

Connecticut State Department of Education Updates





School Nutrition Association of Connecticut (SNACT)

March Menu Madness Conference

March 15, 2023

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CSDE Presenters



- Shannon Yearwood
- Greg King
- Terese Maineri
- Monica Pacheco





Today's Topics



- State and Federal Updates
- School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART) Funds
- CSDE Training Modules
- Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP)

- Farm to School
- Excess Funds and Farm to School
- Unpaid Meal Charges
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO)
- Ask the Agency

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State and Federal Updates









CSDE Updates



- Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs
 Division of School Health, Nutrition, Family Services
 Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness
- School Lunch Tray Table Talk
 Returning Thursday, March 23, 2023
- NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants
 Coming soon



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Federal Updates



National School Breakfast Week

■ Thank you Region 9!







Federal Updates



Public Health Emergency

■ Ends May 11, 2023

Emergency Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits

- Final distribution February 15, 2023
- Average of \$157 in extra food aid to enrolled households



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Federal Updates



Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (P-EBT)

- School year 2022-23
- Summer P-EBT
 - \$140/eligible student
- Childcare P-EBT (ages 6 and younger + SNAP)

 - May 11





Federal Updates



Keep Kids Fed Act (June 25, 2022)

- Expires June 30, 2023
 - USDA nationwide 12(I) waiver authority including paid lunch equity (PLE)
 - Additional \$0.40/lunch and \$0.15/breakfast



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THE SKY IS NOT THE LIMIT Backin-School 2022-2023

Federal Updates



Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act (December 29, 2022)

- Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children (SEBTC) Summer 2024
 - \$120/per eligible student
 - Based on student eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals
 - Community Eligibility Provision (CEP):
 Students not directly certified for free or reduced-price school meals must apply
- Summer Meals rural non-congregate Summer 2023



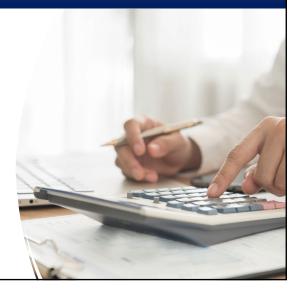


Federal Updates



Income Eligibility Application for School Year 2023-24

- New income eligibility application template
- Streamlined instructions



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Federal Updates



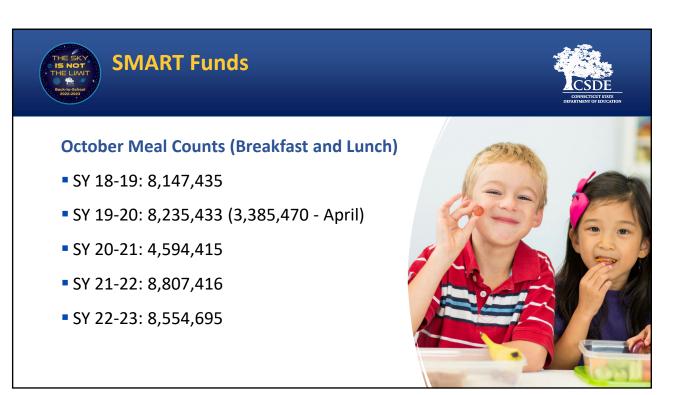
Final and Proposed Rules

- Final: Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- Final: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains and Sodium
- Proposed: Child Nutrition Programs: Revisions to Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans



https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Laws-and-Regulations-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs#USDAFinalRules https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Laws-and-Regulations-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs#USDAProposedRules







SMART Funds



"Free School Meals for Children" grant school year 2022-23 only

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
 - ▶ Connecticut General Assembly ▶ CSDE
- Not "universal" meals transitional assistance for households
 - 1.0: \$30 M
 - 2.0: \$60 M
- "Gap" time
 - Return to charging
 - · Retroactive reimbursement unknown/unlikely using ARPA



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THE SKY IS NOT THE LIMIT Back-to-School 2022-2023

SMART Funds



What happens next?

