

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

**Presenters:** Shannon Yearwood, Fionnuala Brown, Allison Calhoun-White, Caroline Cooke, Susan Fiore, Monica Pacheco, Michelle Rosado (Hostess)

0:05

Hi, and welcome to the School Lunch Tray Table Talk at the Department of Education. We're so pleased you could join us on this beautiful Thursday morning. I'm Shannon Yearwood, the Education Manager, with the Connecticut State Department of Education, and I work with the Child Nutrition Programs, and I am pleased to be joined by my colleagues today.

0:24

They go through some of this information.

0:27

So just a few notes of the housekeeping items here, so some of you may have noticed that we, and our calendar invitation, some of you probably received a notice saying that the webinar was confirmed for one hour when you received it, and that's at 2 to 3 general mountain time.

0:44

So, even though the computer system is really desiring the warmer weather, and to be in that general time zone, we are not from the east coast.

0:55

It's a little bit glitches, though. Just keep in mind that these will be 9 to 10 February, and then we will let, you know if there's when there's going to be any time changes.

1:04

So, aye, glad you made it here.

1:07

But, the other thing is to just note that we, I actually completely forgot what I was going to say, so I may jump in with that, but we can go ahead. I just wanted to make sure that folks were not thrown by that time.

1:24

Okay, I remember it was going to say, either, please consider this type of office hours or keeping this pretty casual, as you can imagine, because I just forgot what I was gonna say.

1:33

I don't feel like we say, you need to, stick to topics, questions, thoughts, ideas, going to share with us, you can enter those in the question box or the chat box at any time. Certainly, you can submit questions ahead of time. We always encourage you to do that.

1:47

We will review, it will take these, we'll take a deeper dive into what was it, do that in the School Lunch Tray for the week, but there are also a really great opportunity for you to let us know what's on your mind and what's going on today, your peers are on this as well. So, they may have been inspired by the information and conversations.

2:05

Certainly, feel free to reach out, if you will. At the end of this, we'll raise it, will enable the hand raising feature, so that you can ask us questions, join us verbally.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

2:15

If you don't want to do that, you can certainly just submit those questions in writing, and with our best answer those. Anything we can't answer, we'll take back, or if it seems very particular individualized, we will definitely follow up with you afterwards.

2:28

So with that, thanks so much for joining us, and I will hand it off to my colleague Fionnuala.

2:36

Speaker 2 - Thank you, Shannon. Good morning, everyone. We really have two main items in the School Lunch Tray today we have updates regarding USDA Foods, which Allison Calhoun-White is going to go over and then we have finally the USDA waivers in the CNP online system for all of our operators, all of our sponsors. So we're gonna go over that, and you also have the resource round-up, which we will end today's Table Talk with. So we're gonna jump right in, and I'm going to have Allison take it away for the USDA updates, Allison.

3:20

Speaker 3 - Thanks Fionnuala. Good morning everybody, and we're going to start talking about Cheese today.

3:26

And I know we've been talking about Cheese for quite a while now, back in the first week of January, we had, we started with the weekly reminders in this School Lunch Tray, and we talked very detailed about Cheese in the USDA Food webinar we did on January 8<sup>th</sup>.

3:45

So, this shouldn't be a surprise to anybody. So, we're going to start talking about the Sliced Cheddar real quickly.

3:53

And just know if anybody has any Slice Cheddar left on your allocation report and those have all been removed from the warehouse.

4:03

And basically, it's just due to the short shelf life of these unprocessed Cheese products, like the Cheddar and the Mozzarella. So unfortunately, if anybody had any of that left, that is gone, and it will eventually come off your allocation report, but you cannot order that anymore at this point.

4:20

Okay, so the second Cheese that we're having some issues with is the String Cheese, as well.

4:27

And so all Cheese with the best buy date of 2/7 has been removed, and we do still have remaining inventory, and the remaining inventory has backed dates of December 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>.

4:42

So generally, the solicitations that the USDA puts out for Cheese states that there needs to be at least a 90 day shelf life.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

4:51

So if you're looking at a 90 day shelf life, these Cheeses will be good, through March fifth thru ninth.

4:59

You can put them in the freezer, of course, but because of that, we have to make sure that they're out of the HPC warehouse and into your districts, and either served or in the freezer, so we have a date that you have to order that by, which is February 19<sup>th</sup>.

5:20

So that being said, I have reached out to the vendor, and I'm trying to see if I can get a more specific timeline if they can actually give me an expiration date on that.

