staff Member for the Child Nutrition Programs Unit
- Emergency Operating Costs Reimbursement Program for School Nutrition Programs: Information Session on Thursday, August 19, 2021:
- New Sample Press Release and Household Letter for Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Sponsors Opting to Implement the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) in School Year 2021-22
- Updated Verification Forms for School Year 2021-22
- Kick off Connecticut Farm-to-Chef Week (August 29 – September 4, 2021) on August 28
- Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) Virtual Training Sessions
- ICN's Back-to-School Toolbox
- Resource Roundup: Resource Roundup: CSDE Equipment Purchase Prior Approval Process for School Food Authorities

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



CSDE Welcomes New Staff Member to the Child Nutrition Programs Unit

The CSDE is pleased to welcome the newest member of the Child Nutrition Programs unit! Evelyn Vicente-Quíñones is joining the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) team with a focus on family day care homes. Evelyn has more than 20 years of early childhood education experience. Evelyn has worked at a for-profit child care program, Head Start, Hartford Public Schools, 2-1-1, and the Office of Early Childhood (OEC). While at OEC, Evelyn inspected all types of child care programs including camps, conducted investigation cases, and initiated and participated in special projects. Evelyn is fluent in both Spanish and English and will be a great asset to the CSDE team!

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Emergency Operating Costs Reimbursement Program for School Nutrition Programs: Information Session on Thursday, August 19, 2021

Please join the CSDE's School Nutrition Team for a 30-minute information session about the Emergency Operating Costs Reimbursement Program for School Nutrition Programs. This session will explain the funding awarded to the CSDE to provide additional funds to eligible school food authorities (SFAs) whose revenues declined, or were temporarily interrupted, during the early months of the pandemic due to COVID-19 related restrictions and closures.

Date: Thursday, August 19, 2021

Time: 2:00-2:30 p.m.

Platform: Microsoft TEAMS (you do not need a Microsoft account to join)

Join on your computer or mobile app: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only): [+1 860-840-2075,123666471#](tel:+18608402075123666471) or 860-840-2075 Conference ID 12366471#

For questions, please contact susan.alston@ct.gov.

New Sample Press Release and Household Letter for Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Sponsors Opting to Implement the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) in School Year 2021-22

The CSDE has developed a new sample press release and household letter for CEP sponsors opting to implement the SSO in school year 2021-22. These forms are available in the "[Documents/Forms](#)" section of the CSDE's CEP webpage. The direct links are listed below.

- [Sample Press Release CEP Sponsors Opting for the SSO](#)
 - [Sample Letter to Households for CEP Sponsors Opting for the SSO](#)
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Updated Verification Forms for School Year 2021-22

The Verification forms for school year 2021-22 are updated and posted on the CSDE's [Forms for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage, and the "[Documents/Forms](#)" section of the CSDE's Verification Procedures for School Nutrition Programs webpage. Sponsors that collect and process free and reduced-price meal applications must conduct verification. The verification process starts on October 1 and must be completed no later than November 15.

For guidance regarding the verification procedures, please refer to the USDA's [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#) and the CSDE's [Verification Procedures for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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Kick off Connecticut Farm-to-Chef Week (August 29 – September 4, 2021) on August 28

Please join the Connecticut Department of Agriculture in celebrating Farm-to-Chef Week from **August 29 through September 4, 2021**. This week focuses on promoting Connecticut restaurants and schools that buy CT Grown and highlighting the producers that source their foods.

Please visit CTFarmtoChef.com to register your restaurant or school. Participating venues and their menus will be listed here prior to the week.

The kick-off for the week will be hosted on **August 28** at the City Seed Wooster Square Farmers Market where you can see cooking demonstrations and try food prepared by Sanctuary Kitchen Chefs and Chrissy Tracey of Bon Appetit and Vegan Vibes Meal Prep. Additionally, hear about the amazing food entrepreneurs in City Seed's Incubates program and purchase from all the wonderful Connecticut vendors at the market! For questions, please contact cyrena.thibodeau@ct.gov or 860-895-3094.

Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) Virtual Training Sessions

The ICN offers free virtual group training on a broad range of topics for child nutrition professionals working in school nutrition and child care settings. For more information visit <https://theicn.org/virtual-group-training/>.

ICN's Back-to-School Toolbox

The [ICN's Back-to-School Toolbox](#) contains tools and resources for training staff and preparing kitchens for the students' return to school. Access online courses, posters, training materials, virtual training opportunities, and more.

Resource Roundup: CSDE Equipment Purchase Prior Approval Process for School Food Authorities

The CSDE's resource, [Equipment Purchase Prior Approval Process for School Food Authorities](#), indicates the process that SFAs must follow for any capital expenditures with a unit cost of \$5,000 or greater that are not included on the CSDE's [Capital Expenditure Approved List for School Food Authority Equipment Purchases](#).

If a SFA chooses to select equipment that is not included on the USDA-approved list, the SFA must submit an [Equipment Purchase Approval Request Form](#) to the CSDE for approval **prior** to purchasing the item, as required by 2 CFR 200.439. Any used equipment with a purchase price over \$5,000 requires CSDE approval.

As a reminder, when purchasing equipment, SFAs must continue to follow all applicable federal, state, and local procurement procedures.

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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_08_18_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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