- Excess funds balance revisions to plans
 - June 30
- Farm to school
- Rainbow vegetable and fruit trays
- Equipment





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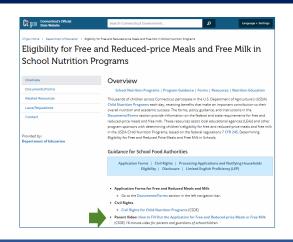




How to Fill Out the Application for Free and Reduced-price Meals or Free Milk



- 16-minute video for parents and guardians of schoolchildren
- Located on CSDE's Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Free Milk in School Nutrition Programs webpage



https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Eligibility-for-Free-and-Reduced-price-Meals-and-Free-Milk-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources

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What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12



- Complying with meal patterns for grades K-12 in National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP
- Grades K-52
- Targets school food service directors, managers, and staff
- Modules 11-13 and 15-16 coming soon

- 1. Introduction to Training
- 2. Introduction to School Meal Patterns
- 3. National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Meal Pattern
- 4. School Breakfast Program (SBP) Meal Pattern
- Dietary Specifications
 Meal Pattern
- Documentation
 7. Milk Component
- 8. Meat/Meat Alternates (MMA) Component

- 9. Fruits Component
- 10. Vegetables Component
- 11. Grains Component12. Whole Grain-rich (WGR)
- Requirement

 13. Grain Ounce Equivalents
- 14. Water Availability During Meal Service
- 15. Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the NSLP
- 16. Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the SBP

https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials



Complying with Healthy Food Certification (HFC)



- How to meet HFC requirements under Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes and the related state laws for competitive foods in schools
- Required for district's designated HFC contact person
- Recommended for all individuals who coordinate sales of competitive foods to students on school premises



- 1. Introduction to Training and HFC
- 2. HFC Requirements
- Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS)
- 4. Evaluating Foods for CNS Compliance
- 5. Laws for Foods and Beverages in HFC Schools
- 6. Fundraisers

https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Healthy-Food-Certification/Related-Resources

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Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP)









Introduction to LFSIP



- Established by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) with funding through USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)
- Purpose and authorization
 - Help states deal with pandemic-related supply chain disruptions
 - Strengthen food system by helping to build a fair, competitive and resilient local food chain and expand local and regional markets



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LFSIP Funding



- \$200 million allocated to states and territories
 - \$1.873 million for Connecticut
- Must be used exclusively to purchase local and regional unprocessed or minimally processed domestic food products from historically underserved producers and processors
- Limited to school food authorities (SFAs) currently operating NSLP and/or SBP
 - SFSP not eligible





LFSIP Definitions



Socially disadvantaged farmers and producers

A member of a socially disadvantaged group (SDG) whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, familial status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program



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LFSIP Definitions



Small businesses

Defined by U.S. Small Business Administration

A for-profit business of any legal structure; independently owned and operated, not nationally dominant in its field and physically located and operated in the U.S. or its territories







LFSIP Definitions



Local and regional foods

Food that is raised, produced, aggregated, stored, processed and distributed in the locality or region where the final product is marketed to consumers, so that the total distance that the product travels between farm or ranch where the product originates and point of sale to end consumer is at most 400 miles, or both the final market and the origin of the product are within the same state or territory



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Unprocessed and Minimally Processed Foods



Examples of allowable food products

- Fruits and vegetables
- Grain products such as pastas and rice
- Meats (whole, pieces, or food items such as ground meats)
- Meat alternates such as beans or legumes, and dairy foods such as cheese and yogurt
- Foods in a wide variety of minimal processing states (e.g., whole, cut) and/or forms (e.g., fresh, frozen, canned, dried)





Significantly Processed or Prepared Foods Are Not Allowed



Examples of unallowable products

- Baked goods such as breads, muffins, or crackers
- Prepackaged sandwiches or meals
- Prepared and/or pre-cooked items that come ready-to-eat or that require no further preparation beyond heating, e.g. chicken nuggets, fish sticks, pre-made pizzas





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LFSIP Phase 1



- \$873,000 allocated to schools
- Base payment of \$2,000 to all eligible SFAs
 - Additional proportional amount based on each SFA's share of statewide student enrollment
- SFAs must choose to elect or decline funds
- Must participate in Phase 1 to be eligible for Phase 2





LFSIP Phase 1



- SFAs encouraged to work with socially disadvantaged and small business farmers and producers
- At least 80% of items purchased must be Connecticut Grown or produced
- Up to 20% can be sourced from producer within region (up to 400 miles)
- Starts spring 2023