5:31

So there may be more to come and we may be able to give you a little bit more time on that, but right now, it's Friday, February 19<sup>th</sup>.

5:39

If anybody would like some more String Cheese and can use it or get it in their freezer, please contact me and let me know and we should see if we can get you some of that Cheese too, because I'm pretty sure with that short turnaround, not everybody's going to be able to use all of their Cheese.

5:58

Again, this is another one of these COVID unprecedented things. It's never happened before.

6:03

We've never had an issue with Cheese, and just due to, you know, people aren't using up their Cheese like they normally, so, hopefully, this year, we'll get through this, and we won't have to worry about this again, And, it's unfortunate, but it's happening, and we have to do the best we can with it, so, okay.

6:22

The next thing we're going to talk about: this is pretty straightforward, we've canceled the Turkey Roast that was due in on September 15<sup>th</sup>, which, we've been waiting for.

6:34

Unfortunately, of course, most people wanted to use this for the holidays. They didn't come in, and at this point, I don't think there's any point in us even getting them. So they've been canceled, which is not a big deal, it's the Sliced Turkey Breast, same thing that is canceled at this point too.

6:51

So we do get a truck earlier this year, but any remaining orders that you are counting on, unfortunately, those are not going to come in.

7:01

Something that's not on here, though, we still are waiting for a tuna that was doing back in the beginning of the year. And I guess there's issues with COVID related issues with inspection and getting it out of places like Samoa, where it's coming from.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

7:16

So that's most likely going to be canceled, also, not 100% yet, but I would say don't count on any Tuna coming in.

7:25

The good news is, though, all the remaining trucks that we have for the rest of the year are scheduled to come in. So they're going to be and everything else that you've been waiting for should be coming in the next probably a couple of weeks or so it's already scheduled for delivery at HPC.

7:44

Okay, so the next thing that we have is the excess USDA Foods for February.

7:55

So this is again something we've been trying forever trying. I want to thank everybody who placed orders for January. We had over 65 orders come in, actually we had exactly, 65 orders come in, and we were able to fill 20 of them. So, if that gives you an idea of how large the volume is of the order that we have, and how many, you know, we're only able to fulfill about a third of them.

8:19

Um so, don't feel bad if you didn't catch your order first time, alright.

8:23

So, just a couple things about January or February order, follow the instructions. We have already gotten another probably 20 orders that went out on yesterday.

8:35

Um, one of the good things, if you didn't get your orders in January, the good news is that the orders will roll over, so please don't resubmit a duplicate order if the order was not filled.

8:48

You can submit an additional order for additional products, and we will combine your prior orders.

8:56

Okay, so there is a link in here for the request to order of USDA Foods form.

9:02

So, you can either link to here if you want to order something, or you can. We do have it posted on the Web page now, and remember, that order form for all of the items that we carry, in the warehouse, but the only items you can order are the ones that are listed on here. I've just been looking at a lot of the orders that came in, and people are just ordering everything up.

9:26

The order form, you know, please don't do that on the order, what's available.

9:31

Oh, okay, so the orders are due Wednesday, February 17th, so next Wednesday by end of business.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

9:41

Also, keep in mind if you realize that you have excess foods, you can submit a donation form at any time.

9:50

You know, your menus changing, or, you know, like we said, just keep track of what you have.

9:58

Over at HPC and submit that donation, and that was good for that, okay.

10:10

And then the last, the big announcement that everybody's been waiting for is the catalog opened up on yesterday.

10:18

Yeah, that's exciting!

10:20

As always, when we put out this announcement, and there's so many links, and forms, and resources and worksheets and everything, if you find a link doesn't work or you find there's a problem on the worksheet or whatever, just please just let us know.

10:35

And we'll be happy to update anything that we find because we always miss something, no matter how, many times, we look it over.

10:43

There are a number of changes that I wanted to let you guys know about this year.

10:50

First of all, web supply data, link to that. So if you guys are going in and try your old link, it may or may not work. I don't know why some people it's not working, but I would recommend if you can't get in and use the link that we have in here, that does work, and then put that into your favorites for now.

11:12

Second thing that's different this year is the ordering threshold. We have increased the ordering threshold from 105% last year to 110% this year, and the reason we did that is because we're, we have a large carryover funds from this school year, which is unusual.

