

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: June 23, 2022

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Yearwood, Shannon

Hi and welcome to a very exciting edition of School Lunch Tray Table Talk. I'm Shannon Yearwood with the Connecticut State Department of Education, and I am joined by my fantastic child nutrition team, not the full one, but we have the folks you're getting used to seeing on this School Lunch Tray Table Talks. So as you probably know, we've had a very exciting week of lots of lots of.

00:00:24.860 --> 00:00:30.480

Yearwood, Shannon

Uh, things on our horizon to keep track of. So we'll go through some of that for you today.

00:00:31.200 --> 00:01:01.450

Yearwood, Shannon

And before we get started, I want to give you guys a little bit of a tip that I just recently learned. And so if you haven't discovered this yet, Teams has a pretty neat feature. So when we start sharing our screen, one of the things that you can do is put your cursor for your arrow from your mouse over the screen chair, press control, and then use your scroll to scroll up and that will help you enlarge it and zoom it to whatever size your heart desires.

00:01:02.030 --> 00:01:11.920

Yearwood, Shannon

You can then move the document around and make it a little more convenient for you, so that was an exciting tip I learned this week and wanted to share that with everybody for the record.

00:01:12.360 --> 00:01:32.000

Yearwood, Shannon

And we also are are just wanted to, I'll I'll take the low hanging fruit topics first. So your Healthy Food Certification payments for those of you who were expecting those, those were sent out on June 7th. So please make sure to check to make sure that you did receive those and those were deposited into the nonprofit school food service account.

00:01:32.640 --> 00:02:03.870

Yearwood, Shannon

Umm, I also am asking so as usual we have our everybody on mute with the cameras off and we are asking questions to be entered into the chat. Thank you so much for for those of you who submitted your questions ahead of time. As always, we really do appreciate that. So I'm gonna ask you to get ready not to. I know you already have Program Guidance bookmarked in your favorite browser. So we're not gonna do that today. Well, we are gonna do today is if you can get your typing fingers ready, we're gonna ask you would you like us to?

00:02:03.990 --> 00:02:35.640

Yearwood, Shannon

Go on summer vacation for School Lunch Tray Table Talk in July and what that means is we last

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year we did suspend this for the month of July since a lot of you are on vacation and as much as you enjoy spending quality time with us, you may not be looking for that on those vacations. For those of you operating summer meals, we have contact with you. So certainly if you would like us to continue in July, please put yes in the chat. And if you would like us to take a break.

00:02:35.740 --> 00:02:58.130

Yearwood, Shannon

Please put take a break in the chat and so we'll look at that and be responsive. That does not mean we won't have trainings or opportunities for discussion or communication with you as they arise as I'm sure they will. So do keep this time slot handy because there might be those situations that do arise and one of them I'm going to cover in a little bit when we get into the School Lunch Tray.

00:02:59.070 --> 00:03:08.240

Yearwood, Shannon

Uh, so the not so low hanging fruit is what Congress passed on to er, or introduced. Excuse me on Tuesday this week.

00:03:09.060 --> 00:03:37.890

Yearwood, Shannon

It's the Keep Kids Fed Act which I have been for some reason, tongue tied about saying all day. So this is bipartisan and bicameral. So if you're wondering what bicameral means, it means that prior to that press release going out, which a lot of you have seen, that there was some form of agreement between the Senate and the House on the language that's contains in that bill. So bicameral means that's involves both the Senate and the House to come to that deal.

00:03:38.990 --> 00:03:59.350

Yearwood, Shannon

And then what? What we have under what we understand is gonna happen is that the Senate is planning to vote on that bill this week using a special process called unanimous consent. What unanimous consent requires is that all 100 senators vote yay. And he may vote means that that Bill doesn't go any further.

00:04:00.370 --> 00:04:24.420

Yearwood, Shannon

If it moves past using that unanimous consent, it will go on to the house where it is likely that it would also move into an expedited process which is called suspension. There, I don't know why it's called that, but it is and the effort the the goal is for Congress to be able to get this passed this week so that it could be in place in time for that.

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Yearwood, Shannon

I expiration of the current nationwide waivers of and the USDA authorized waiver authority past June 30th. So what's in the bill? Here's what's in the bill. What it does is it extends USDA's authority to issue summer nutrition waivers. So instead of our state specific waivers that we have applied for

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and that we've done a little bit of training with you for for this summer, where we really have to tie that to very specific.

00:04:54.670 --> 00:04:55.190

Yearwood, Shannon
Virgin.

00:04:56.290 --> 00:05:26.420

Yearwood, Shannon

COVID related circumstances in order to use those flexibilities, this bill, should it pass, would allow us to kind of look at operating more similarly to how we've been able to in last two years. Now that I'm saying that with only knowing what the, what the surface of the building wage looks like, we would still have to get guidance from USDA. They would still need to exercise their authority. They would still need to set their expectations and communicate that with us. And then we would communicate that with you as as soon as possible that portion of the bill.

00:05:26.490 --> 00:05:57.800

Yearwood, Shannon

Is good May through Sept, May 2022 through September of 2022. So the timing on on this one is really you'll see kind of a patch work to fit the programs. The next thing it does is it allows the USDA authority to extend the meal pattern waivers through June 30th, 2022. We know that supply chain has not stopped being disrupted. It's become continually challenging as soon as you have one supply chain issue.

00:05:57.880 --> 00:06:28.200

Yearwood, Shannon

Fixed. Then another one comes along. So we we are we are very aware of that. So we know that that would provide some relief as well and then it would allow the USDA to issue non cost nationwide waivers. So right now we as a state are able to apply for waivers that are specific to our state and that don't are not assessed by the federal government to cost additional funds well meeting program intents and accessibility So what this.

00:06:28.280 --> 00:06:46.110

Yearwood, Shannon

Still does is allow USDA the authority to do that on a nationwide basis and have it be a little bit more uniform, but it would still have to be non the USDA and other federal agencies would still have to assess that that would be a no cost to the government. So we don't know what that would look like at all.

00:06:46.650 --> 00:06:55.110

Yearwood, Shannon

Umm it also this bill if it should pass, would increase the school breakfast reimbursement by \$0.15 and school lunch by \$0.40.

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00:06:56.330 --> 00:07:10.410

Yearwood, Shannon

It also, I'm sorry, let me back up before I go too far. One of the the biggest summer meals changes is that it would eliminate area eligibility again for this summer. So that would have huge impact. We definitely will get word out to you.

00:07:10.830 --> 00:07:16.490

Yearwood, Shannon

Umm. If that is something that is passed, because that will will change the landscape again.

00:07:17.690 --> 00:07:47.840

Yearwood, Shannon

Alright, so then back to school meals, it also temporarily. So for the next school year, would increase the federal poverty level for free meals to be equal to or for for free meals to be at that 185% federal poverty level. So we know right now up to 130% of the federal poverty level qualifies you for free school meals between 130% and 185% qualify as you for reduced-price meals. So it brings that up, essentially eliminating the category of reduced price.

00:07:47.950 --> 00:07:57.940

Yearwood, Shannon

Because that that the kids who would qualify for reduced price between 130 and 185% would now qualify for free school meals.