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LFSIP Phase 2

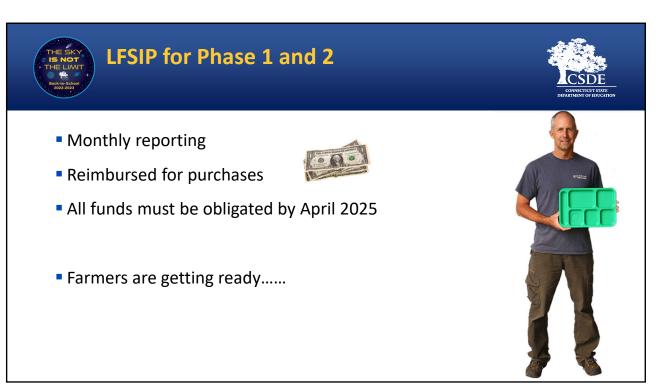


- Participate in Phase 1
- Must engage with socially disadvantaged or small business farmers or producers
- Remaining \$1 million funds projects working to create sustainable, ongoing procurement relationship
- Will receive individualized technical assistance and support
- Required training and data sharing





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Renaming USDA Farm to School Program



Previous Name

- USDA Farm to School Program
- Authorized in Section 18(g) of Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 USC 1769(g)



New Name

- Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program
- Name change in Section 777 of Division A of the Appropriations Act
- Recognizes longtime farm to school leadership of Patrick Leahy, former U.S. Senator from Vermont

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THE SKY IS NOT THE LIMIT THE LIMIT Data-School 2022-2023

Farm to School



- "Farm to School is not another program to add to your work load, it is how you do your programs right, make them better"
- Should be part of all programs
- Silver lining of supply chain challenges over last 3 years: local supply chains and local food systems were there to support schools







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USDA's 2023 Farm to School Census



- October 2023
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) contracting with Decision Information Resources (DIR) and Mathematica
- CSDE will contact SFAs in October to introduce 2023 Census
- DIR and Mathematica will send SFAs link to 2023 Census





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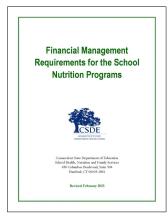




Excess Funds and Farm to School



- SFAs that exceed three months' average expenditures must reduce their operating balance
- School nutrition program funds must be used to operate and improve school food service program



https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/FinancialManagement/Financial_Management_Requirements_SNP.pdf

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Excess Funds and Farm to School



- CSDE encourages SFAs to use innovative ways of meeting financial goals of school nutrition programs
- Farm to school and school gardens provide a unique opportunity for SFAs to use excess nonprofit food service account funds

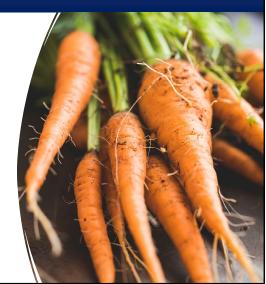




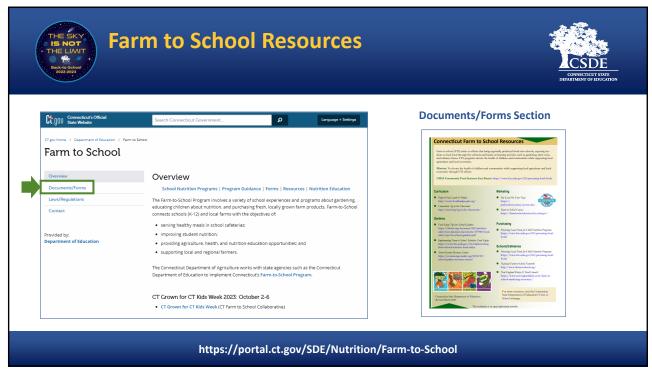
Ways Farm to School Activities and Education Can Improve School Food Service Operations

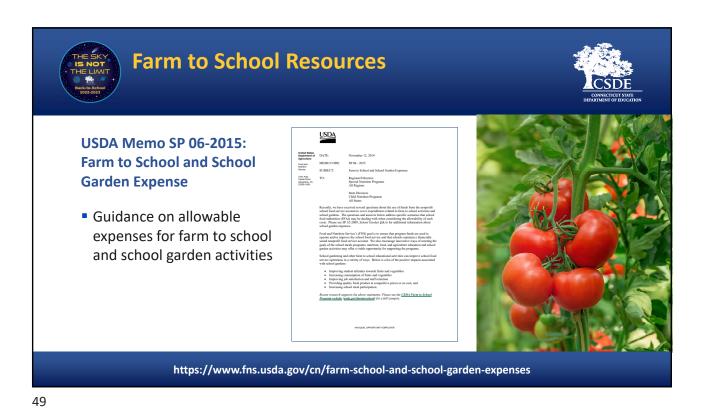


- Improve student attitudes toward fruits and vegetables
- Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Improve job satisfaction and staff retention
- Provide quality fresh product
- Increase school meal participation



