

The School Lunch Tray: September 29, 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.

- Reminder: Verification Begins October 1, 2021
- Reminder: Implementation of Grain Ounce Equivalents in the Preschool Meal Patterns Begins October 1, 2021
- Updated Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 for School Year 2021-22
- USDA Nationwide COVID-19 Waivers for School Year 2021-22
- USDA Foods Update: HPC Deliveries
- USDA Foods Update: Tuna Cancellations, Material Code 100195
- CSDE Memo to Superintendents: Rising Costs for School Child Nutrition Programs
- Resources for Supply Chain Challenges
- AP, PSAT, and SAT Coordinator's Access to Student Eligibility Data
- National School Lunch Week: October 11-15, 2021
- Reminder: CT Grown for CT Kids Week is October 4-8, 2021
- October is National Farm to School Month
- Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN) Webinar: Beans, Peas, and Lentils (Pulses) Legumes: Innovative Ways to Prepare and Serve Pulses: October 7, 2021
- Resource Roundup: CSDE's Important Points for Completing Verification

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



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Reminder: Verification Begins October 1, 2021

The CSDE reminds sponsors that the verification process of a selection of applications begins on **October 1, 2021**. All sponsors who collect and process free and reduced-price meal applications must conduct verification. For information, please visit the CSDE's [Verification Procedures for School Nutrition Programs](#) website, and refer to the CSDE's handout, [Calendar for Completing Verification](#).

Note: Verification of a sampling of the applications received prior to October 1 is required **even if sponsors are participating in the Seamless Summer (SSO)**. Please direct any questions to your [school nutrition consultant](#).

Reminder: Implementation of Grain Ounce Equivalents in the Preschool Meal Patterns Begins October 1, 2021

Creditable grain products and grain foods made from scratch must provide the minimum quantities required by the preschool meal patterns for each meal and snack. Effective October 1, 2021, the required quantities for the grains component in the preschool meal patterns are in ounce equivalents. The ounce equivalents for the preschool meal patterns are summarized in the CSDE's resource, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP](#). For information on how to determine the ounce equivalents contribution of a creditable grain product or recipe, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP](#). More resources on ounce equivalents are available in the "[Ounce Equivalents \(Serving Size for Grains\)](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Note: Per USDA memo, [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #91: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Specific Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child and Adult Care Food Program for School Year 2021-2022](#), CACFP sponsors that cannot meet the ounce equivalents requirement by October 1, 2021, must request a waiver from the CSDE. Information on the 2021-22 waiver application process will be available soon and will be sent to all CACFP sponsors.

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Updated Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 for School Year 2021-22

The updated 2021-22 [ASP meal pattern for grades K-12](#) (dated September 2021) is available on the CSDE's [ASP](#) webpage. The accompanying ASP meal pattern resources for grades K-12 below are also updated.

- [ASP Menu Form for Grades K-12](#)
- [Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for Grades K-12 in the ASP](#)
- [Grains/Breads Servings for Grades K-12 in the ASP](#)
- [Noncreditable Foods for Grades K-12 in the ASP](#)
- [Overview of the ASP Meal Pattern Requirements for Grades K-12](#)
- [Requirements for the Vegetables/Fruits Component for Grades K-12 in the ASP](#)
- [Sample ASP Menu for Grades K-12](#)

These resources are available in the [Menu Planning for the ASP](#) and [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in the ASP](#) sections of the CSDE's ASP webpage. Please discard any previous versions and replace with these September 2021 versions.

USDA Nationwide COVID-19 Waivers for School Year 2021-22

The USDA's nationwide COVID-19 waivers for school year 2021-22 are available in the "[Documents/Forms](#)" section of the CSDE's [Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 Outbreaks](#) webpage. Information on the 2021-22 waiver application process will be available soon.

USDA Foods Update: HPC Deliveries

At the current time, HPC continues to experience challenges with deliveries for both the USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and the USDA Foods Direct Delivery Program. Please continue to inform the Connecticut Food Distribution Program (FDP) about any difficulties you are experiencing by completing the CSDE's [Supply Chain Survey](#).

The FDP is working with the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services, the USDA, and the Department of Defense to facilitate workable resolutions for all involved parties. Until a workable solution is reached, the FDP encourages sponsors to have a back-up vendor in place to accommodate any last-minute cancellations. Additionally, to the extent possible, sponsors should keep either frozen or canned vegetables of various vegetable subgroups in stock.

If a last-minute cancellation necessitates a meal pattern waiver, contact your [school nutrition consultant](#) for assistance. Please know that the FDP is advocating for all food service directors, staff

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and students, and will continue to do so in pursuit of a satisfactory resolution. Thank you for your patience with these ongoing disruptions.

USDA Foods Update: Tuna Cancellations, Material Code 100195

All orders for USDA Foods Tuna, Material Code 100195, have been canceled for this school year due to American Samoa COVID-19 quarantine issues preventing access to the island to facilitate inspected tuna production. There will not be an opportunity to order tuna with entitlement for school year 2021-22. The status of these orders should be updated in WBSCM in the next month or so. Please make appropriate arrangements. The Food Distribution Program apologizes for any menu planning issues this may cause.

CSDE Memo to Superintendents: Rising Costs for School Child Nutrition Programs

On September 23, 2021, the CSDE distributed the memo, [Rising Costs to School Child Nutrition Programs](#), to superintendents. This memo addresses the rising costs for school Child Nutrition Programs that are resulting from supply chain shortages and higher costs of production and distribution. This memo is available in the “[Implementation Resources](#)” section of the CSDE’s Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 Outbreaks webpage.