00:07:59.290 --> 00:08:30.120

Yearwood, Shannon

It also extends that area eligibility waiver for Child and Adult Care Food Programs, which is huge for our family day care home folks. We'll talk to them about it a little more specifically, but for those of you who are participating in the At-Risk Afterschool Program through the Child and Adult Care Food Program, you should be aware that this bill would also increase by \$0.10 for each meal and snack for those programs. So pretty substantial changes pretty short timeline. So we will all watch this very closely.

00:08:30.240 --> 00:08:47.130

Yearwood, Shannon

And like I said, even if it does pass and it passes in time, we as a state agency is still need to hear from our governing agency at the USDA to make sure that we are going to implement this correctly and that we will be in lock step in line with what we need to do with USDA so.

00:08:47.690 --> 00:09:18.410

Yearwood, Shannon

And even if you voted no already for us to do this in July, that's why I said we may have some pop up trainings for you. So don't think that if you vote for us to go on on a July break for School Lunch Tray that we won't still be talking with you as we learn more information. But what I do want to really really emphasize is even for those of you who are going on summer vacation, we need you to

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be aware and checking your emails. And I'm really sorry that that that is the way it is, but it is the way it is.

00:09:18.470 --> 00:09:49.500

Yearwood, Shannon

All of this information is happening fast, furious, and we don't want to miss the timing on any of this. You'll see some things as we go that you'll need to be monitoring those emails and making sure that you're authorized signers are as well throughout the summer. So sorry about that. We wish we could just say, go frolic, have fun after such an intense few years. For those of you not doing summer meals and we are not in the position to do that yet someday. So with that, I'm going to stop talking and go ahead and.

00:09:49.620 --> 00:09:54.610

Yearwood, Shannon

I've been asked for new to cover our first topic, so just give me one second and I will share my screen.

00:10:01.250 --> 00:10:02.920

Yearwood, Shannon

Right. And you can see that, OK.

00:10:04.140 --> 00:10:05.160

Brown, Fionnuala

Perfect, Shannon.

00:10:05.790 --> 00:10:06.650

Yearwood, Shannon

Awesome. Thanks.

00:10:06.080 --> 00:10:36.300

Brown, Fionnuala

OK, so this will be the last reminder of the triennial assessment. The assessment of your Local School Wellness Policy it's due on June 30th, 2022. So all of the information is there. Again, we have the steps, the videos, the worksheets we've been working, I've been working a lot with sponsors who have been sending me the link to where they have it posted to the public. So congratulations to everyone who got it done.

00:10:36.560 --> 00:10:53.340

Brown, Fionnuala

I know that it was a big undertaking and and now you've got some useful information to move forward and you won't need to do this again for three years for anyone that's still needs any help. I am available. Please reach out via email or phone and I could.

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00:10:54.040 --> 00:11:06.230

Brown, Fionnuala

I'll assist you to to get this completed so you can meet the requirement and that's it. Regarding the assessment of the Local School Wellness Policies, and I'm gonna hand it over to Teri.

00:11:08.030 --> 00:11:08.860

Dandeneau, Therese

Thank you Fionnuala.

00:11:10.090 --> 00:11:42.100

Dandeneau, Therese

I just want to remind everyone that the Healthy Food Certification statement is due July 1st and that is next Friday. July is almost here. There are two very significantly different roles and one is that of a claims preparer and the other one is the authorized signer and you both cannot do the same function. So it's very important that you read the instructions and it's outlined very simply as to what the claims preparer can do as well as the authorized signers. As far as uploading the information and getting it certified.

00:11:42.330 --> 00:11:53.950

Dandeneau, Therese

So please make sure that you have done this and read the instructions to to understand what the different roles are. And now I'm gonna turn it over to Sean.

00:11:56.340 --> 00:12:27.830

Fogarty, Sean

Hi everyone. Thanks for joining us this afternoon. I'm really glad to be able to talk to you all about inter school agreements. Just a friendly reminder that just much like Teri said July 1st, next Friday he's a key date. We're looking to have these back by then. This is really important because we're really basically trying to support you and be able to actually work with your recipient sites and any of you that receive meals from an HFC district can choose to certify this type of agreement. We really need it back in. Unfortunately the reality is if it's not back in.

00:12:28.510 --> 00:12:59.960

Fogarty, Sean

Unfortunately, we wouldn't be able to have those lunch counts in the future included in those reimbursable meal that are used to determine those HFC payments for 22-23. My big thank you to everyone who was in the schools have already gotten to me. I really appreciate that. But just reminder, we really need those in this coming week and by next Friday we also have the recipient site fended, inner school agreements that need to be submitted back to us at least two weeks before the start of the school year, but no later than August 30th of 2022. If you do any questions about any of this, you can certainly reach out to me.

00:13:00.060 --> 00:13:10.540

Fogarty, Sean

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Just give me a call. Write me an email. I'm happy to help or answer any questions you might have and that we really wanna see these. These forms get out in time. So thank you all. And I'm gonna pass it back over to Fionnuala.

00:13:13.540 --> 00:13:15.890

Brown, Fionnuala

Thanks Sean. Alright.

00:13:16.820 --> 00:13:35.140

Brown, Fionnuala

Next, I'm going to talk about the, Umm, operational memorandum that went out with the regarding unpaid meal charges in public schools. So this is a new state statutory requirement for public schools regarding unpaid meal charges. Shannon, if you can open up the memo and I'm gonna just.

00:13:36.320 --> 00:13:36.840

Brown, Fionnuala

Please.

00:13:39.550 --> 00:14:07.840

Brown, Fionnuala

Briefly go through it. So this was effective July 1st, 2021, but with the majority of our sponsors participating in the Seamless Summer Option and serving free meals to all students or meals to students at no charge, that this wasn't really applicable. This may become applicable next year as we transition back to free, reduced and paid. So a few things I wanna point out regarding this operational memorandum.

00:14:09.350 --> 00:14:13.440

Yearwood, Shannon

There is a new line. Not sure it doesn't really want to go there.

00:14:10.740 --> 00:14:11.470

Brown, Fionnuala

That's OK.

00:14:15.490 --> 00:14:16.140

Brown, Fionnuala

OK.

00:14:15.730 --> 00:14:21.720

Yearwood, Shannon

I'm gonna. Yeah, I'm gonna see if I can pull it up in our folders and then I can grab a hold on, see if.

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00:14:23.540 --> 00:14:24.810

Yearwood, Shannon
See if I can beat the.

00:14:26.410 --> 00:14:26.710

Brown, Fionnuala
Alright.

00:14:26.790 --> 00:14:27.600

Brown, Fionnuala
Well, I'll.

00:14:27.200 --> 00:14:27.490

Yearwood, Shannon
OK.

00:14:28.270 --> 00:14:49.800

Brown, Fionnuala
Start out and kind of say that so they in the memorandum, uh, we have information about the federal requirements for all sponsors that participate in our program. There have been federal requirements around unpaid meal charges or unpaid meals for the last few years and.

00:14:51.480 --> 00:15:00.830

Brown, Fionnuala
And now there are new requirements state requirements, so do do do OK, so let's see here.

00:15:02.010 --> 00:15:32.320

Brown, Fionnuala
So as I said, this was effective July 1st, 2021 and this is applicable to all public schools and does not apply to private schools or RCCIs. So if you haven't done so already and I know many districts or schools have already updated their policy, they have been aware of this new statutory requirement. But if you have not, you must create or update any policies or procedures related to the collection of unpaid meal charges.