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Unpaid Meal Charges

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2022-2023



Purpose of Unpaid Meal Charge Policy and Procedures



- Address collection of unpaid meal charges for students who are served meals and are not eligible for free meals but do not have money in their account or in hand to cover meal cost at time of service
- Eliminate shaming due to unpaid meals charges
- Ensure that child may obtain breakfast and/or lunch
- Provide appropriate customer service



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Required Elements for District's Unpaid Meal Charge Policy and Procedures



Policy

- Statement prohibiting public shaming for unpaid meal charge
 - Delaying/refusing a meal
 - · Special meal option
 - Any other disciplinary action





Required Elements for District's Unpaid Meal Charge Policy and Procedures



Policy

- Declaration of child's right to have a meal
 - May exclude a la carte items and second meals



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Required Elements for District's Unpaid Meal Charge Policy and Procedures



Procedures

 Planning to communicate meal charge policy to families at least annually





Required Elements for District's Unpaid Meal Charge Policy and Procedures



Procedures

- Communicating to parents/guardians for purpose of collecting unpaid meal charges, including
 - · information about local food pantries
 - information about applying for free/reduced-price meals, including information about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), e.g., CSDE's Addendum C
 - link to town website listing community services available to residents



https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Eligibility-for-Free-and-Reduced-price-Meals-and-Free-Milk-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#AddendumC

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Required Elements for District's Unpaid Meal Charge Policy and Procedures



Procedures

- Referring parent/guardian to LEA's designated local McKinney-Vento Act Homeless Education Liaison, if a student's unpaid meal charges equal or exceed the cost of 30 meals
- Including statement that C.G.S Section 10-215c allows board of education to accept gifts, donations, or grants from public/private sources for the purpose of paying unpaid meal charges





Required Elements for District's Unpaid Meal Charge Policy and Procedures



Procedures

- Training all staff responsible for policy enforcement
 - Food service staff
 - Principal or associate principal
 - Guidance personnel
 - School social worker or homeless liaison
 - School nurse
 - Any other staff the district deems appropriate



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Resources for Unpaid Meal Charge Policy



- CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 11-22: Connecticut Statutory Requirements for Unpaid Meal Charges in Public Schools https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2022/OM11-22.pdf
- C.G.S. Section 10-215 (Amended 2021): Lunches, breakfasts and other feeding programs for public school children and employees. Collection of unpaid charges. Acceptance of gifts, donations or grants
 https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/CGS_10_215_Amended_2021.pdf
- Guide: Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge: Proven Strategies from Our Nation's Schools (USDA)
 https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP29-2017a2.pdf

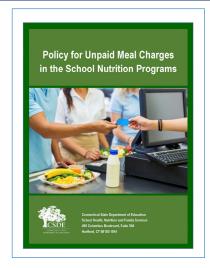


CSDE Guide: Policy for Unpaid Meal Charges in the School Nutrition Programs



- New guide to assist SFAs with policy for unpaid meal charges
 - Policy development
 - Staff training
 - · Policy implementation

Coming soon



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Common Findings in School Year 2022-23 Administrative Reviews



- No charge policy
- Missing procedure for referring parent/guardian to LEA's designated local homeless education liaison, if a student's unpaid meal charges equal or exceed the cost of 30 meals
- Communication to families does not include required information
 - Contact information for local food pantries
 - Free or reduced-price meal application including SNAP information
 - Link to the town's website listing community services available to residents
- Missing procedure to train all staff responsible for policy enforcement





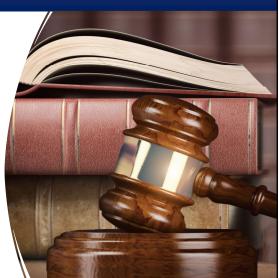


Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2023 (H.R. 2617)



Impact on Summer Meals Programs

- Permanently allows non-congregate meals option for SFSP and SSO sponsors in rural areas without congregate service beginning summer 2023
- Establishes permanent, nationwide Summer electronic benefit transfer (EBT) serving children eligible for free and reduced-price meals beginning summer 2024



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Rural Non-Congregate Summer Meals



How USDA defines "rural"