11:30

We have about \$2.5 million from canceled items this year, that's going to roll over, and just remember though, that 110% threshold only applies to things that you can order in web supply, so that applies to direct delivery items, and processing items does not apply to your DOD allocation, and then we have updated the Web Supply Training Guide, so we've streamlined it. Go to guide, it'll show you how to check your entitlement. DOD allocation as right.

12:05

It's going to walk you through ordering direct delivery items and processing items that help new users get set up on web supply.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

12:14

Well, that's going to be goto, okay especially for those folks who are doing it. First ordering, first time share.

12:22

Another thing that is new is that we back now to a minimum case order.

12:29

So for school Year 20-22, the minimum order for direct delivery items from HPC is 12 cases per drop, and this was due to we had our contractors, HPC, but we have the option to renew.

12:44

And so, to try to keep the price we had to come up with some sort of concessions, and that concession was to go back to the case minimum, but that's what you guys were used to for years at SYSCO, and I mean honestly, I believe it was an oversight on HPC part that really never should have happened.

13:04

So lucky for the last two years. I'm not having a case.

13:09

I don't know of any other state agency anywhere in the country that doesn't have a case amendment.

13:15

So, but that being said, that doesn't prohibit you from ordering less than 12 cases, if you can't fit it in your freezer or whatever the case may be, but you'll still have to pay that delivery charge of \$54 per drop.

13:32

Okay, and then we have the links to the worksheets on here, just remember, when you're ordering direct delivery, order those, in cases. If you're ordering processing, those are ordered in pounds. And the worksheets reflect that.

13:48

And just remember that the pricing may even change from when you fill out the worksheets, to what you enter your order in web supply. Because web supply updates.

14:00

The pricing with the most current solicitation, so between that time, we created the worksheets, and the time that you put your order in another solicitation has gone out. That pricing is going to change, and it just continues to change and change constantly. Nothing is ever perfect. It's not a perfect system.

14:20

It's constantly updated, and I don't drive certain people crazy, especially people who like to be perfect, but not that kind of system.

14:31

So, as far as the catalog is, it mainly stayed the USDA Foods available list. Really, change that much, so, we kept our catalog, mostly, the same three items, three Processing Material.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

14:50

And a couple of processors were just strictly due to low volume over the past.

14:56

So, lastly, I guess, if you're already for the first time, Monica has been doing a great job at outreaching and doing kind of a mini training, with all new folks that we know about, but there's always some that fall thru the crack, so if you're listening to this, and you are not registered, and haven't ordered before, please reach out to us as soon as possible.

15:25

So we can get that process moving forward.

15:29

And I think that's it for me. And I have to jump off the call, so I think we can we stop for questions. If anybody has questions now with that.

15:37

Speaker 1 – Okay, Allison, we do have a couple of questions to ask you.

15:46

One of them I'm gonna send it to a little bit of a specific question. So I let the asker know that you would be following up with them. So I'll make sure you have that information.

15:55

So another question is, if I got more entitlement money than I was expecting, can I add more to DOD, or is it too late?

16:06

Speaker 3 - Yes, you can just e-mail me.

16:10

Speaker 1 - Great answer, alright.

16:11

So, when we were when you were talking about the, I believe, it was the, the first item. That, if you ordered already, but didn't get the extra item, do not put in another request. But if they've put a request and then only got a partial match, should they reorder?

16:33

Speaker 3 - Yes.

16:36

Speaker 1 - Easy answer, alright, great.

16:38

Those were the, those were the questions that I think very likely pertain to a lot of folks, that we're on there, but I know you have to jump off for a meeting, and we have a pretty packed agenda.

16:48

So, if any other items come in around food distribution, certainly, USDA Foods, just submit those questions, and we'll make sure that Allison and Monica get those to follow up.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

16:58

And who knows if they're if they're general enough questions, they might even make another School Lunch Tray.

17:03

Thank you so much, Alison.

17:06

Speaker 3 - Thank you. Everybody.

17:10

Speaker 2 - Thanks, Allison.

17:13

Okay, so the next item in the School Lunch Tray is around the USDA waivers. So we're finally prepare to gather data on a site level regarding the USDA waivers that are being implemented, both in the Seamless Summer Option and the Summer Food Service program. So Caroline, Cooke is going to jump on at the end of this, my section and specifically speak to the summer food service program sponsors. I'm gonna go over in detail what is required and we're going to briefly go through the guide, or the USDA waivers for the Seamless Summer Option, So again, Caroline's going to jump on at the end to give more information for those Summer Food Service Program operators, everything that I'm going to mention, it will be applicable. I'm going to go through how to access the system, and then I'm going to talk about the seven Waivers that are available for the SSO sponsors and there are 11 for the SFSP sponsors. So she's going to talk a little bit about that, and a little bit about your Phase Two of your online applications.