00:15:32.540 --> 00:16:02.520

Brown, Fionnuala
For children who are served meals and are not eligible for free meals but do not have money in their account or in their hand to cover the cost of the meals, so the three important things that you must be sure that it includes is that you're not publicly identifying or shaming a child for any such unpaid meal charges, including not limp but not limited to denying or refusing to serve a child.

00:16:04.110 --> 00:16:21.380

Brown, Fionnuala

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Such child designated a specific meal options, so there have been in the past some districts had emergency meals, cheese sandwiches, so that is no longer allowed. So you need to make sure your policy specifically identifies that that there's no.

00:16:22.410 --> 00:16:32.820

Brown, Fionnuala

Shaming. There's no public identification if a child does not have money on their account or money in their hand. The second item is that.

00:16:36.250 --> 00:17:06.600

Brown, Fionnuala

The the child has a right to obtain a meal, which may exclude any a la carte item or be limited to one meal for any lunch, breakfast or other meal service. So your policy can outline that the child is allowed or can obtain a meal, but you you're you may not include a la carte items and that again could be listed out in your policy, but you do need to identify that the child has the right to obtain a meal.

00:17:06.840 --> 00:17:36.670

Brown, Fionnuala

So that's the second element that your policy must be updated to include and then lastly, which has a lot of information here is that you need to include how you will have procedures in place for communication with parents or legal guardians of a child for the purpose of collecting unpaid meal charges. So the communication must include the following. The three items here contact information for the local food pantries, a free and reduced-price meal, application information.

00:17:36.850 --> 00:18:03.270

Brown, Fionnuala

And information regarding SNAP, so you could use the Addendum C, which the Department of Education puts together, and then additionally the last item is a link to the town's website listing any community services available to residents of the town. So again, all of this needs to be included in your policy, and then you must have procedures in place that you're communicating all of this out to, to families as well.

00:18:03.870 --> 00:18:04.530

Brown, Fionnuala

UM.

00:18:06.310 --> 00:18:11.990

Brown, Fionnuala

There's a few other items that I want to go over in the memorandum. If you could click back to that, Shannon.

00:18:14.930 --> 00:18:30.860

Brown, Fionnuala

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Uh, so lastly, if a student's unpaid meal charge equals or exceeds the cost of 30 meals, the LEA must refer the parent or guardian to the lease designated local McKinney and Vento Act homeless educational liaison.

00:18:31.910 --> 00:18:50.290

Brown, Fionnuala

And then lastly, it's important to note that this general statute also allows, which was allowable to be able to accept gifts, donations, grants from any public or private source for the purpose of paying the unpaid meal charges for breakfast and lunch.

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Brown, Fionnuala

So that's a lot of information. I know that districts and schools, food service directors have been working diligently to update their policies and procedures, and there's other resources that have been out there. But just be sure you go back now and make sure it has those three elements that we have outlined here and then.

00:19:10.990 --> 00:19:36.440

Brown, Fionnuala

As I mentioned at the start, there's the federal requirements which have been in place for all of the sponsors participating in our programs and that there's some good guidance here that they have for meeting unpaid meal challenge. There's different operational memorandums that we have outlined that we link to. It's important to note that.

00:19:36.550 --> 00:19:37.170

Brown, Fionnuala

Umm.

00:19:38.980 --> 00:19:59.990

Brown, Fionnuala

Funds from the nonprofit food service account cannot be used to cover the cost of any unpaid meal charges for the National School lunch Program and and Breakfast Program. So again, a number of links there to to further guidance. The other thing I guess I may have not pointed out is the state requirement is applicable to all.

00:20:00.070 --> 00:20:21.750

Brown, Fionnuala

Umm, all schools, regardless if they are all public schools, regardless if they are participating or not participating in our program. So that is relevant if you are a sponsor and you may not have all of your schools operating the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, you still have to comply with this Connecticut general statute.

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00:20:22.720 --> 00:20:25.160

Brown, Fionnuala

I think I have covered everything please.

00:20:27.410 --> 00:20:34.860

Brown, Fionnuala

My colleagues, if I missed something and you wanted to jump in, do so, but no. OK, I think we're good and I'm passing it off to Monica.

00:20:36.480 --> 00:21:09.700

Pacheco, Monica

Alright, thanks Fionnuala. So I have a quick one here and that is a reminder that for your orders that you maybe still getting through the USDA DoD through favors. Please be sure that you are going into the system and receiving those last sets of orders before you go on vacation. As a reminder, they should be all receded within 5 business days and this is allows for USDA to continue processing and otherwise I will be trying to hunt you down and hope you see a message after the schools of closed if.

00:21:09.960 --> 00:21:37.550

Pacheco, Monica

If it isn't done so, please remember if you've had any later orders that you've double checked and and receded those in favors, and also as a quick reminder for those who are participating in the SFSP DoD pilot. This same timeline remains so you will need to do your receding within the five business days and I think that was short and sweet on that one. But I do think I had a question submitted on the spreadsheet that Caroline was gonna check for me.

00:21:39.350 --> 00:22:04.910

Cooke, Caroline

Yes, ma'am. Here is your question. If we were unable to receive our HPC USDA deliveries prior to the staff being released and school closing, well, HPC store, the product over the summer and be able to reallocate it with the first delivery in the new school year. Many of the items were supposed to be delivered in May, but deliveries were canceled multiple times by HPC.

00:22:06.200 --> 00:22:27.920

Pacheco, Monica

OK. Thanks, Caroline. So great question it unfortunate circumstance and I do apologize for this situation as as Shannon mentioned that supply chain issues continue. Believe me they do continue as as some folks are well aware of and we've had a group of schools that have had I think a few delays on their on their final HPC.

00:22:29.410 --> 00:22:58.310

Pacheco, Monica

A direct delivery items order that was initially in May and and some for early June and have been bumped a few times. If it comes to the point where you have gone beyond your school year and you

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are closed and unable to accept that order and that's only again for those who had these pending orders, HPC will be reaching out to you to see if they can come up with a solution with you on a one on one basis. So if you do not hear from HPC, I believe it will be Steve reaching out.

00:22:58.970 --> 00:23:18.220

Pacheco, Monica

It in, I'd say within about a week or so, please reach out to myself and Allison and let us know if you do have any communications with them, please make sure you're also seeing myself and Allison so that we could be abreast of what's going back and forth regarding that. So yes, you will be contacted by HPC to talk about options if you had one of those pending orders.

00:23:19.450 --> 00:23:25.250

Pacheco, Monica

And I think that it almost or any other questions. So I'm passing it on next to Shannon.

00:23:26.540 --> 00:23:28.090

Yearwood, Shannon

Great. Thanks so much, Monica.

00:23:28.920 --> 00:23:59.950

Yearwood, Shannon

Ah, alright, so here's the \$30 million question folks are waiting for some information on. And of course, this bill that is potentially going to pass Congress will have some implications on this as well. But I will tell you what we can tell you at this point. And so this is part of the reason we really wanna make sure you are monitoring your emails over the summer and there's a lot of, you know that public act #22-118, which was also known as House Bill.

00:24:00.170 --> 00:24:35.030

Yearwood, Shannon

5506 the State Department of Education implementer Bill there was \$30 million allocated to the Connecticut State Department of Education in a line item called Free School Meals for Children. These funds are through ARPA, so they have several different rules that we are getting to understand that are a little bit different than what we work with and USDA. So we are working with the with OPM, with our physical department, with our legal department to really make sure that we are doing our due diligence and making sure that you have.