Resources for Supply Chain Challenges

As the 2021-22 school year begins, supply chain issues continue. Food service directors are experiencing ongoing challenges with the ever-changing landscape of procuring food and supplies, and insufficient staffing. The resources below provide suggestions and solutions-for these challenges.

- [Planning for a Dynamic School Environment During School Year 2021-2022](#): Supply Chain Issues (USDA webpage)
- Recorded Webinar (USDA Food and Nutrition Service): [Procurement Strategies for School Year 2021-2022: Webinar for School Food Authorities](#)
- Handout (Texas Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Division): [Managing the Food Supply Chain: COVID-19 Impacts on School Year 2021-2022](#)
- Back to School: Tools and Strategies to Address Supply Chain Challenges (ICN’s STAR Two-part Webinar Series): Panel discussions with food service directors and state agency staff sharing their solutions to many of the supply chain issues being faced by operators this year.
 - Part 1: [Register](#) to watch the part 1 recording on demand.
 - Part 2: [Register](#) to watch the part 2 recording on demand.

As a reminder, school food authorities (SFAs) and sponsors may use the regulatory authority found in the Federal procurement regulations ([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

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school year 2021-2022. This option is available to operators who determine that current emergency circumstances do not allow competitive procurements to be completed.

AP, PSAT, and SAT Coordinator's Access to Student Eligibility Data

The CSDE recently issued the September 21, 2021, edition of the [Students Assessment News](#) for school districts. This newsletter included the following information pertaining to AP, PSAT and SAT coordinators having access to a student's income eligibility status (refer to "Advanced Placement Updates" on page 6):

The CSDE and College Board will cover the entire cost of the 2022 AP exam fees for all students from low-income families who attend public school in Connecticut. The AP coordinators will indicate in the APRO site a student's low income status. Since the AP, PSAT, and SAT are considered part of a CSDE State Educational Program, the AP, PSAT, and SAT coordinator can be given access to a student's income eligibility status. It is always a good idea to have the coordinator complete the Disclosure Release form to ensure that they have an understanding of the USDA regulations and do not use this information for other purposes. Note that each district's AP, PSAT, and SAT coordinator should use the student's free, reduced-price and paid eligibility status that is posted in the Public School Information System (PSIS) instead of requesting this data directly from the determining official or the food service director. Questions can be directed to [Michelle Rosado](#).

Note: After completing the CSDE's form, [Disclosure Release Request for Free or Reduced Eligibility Status of Students in the School Nutrition Program](#), the AP, PSAT, or SAT coordinator can access the free, reduced, and paid information directly via the PSIS system, without having the determining official provide a list of children who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Please direct any questions to your [school nutrition consultant](#).

National School Lunch Week: October 11-15, 2021

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) serves nearly 30 million children every school day. President John F. Kennedy created National School Lunch Week (NSLW) in 1962 to promote the importance of a healthy school lunch in a child's life and the impact it has inside and outside of the classroom.

The 2021 NSLW theme WILD About School Lunch invites creative and fun new menu items while appealing to the universal popularity of animals and nature to appeal to students in all grade levels.

During this annual weeklong celebration, School Nutrition Association (SNA) members and students around the country will celebrate in their cafeterias, schools and districts with special menus, events, student activities, and more. Visit the SNA's [NSLW](#) website for more information.

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Reminder: CT Grown for CT Kids Week is October 4-8, 2021

October 4-8, 2021, is CT Grown for CT Kids Week. Select from the [menu of activities](#) for the classroom, cafeteria, and community. Find local farms for purchasing and U-pick farms for families to visit. The Social Media toolkit, a draft newsletter for families, fun educational materials, graphics for school menus and more are available on the [CT Farm to School Collaborative](#) webpage

October is National Farm to School Month

Join thousands of schools, early care and education sites, farms, communities, and organizations across the country to celebrate food education, school gardens and lunch trays filled with healthy, local ingredients. Visit the [National Farm to School Month](#) webpage for more information and ways to get involved. For more information about Farm to School, visit the CSDE's [Farm to School](#) webpage.

Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN) Webinar: Beans, Peas, and Lentils (Pulses) Legumes: Innovative Ways to Prepare and Serve Pulses: October 7, 2021

Join the CICN team and operators from around the nation as they share innovative and delicious ways to serve beans, peas, and lentils (pulses) legumes in child nutrition. This webinar will be presented on Thursday, October 7, 2021, from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. ET. Registration is available at https://theicn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WQuLZiaURrulIDcjQRaWKw.

SNA Key Areas: 1 – Nutrition, 2 – Operations

USDA Professional Standards Codes: 1000 – Nutrition, 1100 – Menu Planning, 2000 – Operations, 2100 – Food Production

Learning Objective: After the webinar, participants will recognize steps to plan for incorporating child-friendly, legume-based recipes in their foodservice operation.

Resource Roundup: CSDE's Important Points for Completing Verification

The CSDE's document, [Important Points for Completing Verification](#), provides valuable information regarding conducting the verification process. As a reminder, while the annual formal verification process begins on **October 1**, sponsors may verify any questionable application. This is known as "verification for cause." This type of verification may occur any time during the school year.

The verification process must be completed by **November 15**. "Completed" means that all selected households have been notified of the results of the verification process. For more information, 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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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_09_29_2021.pdf.

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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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