18:28

So again, I want to just really point out, that we collected this data in the fall, at a sponsor level, those summer sponsors, that are going to implement these USDA waivers, and now everyone is requires to report on the waivers that are applicable at the site level, the site schools, every site listed under your SSO operation or your SFSP operation. You will be required to identify which waivers are being implemented, or have been implemented at those sites.

19:03

We do have about 25 sponsors that stayed as the National School Lunch Program sponsors, and did not opt to transition over to summer. So for those sponsors, you are on hold now. You, we have collected the data from you, and you do not need to follow these directions at this point. So, if anybody's confused, am I a National School Lunch Program are Seamless Summer Option look to see where you've been claiming, because if you are claiming under SSL, you are operating SSL, and you are required to report on these waivers.

19:45

So, I know that we gave a, the instructions, the guide that we put together, and I'm not gonna open that, what I'm going to do is open the online system and kind of reference the guide and walk you through the online system for these waivers.

20:05

So, um go back here.



## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

20:08

So for the guide, you'll need just jumping right to page one, the Section one, which is again applicable for the Summer Food Service Program sponsors and the Seamless Summer Option. And we also have sponsors. If you're participating in CACFP, you'll be getting information coming out from our colleagues in CACFP to direct you on any reporting required there. So you'll need a user ID and password to access the system. And then you would click into the applicable program. And again, I'm gonna go over for this Seamless Summer Option.

20:44

You'll be clicking into the School nutrition programs if you have multiple programs, and then you um, I'm going to just select a sponsor here and I'm going to use a Sponsor them I'm familiar which is Watertown, and then you click into applications. Again, all of this is in the guide. I just want to, I'll walk you through and get to the area with the specific waivers. You will click on.

21:16

Down here after applications, you would click down into USDA waivers, and now you're here in the USDA Waiver section.

21:29

Once you click Details, all of the schools and sites operating under your um Program Sponsorship will be listed, and you will need to report on each of these sites.

21:47

I'm gonna click right in, um, we gave some general information in Section one, as I said, that section one is applicable for all sponsors, and then section two has site specific information.

21:59

So um, I am going to, there's some general information before I guess jumped into the site specific.

22:08

For all of these waivers, you are um, are going to be identifying the months, and the months would be October through June, all of these programs, or the have been approved to operate October first through June 30th. So that is what is available to you to check off. You will not be clicking on all or July, August or September, because those are represented in the previous year's application.

22:40

Also, there'll be tool tips available for any applicable questions, and we're gonna kinda go through that. I wanted to get to this last piece which is that the status is going to say submitted. So once you see this set, status is submitted for all of your sites and schools. That's when you know you're all set with this. And then, as a state agency, we're going to go in and approve those. So, I'm gonna click in here.

23:07

You've already clicked, and it would be add, and then, you see, the site name is listed here in the upper right-hand corner. And then, all of the, for the Seamless Summer Option, we have the seven waivers listed out.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

23:26

And, I'm just gonna go through each waiver and give you some tips and just, hopefully, provide a little more clarity to these questions.

23:39

So, again, you have the Guide there and you also have the tooltip. So, for the first question.

23:46

Anyone operating the Seamless Summer Option, submitted an application in the Fall that was approved by our agency, to do that, so, you know, one is not participating. If you are claiming the Seamless Summer Option. If you have submitted that application, you will be checking off, participating in waiver. And, again, you're not going to be checking off all, or July, August, and September. You'll be checking off October, November, December, going through, and all of the applicable months right up to June.

24:19

Now, most sponsors, this is what, it's going to look like, because, you know, most sponsors started in September, which is captured in last year's applications, over this year's application, school year 20-21, it's October through June. We have a handful of sponsors that were late to the party and decided to operate seamless summer at a later date. So, some of you may be checking off on November through June, or December through June. For the majority of 125 Seamless Summer Sponsors, it's going to be October through June.

24:56

And, again, know, you have, on record the application that you submitted, that was approved, you would have received an e-mail that it was approved, and anybody currently participating in the seamless summer option would be approved. The tooltip is up here with the question mark.

25:11

So, it gives you the, some instructions that were written in the guide, will be accessible here for you as well.

25:20

So, that is, we are one then we get down to waver number two, which addresses Area Eligibility.