00:24:35.160 --> 00:24:46.640

Yearwood, Shannon

All of the information that you need now that said, the very important part of this is that with ARPA funds, one of the allowable costs cost is to be able to.

00:24:47.740 --> 00:25:16.940

Yearwood, Shannon

Assist households, who are disproportionately economically impacted, and so the US Treasury has

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assessed that those would be households participating, potentially participating in school breakfast and school lunch, and we may not have that data due to the national nationwide flexibility as we've been operating. And so that really, really drove us to have to look at how do we hold true to that.

00:25:17.180 --> 00:25:30.300

Yearwood, Shannon

That keeping the focus on the benefit for households and helping households really be able to have a longer transition than they would back into filling out and submitting those free reduced applications for you.

00:25:31.620 --> 00:25:54.070

Yearwood, Shannon

And we just July 1st would be a hard cliff and it is for a lot of states. But for our state with this additional ARPA funding, we are going to be able to supply to be able to make funds available to school districts, schools that are not participating in the Community Eligibility Provision and that are not new sponsors. So the entire.

00:25:55.310 --> 00:26:25.010

Yearwood, Shannon

Kind of permanent, well, intense of this is to help that transition from going from meals at no cost to the households to back to households having to pay a share of those meals. So we're steering really clear of calling it universal meals for a very for that exact reason because it's really although kind of structurally it will feel that way to households. It really is not like a program that will continue on in perpetuity at this point. It's really to help.

00:26:25.250 --> 00:26:41.990

Yearwood, Shannon

Create instead of a cliff of more gentle slope to give you a little bit more time to get those free reduced applications. Then now with the with the Keep Kids Fed Act, there are some structural changes to the reimbursements and so we would we would have to take that into account.

00:26:42.480 --> 00:27:02.660

Yearwood, Shannon

And there's also we are working to come up with the we know you're waiting for your frequently asked questions and your templates for parents and such. And so we're a little bit in a holding pattern on that as well. So we're trying to come up with different sets of those for you. And again, just kind of depending on what happens this week, we will probably have to shift a little bit of that.

00:27:05.050 --> 00:27:35.660

Yearwood, Shannon

So we are so the the Smart Funds will will be optional. So you will have the opportunity to opt in. We will require every school food authority who participates in the National School Lunch Program and our state to either opt in or opt out. This is why it's going to be so important because we are to check your emails over the summer and make sure you're authorized signers are available because

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we unfortunately due to the very short timing that we have to be able to turn this around and get it up and running.

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Yearwood, Shannon

For you into the next school year, we are going to have to send that opt in and opt out information probably in the in middle of August as what we are estimating at this time. that knowing kind of what changes we may not be able to predict at this moment with going with Congress and everything else that that weighs into this. So keep your eyes out for that. We will definitely provide information sessions, we are definitely going to provide you with your resources, your materials, everything that you'll need. We are working on that.

00:28:08.130 --> 00:28:13.850

Yearwood, Shannon

Yes, very diligently. And so as soon as we are ready with that, we will send that out.

00:28:14.200 --> 00:28:46.700

Yearwood, Shannon

I'm all of the information and so we're just gonna ask you to really pay close attention things as soon as we issue them. Who knows, they may change again because of whatever Congress and USD is able to do, but the intent of this of these funds is to really help those households be able to have that additional time to get those through reduced applications. Then you're going to have a tremendous incentive to be able to look at how much funding you have, what we're what our preliminary plans are, is to be able to, once you opt in.

00:28:46.960 --> 00:28:54.660

Yearwood, Shannon

You will be able to manage your own pot of funds, so you'll be able to really track that and project how long you think that will last for your own.

00:28:55.040 --> 00:29:24.890

Yearwood, Shannon

Umm, students. And so we that's a little bit little bit of a preliminary glance into how we will be able to administer this. And so we'll be sending that information out to you, but hopefully that's a little bit helpful in in helping you kind of think about how you might plan that. But the SMART funds would what we would do is look at that federal reimbursement for the cost of or for the reimbursement for free meals and for reduced meals and for paid meals and so for.

00:29:25.130 --> 00:29:55.550

Yearwood, Shannon

Kids who are eligible for free meals. So whether that's by virtue of attending a community eligibility school, participating in community eligibility provision, or by virtue of their household income or direct certification, they'll still remain free. Pull down that federal reimbursement. There will be no

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state share associated with that for the children who are eligible for reduced priced meal. This is very this will cover the household share. And so speaking as if we are in the land of.

00:29:56.870 --> 00:30:27.680

Yearwood, Shannon

Before Congress does anything with this, this bill that would be we, the state share could be 30, would be \$0.30 for breakfast and \$0.40 for lunch. So you would be able to pull that to supplement it and make yourself whole. And then the difference for those kids who are full pay, which we know a lot of the kids who have not, every kid who has not turned in those for reduced applications. We know defaults to that full paid status. So there's that whole big realm that we're all very concerned about where we would have a much smaller.

00:30:27.790 --> 00:30:30.940

Yearwood, Shannon

Federal subsidy to be able to help offset those costs.

00:30:31.710 --> 00:31:01.540

Yearwood, Shannon

And so the state chair would help. After these smart funds would help be able to fill would would be what that reimbursement the difference between the pain and the free. So sorry, I got myself a little tongue tied there as I realized that we didn't tell you what SMART funds are. So that that is the name that we're calling the free school meals for children and what that stands for is the school meals assistance revenue for transition funds. So we are going to be calling them the SMART funds. So here us refer to that. That's really what it is.

00:31:01.920 --> 00:31:16.170

Yearwood, Shannon

Umm. So like I said, we gotta kind of wait and see a little bit about what is going to happen with this bill, what might happen with USDA and then that will impact our administration of this as well. But please stay tuned because you have a lot more information on the horizon.

00:31:19.380 --> 00:31:20.050

Yearwood, Shannon

Up to you.

00:31:20.130 --> 00:31:50.430

Alston, Susan

Alright, thank you. Alright. So next I'm gonna go through about 6 items and they're all related to some updated resources that we have for you. So the first one on the breakfast and lunch meal patterns have been updated for school year 23 or 22-23 and they reflect the changes that are effective as of July 1st. So they're listed there. You're now able to have low fat flavored milk that is now allowable. I'm 80% of your weekly grains offered each week must be enriched.

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00:31:50.560 --> 00:31:56.740

Alston, Susan

And the sodium target one is implemented for school year 22-23 for breakfast and lunch.

00:31:58.180 --> 00:32:27.820

Alston, Susan

These updates replace any of the old forms that you may have, so you wanna make sure that if you have these meal patterns posted up around in your kitchens that you would take them down and and put up the new ones. The new ones will all have June 22, 2022 at the bottom so that you know that you're using the most current. They are all listed on the website that is linked right there. And if you haven't gone to that website, you will see that there every age grouping or great.

00:32:27.890 --> 00:32:57.560

Alston, Susan

I'm sorry grade grouping that you can think of is listed as far as the meal patterns for breakfast and lunch for those great groupings. Whether you do four day, five day, seven days, they're all listed there. So please check those out along with the updates to the meal patterns, the preschool meal patterns for the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast, and Afterschool Snack have also been updated for school year 22-3. Preschool has its own webpage, and the link is there with lots of great information about.