- Any area in a county that is not a part of a Metropolitan Statistical Area
- Any "pocket" within a Metropolitan Statistical Area that is geographically isolated from urban areas

Determining if area is part of Metropolitan Statistical Area

- May access Metropolitan Statistical Areas for the entire U.S. through USDA's Rural Designation Map
- May use this map to determine if a site is designated as rural by entering the site location

Eligibility for non-congregate meal service if area is not designated as rural on the map

- The area may still be eligible if it is a rural pocket within a larger area designated as urban
- When a site is located in a rural pocket, the CSDE must consult with USDA FNS Regional Office to designate the site as rural



Rural Designation Map: https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/rural-designation



Rural Non-Congregate Summer Meals



Reimbursement of Rural Non-congregate Summer Meals		
Type of site	Meets definition of "area in which poor economic conditions exist" (7 CFR 225.2)	May claim reimbursement for meals served to
Area eligible	Yes	all children
Not area eligible	No	children eligible for free or reduced-price meals in NLSP or SBP

https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-225#p-225.2(Areas%20in%20which%20poor%20economic%20conditions%20exist)

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Final Rule: Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in SFSP



USDA implementing changes to SFSP regulations

- Initial site visits (formerly first week site visits)
- Offer versus serve (OVS)
- Meal service times
- Eligibility for closed enrolled sites
- Authority to waive statute and regulations
- Application procedures for new sponsors

- Approved level of meals for vended sites
- Demonstration of financial and administrative capability
- Performance standards for evaluating sponsor viability, capability, program accountability

https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/09/19/2022-20084/streamlining-program-requirements-and-improving-integrity-in-the-summer-food-service-program-sfsp



USDA Memo SFSP 01-2023 and SP 05-2023: Implementation Guidance: Summer 2023 Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas

Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas

| Value | Value





CT Grown and Summer Meals

 UCONN Extension in partnership with CSDE will continue **Dip into Summer** campaign during summer 2023



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Why participate

- Drives higher meal participation
- Local food equals higher nutritional quality, flavor and visual appeal
- Take advantage of peak season and best prices
- Students and families want and deserve it
- Environmental benefits
- Support local economy, local community, and local working lands and people







Interested in participating?

- Visit UCONN Extension's table today
- Contact
 Abigail Dubois, Campaigns Coordinator abigail.dubois@uconn.edu



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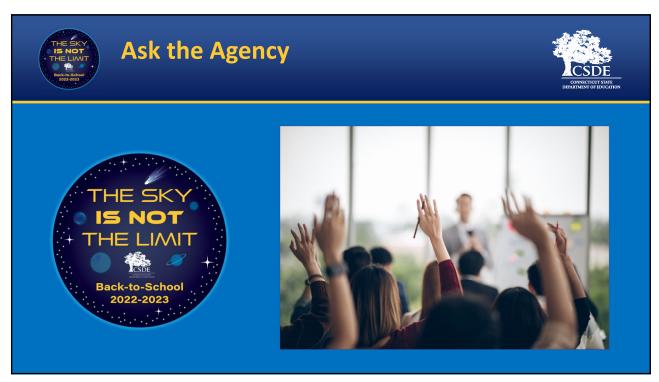


Annual Summer Meal Programs Training



- Training webinars online
- Recorded webinars will be available but CSDE expects sponsors to attend as many live webinars as possible
 - Allows sponsors to ask questions and learn from each other to get better prepared for this year's Summer Meals
- Registration and training topics coming soon

- Thursday, April 20, 2023 2:00 to 3:00 PM
- Thursday, April 27, 20232:00 to 3:00 PM
- Thursday, May 11, 20232:00 to 3:00 PM
- Thursday, May 18, 20232:00 to 3:00 PM
- Thursday, June 8, 20232:00 to 3:00 PM



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CSDE School Nutrition Programs Staff



Susan Alston 860-807-2081

susan.alston@ct.gov

Fionnuala Brown 860-807-2129 fionnuala.brown@ct.gov

Allison Calhoun-White 860-807-2008

allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov

Teri Dandeneau 860-807-2079

teri.dandeneau@ct.gov

Sean Fogarty 860-807-2055

sean.fogarty@ct.gov

Susan Fiore 860-807-2075 susan.fiore@ct.gov Greg King 860-713-6804 greg.king@ct.gov

Monica Pacheco 860-807-2086

monica.pacheco@ct.gov



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- mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
 Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
- 2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- 3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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