00:32:57.900 --> 00:33:25.020

Alston, Susan

Offering meals to preschoolers if you have them in your program. The preschool meal pattern varies a little bit from K12, so if you are new to doing preschool, we are. I know during the pandemic we have a lot of schools that are having preschool only sites. So if you have that as you transition back to NSLP SBP, you wanna definitely look at the differences and the for the preschool meal patterns.

00:33:26.840 --> 00:33:57.670

Alston, Susan

OK. The next one has to do with Afterschool Snack Program. Again, the meal patterns for Afterschool Snack have been updated. So you can refer to that. These are a great refresher from any planning as many of our sponsors did not do Afterschool Snack during the pandemic while they were participating in the Seamless Summer Option. And you may want to resume operations of snack in the fall and and as you do update your online applications, we'll be sending out information as to get you back in the swing of things.

00:33:57.780 --> 00:34:01.270

Alston, Susan

Afterschool snack snack. So I'm check those out.

00:34:03.260 --> 00:34:04.890

Alston, Susan

Sorry, just clicked off or something.

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00:34:07.030 --> 00:34:30.880

Alston, Susan

OK. And along with the preschoolers, as there are sample menu, so if you are again new and you're checking out the meal pattern for preschools for the first time, there are sample menus for Afterschool Snack Program to help you kind of schedule your and and plan your menu for the for the week and for while you're operating the program?

00:34:31.930 --> 00:34:50.490

Alston, Susan

OK, the menu planning forms again also for preschool have been updated for school year 2223. They'll patterns you go to Program Guidance go under M meal pattern. You're gonna see all the links to all of these great resources.

00:34:53.430 --> 00:34:54.690

Alston, Susan

I think.

00:34:56.170 --> 00:35:30.780

Alston, Susan

Ohh no no. There's one more. So if you're looking to see how each one of these the meal patterns compares across the programs, we do have some great comparison charts that that will compare US preschool to K through 12 and all of the different programs and it when you open them up, it's a little overwhelming with all the information that is on there. But they really do get into the components of each one and and outline the differences between each of the programs to help you as you're kind of, you know, trying to have the most.

00:35:30.960 --> 00:35:46.460

Alston, Susan

Your menu across programs to show you what what my might have to be different from one age group grouping or to another or from what program to another. OK, so with that I'm gonna turn it over to Caroline for just a brief minute.

00:35:49.210 --> 00:36:20.080

Cooke, Caroline

This is going to be the quickest update of the day, just a reminder to all of you that Teresa and I have just concluded a 6 part series on summer meals training and that the slides, recordings and transcripts for those webinars are on our webpages for your perusal. For our SFSP sponsors, obviously those training all of those trainings apply to you for SSO sponsors. Most of them also apply to you.

00:36:20.640 --> 00:36:29.260

Cooke, Caroline

But the ones that are most important for you are the ones that were listed in the School Lunch Tray. And if you have any questions, please feel free to let me know.

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00:36:31.670 --> 00:36:34.010

Alston, Susan

OK, so I'm back. Thank you.

00:36:32.180 --> 00:36:32.960

Cooke, Caroline

Ohh you are Susan.

00:36:35.170 --> 00:37:03.680

Alston, Susan

Alright, so I'm back. I'm talking about last week we put out and we published on the website the annual notification of LEAs and their whether they're eligible or near eligible to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision. If you're wondering how we come up with this information, it is based on all of the data that you put into the online system and when we collected that information, April. So those are your numbers of directly certified students.

00:37:04.320 --> 00:37:33.250

Alston, Susan

Anyone who doesn't didn't fall into the the SNAP category, or there was the other category in your enrollment. So we encourage you if you haven't already, to look at those lists, whether it be at the district level of the school level and if your school is listed there with an identified student percentage of 40% or higher, you may consider applying for CEP for next school year. If you have questions about that and your percentage, I'm I encourage you to reach out to your county consultant.

00:37:34.110 --> 00:37:56.200

Alston, Susan

You and we can talk you through it or answer any questions that you might have and if you are interested in applying and then you're trying to see what that entails, you do wanna refer to operational memorandum 10-22 that came out last week or may have been the week before at this point where we outlined the three documents that you need and the time frame for applying.

00:37:57.190 --> 00:37:58.080

Alston, Susan

OK and.

00:37:59.170 --> 00:38:01.400

Alston, Susan

With that, I'm going to turn it over to Fionnuala.

00:38:06.600 --> 00:38:07.670

Brown, Fionnuala

Thanks Susan.

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00:38:09.420 --> 00:38:39.050

Brown, Fionnuala

OK, so I am going to. OK, I am going to take the last few items which all pertain to financial management. So the first item is the new webpage. So a few months ago we determined that it would be beneficial for our sponsors to start putting together, compiling a guide and with that it made sense to.

00:38:39.330 --> 00:39:11.220

Brown, Fionnuala

Have have its own webpage, so this is the financial management webpage and the overview provides the code of federal regulations that pertain to financial management. So those four bullets there are the the main main requirements maintaining a nonprofit school food service account, limiting the use of your revenue, limiting your net cash resources, maintaining financial management system and complying with the regulations of financial management. So the overview.

00:39:11.300 --> 00:39:20.680

Brown, Fionnuala

Really, touches upon all of the code of federal regulations, which it links to, and then they're at the bottom. You have the quick links which are.

00:39:21.900 --> 00:39:37.110

Brown, Fionnuala

The sections of the guide which I'm going to go over a little later so the quick links. Uh, the first one actually brings you to our new financial management guide and then the other items there are the.

00:39:38.140 --> 00:39:56.220

Brown, Fionnuala

Are the other sections in in the guide, so I'm just just for the webpage. If you could scroll back up Shannon to the left there on the dashboard we call this the overview which just went over and then we have the documents and forms as I mentioned that.

00:39:57.410 --> 00:40:28.630

Brown, Fionnuala

Would be all of the sections of the guide, so these are all of the elements and resources related to financial management to help you comply with the federal and state requirements. And this is language pulled directly from the guide. So you know then under related resources, these resources are not represented in the guide. These are other resources that pertain to financial management that we wanted to have available to you Buy American elements of the administrative review. So those are there.

00:40:28.800 --> 00:40:45.510

Brown, Fionnuala

And then the last item there on the left are second to last. The laws and regulations they mentioned,

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which code actual regulations and they're listed out here and links to to that. And then the contact would be your school nutrition staff, the program staff there, it brings you to.

00:40:46.110 --> 00:41:16.880

Brown, Fionnuala

So that is just a, a high-level overview of the new financial management webpage, which we are extremely excited about. We have been getting a lot of questions over the years and had been pulling resources. Our main guidance is from the indirect cost manual and guidance we have had from Nero, the Northeast Regional Office of the USA over the past several years. And so it's it's great that we moved forward. My colleagues and I with creating this.

00:41:17.250 --> 00:41:41.630

Brown, Fionnuala

This guide that I'll get into a little further and then that as I mentioned, really pushed us to have a whole financial management webpage. So I'm also really excited about the new form, which is our next item here and we're calling it the plan to reduce excess operating cost. So part of the federal requirements for your National School Lunch Program.

00:41:42.500 --> 00:42:12.910

Brown, Fionnuala

You could click back Shannon not ready yet is that you maintain a nonprofit status and we review your your adherence to this with your financial reports. So annually you submit your financial report and it's during that exercise that you identify if you have exceeded your three months operating cost. So if you exceed your three months operating costs, you have to put together a plan on how you're going to spend that excess.

00:42:13.610 --> 00:42:25.620

Brown, Fionnuala

Balance those excess funds down and that has been a practice for for as long as I've been here and it's been done. Just a narrative that has been submitted.

00:42:26.940 --> 00:42:44.410

Brown, Fionnuala

Used to be come in by email and now it's done as part of the online system, but we thought it would be beneficial to create a template, a form for you to use to decrease the amount of back and forth to get clarification on certain items. So.

00:42:45.770 --> 00:42:51.120

Brown, Fionnuala

This form is what you're going to be required to to submit when you have an excess.

00:42:52.360 --> 00:43:17.170

Brown, Fionnuala

Operating balance. So over your three months which you are allowed and then you're going to

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submit this as part of your online application next year when you complete your financial management or your financial report and now Shannon, if you could please click into the form, I'm just going to quickly show it to you. We have the instructions which are there and then I'm just going to give you kind of a.

00:43:17.590 --> 00:43:22.410

Brown, Fionnuala

Ohm a walk through on the the plan itself so.

00:43:23.440 --> 00:43:33.870

Brown, Fionnuala

It's very straightforward. You'll be putting your the SFA name, the sponsor number and then you'll be putting the excess balance as of June 30th. If you could scroll down.

00:43:34.820 --> 00:44:06.290

Brown, Fionnuala

In each of the items, you're just gonna list the, uh, description of the activity. They allow allowable expenditures, and then the cost per unit, the total cost, and the estimated date of completion. So just looking to see that, that field, that total cost and the bottom there are shaded in orange reflects the excess balance as of June 30th. Sometimes you know, sponsors submit a number of different things to me and it might be shy \$100.

00:44:06.410 --> 00:44:15.060

Brown, Fionnuala

Few \$1000 it must exceed your excess balance. So in Connecticut, you know we are allow you to carry that over we don't.

00:44:16.240 --> 00:44:34.910

Brown, Fionnuala

Have you returned those funds? But your plan must show us how you will spend down the total of your excess balance as of June 30th. We know that there are some concerns right now with timelines. So we have had an opportunity to extend things.

00:44:35.310 --> 00:45:04.760

Brown, Fionnuala

Umm. If necessary. Uh, you know past a year, but the expectation is those funds are spent down within the next school year. So you will be listing out the estimated date of completion. So these are all reviewed and approved in the online system when you submit your financial report. So normally there are a handful of sponsors that might have to complete this.

00:45:05.460 --> 00:45:34.810

Brown, Fionnuala

But in the past year with the pandemic, I'm sorry. I'll be right there with the form, with the pandemic that has kind of skyrocketed. So this form hopefully will be useful for everyone. And in

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addition to just listing out the item and I'm going to go into this a little more detail later on, you are going to need to briefly describe how these specific expenditures will benefit the USDA school nutrition program. These are highly regulated funds.

00:45:35.030 --> 00:45:47.120

Brown, Fionnuala

Now we're gonna go into the guide now, and I'm gonna touch him on some resources that will help you identify what would be allowable to list out here as your plan to.

00:45:48.360 --> 00:46:17.450

Brown, Fionnuala

To reduce your excess balance. So that's everything about the new form. The instructions are there Umm. As you know, we like to give detailed instructions. So those are all there a line by line will help assist you with completing that and then last but certainly not least we have our new financial management guide. So we are very excited about this. Why we're excited about it is that hopefully this will be your your go to.

00:46:17.560 --> 00:46:48.520

Brown, Fionnuala

Guide it's our go to guide for everything related to financial management. As I said, we've kind of we pull the different guidance we have on from USDA when a question comes in. Not a straightforward question, maybe something you know creative from a sponsor. So now everything will be here. Everything will be very straightforward and it includes all things, financial management. So you can click into the guide and I'm actually not gonna go over.

00:46:48.610 --> 00:47:02.090

Brown, Fionnuala

From all of the content, but I wanted to point out a few areas today just because we talked about the net cash resource and the requirement to maintain that nonprofit status so.

00:47:02.180 --> 00:47:04.470

Brown, Fionnuala

Umm. So I'm gonna cover.

00:47:05.740 --> 00:47:24.910

Brown, Fionnuala

Some areas that are going to assist you with that, so if you could actually go right up to the beginning, Shannon, we're we're going to cover, we're going to kind of scroll through, OK. So just scrolling down, it covers all elements regarding financial management requirements and then funding sources. So if you could scroll down a little more.

00:47:26.240 --> 00:47:31.150

Brown, Fionnuala

The introduction there is, UM around the UM.

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00:47:32.170 --> 00:47:43.040

Brown, Fionnuala

Code of federal regulations and the requirements, and if you could scroll down a little more and let's see, I'm going to try and use your trick and make this a little bigger for myself.

00:47:44.140 --> 00:48:15.230

Brown, Fionnuala

UM ohh, there we go. Thank you. So so the the thought is that you could use this guide obviously we get a lot of questions is this purchase allowable can I do this what how can I use my funds so anytime you have any question about utilizing your funds in your nonprofit school food service account, this is where we want you to go. So if you could scroll down a little more. I'm sorry just scroll through slowly and I'll. I just wanted to hit a few things.

00:48:15.710 --> 00:48:16.330

Brown, Fionnuala

Umm.

00:48:17.090 --> 00:48:48.210

Brown, Fionnuala

So stop there, the IT the most important thing. And and what we always say is you need to kind of take each purchase and and use of your expenditures and you need to go through the the process is this cost necessary reasonable allocable and is it consistently treated as direct and indirect. So those are kind of the steps and your responsibility to safeguard these funds. And so we're gonna I'm gonna if you could scroll down a little more we're going to go through a few of the sections here.

00:48:48.480 --> 00:48:49.690

Brown, Fionnuala

That Umm.

00:48:50.880 --> 00:48:59.510

Brown, Fionnuala

Will help you kind of go through that. So again this gives you all of the requirements regarding your nonprofit school, food service and nonprofit school food service account.

00:49:01.170 --> 00:49:09.790

Brown, Fionnuala

And then we have information about revenue, which is is everything and then information about your expenses here, so.

00:49:12.950 --> 00:49:35.110

Brown, Fionnuala

As you go through with each purchase, you do need to identify that it is necessary, reasonable, and allowable. So if you scroll down, we have a nice chart that specifically outlines most items that we get questions about right. Is this an allowable cost? Is it not an allowable cost?

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00:49:35.210 --> 00:49:46.950

Brown, Fionnuala

Ohm. So items are listed out here. One thing I will say is that everything doesn't necessarily fit neatly into these to these.

00:49:48.220 --> 00:50:04.570

Brown, Fionnuala

To this table and that's OK, and it's OK for you to also if it's if you're still confused. Yeah, these expenses are not all inclusive is to reach out to your county consultant. Also you can refer to the indirect cost manual that might have some more information.

00:50:05.780 --> 00:50:13.130

Brown, Fionnuala

So we've grouped things together. You have to identify if it's allowable or unallowable. And then additionally, when you're looking at.

00:50:15.100 --> 00:50:33.160

Brown, Fionnuala

Is it a direct or indirect cost so we do get a lot of questions if you could scroll down. I'm not going to go into all of the items in this in this manual, but it identifies meals. Actually. We'll stop right here. What one big question we get are and now with a lot of our sponsors.

00:50:34.040 --> 00:51:03.590

Brown, Fionnuala

I'm having some excess funds in their nonprofit school food service account. We get a question to say, you know, the Board of Ed, they wanna take this money back. They have loaned us money or gave us money several years ago or covered the cost of something. And now they want it back. So right here tells you what the guidance is around loans. And so USDA does not allow a fund transfer into the nonprofit school food service account to be retroactively designated as a loan.

00:51:03.940 --> 00:51:34.750

Brown, Fionnuala

That is subject to repayment, so the only way that you can pay back is if it was identified as a loan. And there's documentation to support that so and that everything is outlined there regarding the conditions for repayment and needs to be documented, agreed upon in advance by both parties. So it's very, very specific and the in advance is the key term there. So you'd have to have that documentation on file if you were to.

00:51:34.900 --> 00:51:45.610

Brown, Fionnuala

Transfer funds out of your nonprofit school food service account into the General General Fund or to the Board of Education, so there's the guidance around loans.

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00:51:48.220 --> 00:52:13.950

Brown, Fionnuala

OK, direct and indirect, this is also where we get a lot of questions. And again, I'm just pointing out some sections in the guide that are that hopefully will help you if you have excess funds in your nonprofit school food service account and you will be completing that plan and submitting that. So you wanna make sure that the items that you're submitting are allowable and appropriate and necessary. So we do get questions about.

00:52:14.030 --> 00:52:44.160

Brown, Fionnuala

Direct and indirect. So it's important to identify that when you are identifying if it's allowable. So because scroll down a little bit for indirect, there's two allowable elements in acceptable methods to use. So one is if you have an indirect cost rate. So we do have a few sponsors that submit proposals to the Department of Education and get approved rates and you would need to apply those rates.

00:52:44.380 --> 00:52:49.590

Brown, Fionnuala

The second is what is used more commonly, and that's a cost allocation plan.

00:52:50.250 --> 00:53:19.560

Brown, Fionnuala

Umm, so if you are going to deem a specific expenditure as an indirect cost at which means that the full amount is not going to be used, it's going to be a portion you need to have a cost allocation plan and so this is a mathematical exercise used to assign an indirect cost to a particular program or other cost objectives such that each program or other cost bears a portion of the indirect cost. So an example of this would be lunch aides.

00:53:19.680 --> 00:53:49.490

Brown, Fionnuala

OK. So we get questions a lot that we have. They have staff that comes in and they spend 2 hours in the cafeteria, but then they go out and they are also in the in out observing recess and then they might be down in a classroom. Well, that salary cannot be a direct cost to your nonprofit school food service account because all of the functions and job description of that employee is not related to.

00:53:49.790 --> 00:54:21.040

Brown, Fionnuala

The school meals program. So you would have to go through a cost allocation plan and determine what portion of the salary would be an allowable cost and then that that would determine how much you could you could be paying out of your nonprofit school food service account. So sometimes it's staffing, sometimes it would be equipment. So you know, they say we're going to purchase equipment for the.

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00:54:21.720 --> 00:54:33.180

Brown, Fionnuala

Cafeteria that might just be used three hours of the day for the uh for meals, but is used by many other programs. The students are in there for.

00:54:33.920 --> 00:55:02.070

Brown, Fionnuala

Before and after care programs are run in there and so there something may not be 100% used for the nonprofit school Food Service account or for the school meals program. And so a cost allocation. Looking at that equipment and what would be allowable to be allocated to the nonprofit school Food Service account would be appropriate. So that cost allocation plan is key if you are going to be.

00:55:03.650 --> 00:55:14.430

Brown, Fionnuala

Having an expense that is not a direct cost and it would be an indirect cost. All right, so and then we have a little chart there too about indirect and direct.

00:55:15.670 --> 00:55:16.860

Brown, Fionnuala

Which is.

00:55:18.570 --> 00:55:19.340

Brown, Fionnuala

Useful.

00:55:20.870 --> 00:55:21.640

Brown, Fionnuala

UM.

00:55:22.350 --> 00:55:53.110

Brown, Fionnuala

And again, further guidance is in the indirect cost manual. So we pulled what we thought would be pertinent for our sponsors and kind of compiled it here procurement. You obviously need to comply with all of the federal and state local regulations for proper procurement when we're talking about using purchases or purchases from your nonprofit school food service account. And lastly, we know we're just wrapping up here. I did want to mention the capital expenditure request in equipment approval, so.

00:55:53.260 --> 00:56:23.450

Brown, Fionnuala

If you have access funds, we have an approved list, so we have our capital expenditure, approved list and any item listed here. You do not need preapproval. So this list was compiled and approved by

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USDA. So if if you are looking to make a purchase and it's listed here, you do not need pre approval if it is not listed here and it is over \$5000 or if it's used equipment.

00:56:23.540 --> 00:56:45.450

Brown, Fionnuala

You need approval from the state agency. So we have a form that you need to complete. We are actually transitioning that this form is gonna be available online in the near future, but here it is now and you need to provide us the information regarding the equipment purchase.

00:56:46.970 --> 00:57:04.680

Brown, Fionnuala

Uh, and attest to all of these items here. Sign it submitted in order to get approval to to make a purchase of an item that is not listed on that approved list and that is over \$5000 greater than \$5000. So we have that list.

00:57:05.510 --> 00:57:11.680

Brown, Fionnuala

Uh, and I think that's it, that's that's as far as I'm gonna go right now. Umm and.

00:57:12.890 --> 00:57:46.210

Brown, Fionnuala

We kind of covered everything around the plan and there's a lot of other elements in the guide. We may, Umm you could stop scrolling now. There are many other sections, but I I'm just wanted to cover that because it pertains again to the net cash resource and maintaining your nonprofit status. So hopefully in future table talks, we'll have an opportunity to bring up this guide. Again. We are really excited about it. I hope you guys are excited too and it is really anything around financial management. It should be in here.

00:57:46.350 --> 00:57:54.660

Brown, Fionnuala

And we'll be able to talk a little bit about this later. I'm gonna stop right now and see if there are any questions because I know we only have a few minutes. Thank you.

00:57:56.490 --> 00:57:57.310

Yearwood, Shannon

This one.

00:57:56.760 --> 00:58:00.150

Cooke, Caroline

Hi we do have a couple questions.

00:58:00.560 --> 00:58:31.310

Yearwood, Shannon

Caroline, can you give me one second? I just want to show another quick feature of this financial

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management guide. So this table of contents is live, so don't be intimidated by the link. It really is only about a 20 page document. We have acronyms, glossary at the back. We did this so that it would be as user friendly to your business official as well as you. That was last thing I wanted to say. Now you can go Caroline.

00:58:31.950 --> 00:58:56.680

Cooke, Caroline

OK, great. And so our first question goes back to the beginning of today's webinar. When formula was talking about the Connecticut statutory requirements for unpaid meal charges in public schools. So the question is for the charge policy, is it enough for the Food service department to have procedures or does this need to be a Board of Education policy?

00:58:59.890 --> 00:59:31.540

Brown, Fionnuala

Great question. I'm not sure I 100% know the answer, but I will give some information and that is I would say if you have existing policies in place, right? So the requirement for sponsors is that you have policies in place regarding unpaid meal charges and those are all around communication with parents and communication to students and training staff that you're gonna be updating those policies. So if those policies were already board approved, I would say that these need to be board approved.

00:59:31.620 --> 01:00:03.530

Brown, Fionnuala

As well, this is a huge change in the way you do business, so certainly it's how you do business there. If your board is highly involved. You'd wanna make them aware of these changes and these requirements. So I read those that statutory requirement in detail and I did not see any language that spoke to that. It needs to be board approved, but I will certainly defer to my colleagues here regarding that. But I would say it's really it's.

01:00:03.690 --> 01:00:10.660

Brown, Fionnuala

Look at your current policies and where are they with with regards to being board approved, Shannon or Teri or Susan.

01:00:11.480 --> 01:00:41.320

Alston, Susan

I was just going quickly say, I mean I agree and and because of what could happen with these charge charge meals, right, you know that a A eventually the board may have to get involved to supplement right all the the cost of of what those charge meals were. So you really wanna make sure that everybody is on board with what the policy is including the state requirements you know from the superintendent to the business official cause you may need them to help you know get the money that you are the the families.

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01:00:41.390 --> 01:00:43.550

Alston, Susan

My ohh so I think it would.

01:00:44.360 --> 01:00:54.470

Alston, Susan

Like I said, if it's already a board policy, you would keep it that way, and if not, you may think about is it an important enough to become a board policy so that everybody's on the same.

01:00:56.140 --> 01:01:04.620

Dandeneau, Therese

I I agree, and I would definitely recommend speaking with your business administrator just to get guidance and and make that make sure that they're aware of this.

01:01:07.130 --> 01:01:08.120

Yearwood, Shannon

That's great. It better.

01:01:07.330 --> 01:01:15.610

Cooke, Caroline

OK. And we have we have one more question. We're gonna try and sneak in really fast because I think it's a quick answer, but Shannon may surprised me.

01:01:17.170 --> 01:01:36.660

Cooke, Caroline

So this goes back to Shannon's covering the SMART funds. The question is if we opt into smart funding, will the accounting process for claims remain the same as this year and all the meals for the time frame allowable be submitted as free in the Colyar claim system?

01:01:37.650 --> 01:02:08.860

Yearwood, Shannon

Alright, so before I answer that one, I'm gonna just save one more thing on the anti anti share the charge charge policy and legislation and that is just really wanna reemphasize what's Fionnuala had said is that this also applies to your schools that are not participating in our programs. So that is definitely something your board and your business officials and your and anybody else involved in your programs will want to know. And we will since it lives in our department we will be looking at that as well.

01:02:08.940 --> 01:02:09.970

Yearwood, Shannon

So just be aware of that.

01:02:11.170 --> 01:02:32.690

Yearwood, Shannon

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So this is a great question. And the other thing I want to do is do say is that everybody except for a couple folks wants us to take a break. So we're gonna do that. Thank you all. And we will, we'll discontinue. So this will be our last one before unless we have some pop up trainings and such. So just keep your eye out on that School Lunch Tray for that so.

01:02:33.270 --> 01:03:04.230

Yearwood, Shannon

Umm. And we will definitely be sending out more information, but what I do want to remind folks is that uh, that link that's that's for submitting questions ahead of time. We still definitely want you to continue putting your questions about the SMART funds into there right now we have a Q&A document that's upwards of 60 questions that we're asking and that you guys have been asking. So keep them coming because we wanna make that as comprehensive as possible. So this is a great question. So the entire purpose behind the SMART funds.

01:03:04.310 --> 01:03:34.470

Yearwood, Shannon

Is to help the transition away from all meals at no cost for participating in the seamless summer option of the National School Lunch Program during the current school year into shifting into the next school year where you will be responsible for collecting free and reduced price applications, verifying them, and then also charging households accordingly, the SMART funds would pay the household share. So what?

01:03:34.590 --> 01:04:01.300

Yearwood, Shannon

The reason you wanna collect free reduced applications is 1 because you need them to. That would make your SMART funds go further. So the more federal reimbursement you can bring in through increasing that documentation around children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and including checking your direct cert certification runs weekly, that's gonna help you every month. Make that funds that you are allocated go a little bit further.

01:04:02.980 --> 01:04:03.610

Yearwood, Shannon

Transition.

01:04:03.420 --> 01:04:32.840

Alston, Susan

Uh, yeah. I was just gonna say, but I think in the answer to the question would be no, you're you're not going to be able to claim all your meals as free, like you have been under SSO. You would still be claiming them based on the students eligibility as free, reduced and paid and you would still have to track them that way. So getting back to the point of sales system, every student comes through, they're eligibility. How does that their meal get claimed from that? So it it does is going back to previous unless you're CEP district.

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01:04:33.220 --> 01:04:40.880

Alston, Susan

Which doesn't apply to you anyway, but yes. So no, you would not be putting all your meals into the system as free.

01:04:41.420 --> 01:05:01.270

Yearwood, Shannon

Right, like think about this, we are returning to pricing programs regardless of the SMART funds, right? So the the SMART funds are really think about that as your big household. So that is the household pot of money that you will have to pay that household share which will be equivalent to the federal share difference. Go ahead for the.

01:04:41.820 --> 01:04:42.770

Brown, Fionnuala

And just to.

01:05:01.910 --> 01:05:31.260

Brown, Fionnuala

Ohh, I was just gonna piggyback on what you're both were saying and just to answer her question is then we are in the process of updating our online system to be able to utilize your meal counts, your reduced in paid counts and then extract that out through a report and come up with your owed amount that month to pay you. So it'll be after your federal reimbursement, your smart funds reimbursement, this is what we're kind of working through developing all of this but.

01:05:31.620 --> 01:05:50.310

Brown, Fionnuala

Not everything that Susan and Shannon just said, but just to just to reiterate and piggyback on that, we'll be utilizing your reduced and paid counts for the month and determining your eligible your smart phone payment for that month. So it'll be a little later, but great question, so.

01:05:49.880 --> 01:06:19.090

Yearwood, Shannon

Yes. And that and you won't be needing to do. We're really excited about this enhancement to this system because they will do the calculations for you. So you don't have to separate them out and submit different different categories and such. So that will be something you'll be able to do in the system and it will have quite a few other features. We're also excited about, but we'll wait for our info sessions. So we make sure to do some big foreshadowing. So you come to that whenever we decide what date that will be. So stay tuned.

01:06:19.630 --> 01:06:39.880

Yearwood, Shannon

Thank you so much to my team. Thank you so much to all of you summer meals sponsors out there. We will definitely be seeing you and cheering you on as you as you provide those services and

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for the rest of you I can say go frolic, enjoy the summer, take some time off, enjoy your family, your friends and do something fun and unrelated to work.

01:06:40.610 --> 01:06:55.660

Yearwood, Shannon

I that is a directive I give my team all of the time when they actually take time off, which is very, very rarely. So. I have a wonderful summer and we will see you soon and stay. Stay tuned to those emails, lots of changes in our world, lots of rapid pace. So thank you everybody.

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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's Training for School Nutrition Programs webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, School Health, Nutrition and Family Services, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/School_Lunch_Tray_Table_Talk_06_23_2022_Transcript.pdf.

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