25:27

So many of the Seamless Summer Option sponsors did not traditionally qualify for eligibility, and, thus needed to submit an application. So this was another application that was submitted in the Fall that you should have on record that was submitted, and then approved use, received approval for that. And that was at a district level of you identified the site, and it was all of the sites at that point that were participating in the town and the district. So that was done at a district response, or level, and now we're collecting this data at the site level, so you would check off participating Level.

26:08

You would now check off all July, August, September, and then you would go through and check off the applicable months.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

26:16

Just gonna go through this, and again, you have the tool tip there, which gives you some information about that specific waiver.

26:28

So we're going over the Seamless Summer, but if anyone just joined us, if you're an SFSP sponsors majority of these waivers are the same. You just have a few more and Caroline Cooke is going to jump on the end, go over that.

26:41

So the next one is the Area Eligibility.

26:48

Whoops, the Area Eligibility is for Closed Enrolled Sites, so you, that eligibility application, covered your open sites and your close sites.

27:02

And so if you're wondering, is this site an Open Site or a Closed Site, you would go to your online application, and see how you have identified this site.

27:14

So Watertown High School, I know, is an Open Site.

27:19

And so Watertown High School is not participating in this waiver, because, if you look at the information in the guide, and also in the tool tip here, Closed Enrolled sites would be a site that's distributing meals only to the students enrolled in the actual site where the meals are served, and this would be due to safety, security, capacity, concern.

27:42

So meals served only to enroll children, students and claimed only at the site, would identify this and where you would check off um that you were participating. So again, Watertown, High School, I know, does not feel that criteria. And because they are going to be the next three waivers, which are an open site, and they're feeding remote learners, are, not participating, would be what you check off now, many of you on, decided to have all of your site's open. So again, you'll be checking off not participating. If you have any questions, you look at the tool to look at the instructions in the guide, and you can always reach out to us.

28:26

But not participating would be the answer here applicable for this high school, because I know this high school is feeding remote learners.

28:33

So that brings us to the next three waivers, which, together, which, together, allow you to feed those students and children that are distributing meals to be consumed off site.

28:51

So the non congregate feeding, the parent guardian pick up and the mealtime flexibility, mealtime, flexibility or restriction waiver. Those are the ones that work together to allow you to feed students off site.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

29:10

Ah Ha!

29:12

So, any remote learners, any Open Sites, they have, would you be checking off any participating, for this particular, for this particular waiver, and, sort of, the tool tip is there, again, goes through what an open site is.

29:28

Um, and for, for number four, for waiver number four, you do have to indicate, you do have to indicate how you're distributing meals. So you would have to write, you know, grab and go, or, you can be specific send meals homes for weekend distribution, or you can see all of the, all of the applicable distribution methods, you would list here, if you list household delivery, you, there is a separate application for that. So, that would require that you were approved to participate in Household delivery, both for SSL and for SFSP. So, we'll be looking at that, but if you know, oh, wait, I am doing households deliberate, I don't think I have been, application, will show you where that application lives at. The, during the resource roundup section, we're kinda going to go over the COVID Operation Page. So, so I know, the Watertown High school participates in these waivers.

30:32

And because they're feeding remote learners, they have an open site feeding all children 18 years and younger, from that high school. So I'm going to need to click off, um participating in waiver, and indicate um, indicate how I'm distributing meals.

30:50

And I can't forget um the operating months because I will get an error if I don't check off the applicable months.

31:00

And so I'm going to do that and then again, if I have a question, pop this up.

31:05

Okay, take a look, and I'm going to walk me through it.

31:10

Not long, a little, confusing, where the check marks go for it, a box after the month is indicated.

31:22

So we have 4 or 5 and 6, as we said, some mealtime restriction also on right.

31:28

So, this is what it's allowing you to be outside of the regulations, which require breakfast to be served at the beginning of the day and lunch for the National School Lunch Program, under SSO to be served during the 10AM and 2PM. So, because you're not doing that, you're participating in this waiver distributing meals.

31:49

For these open sites, for um students to consume, potentially the next day, potentially, you're, you're distributing 5, 5 days worth of meals on, so you would need to check that off. So for 4, 5 or 6 to work together, and would need to be checked off for any opening site.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

32:10

The last one we have is the Meal Pattern Flexibility Waiver, and we went over that, at length of the last school lunch train.

32:20

Anybody, um participating in that waiver would have had to submit a separate application, and it would have been approved for that, if you find, after, last week's on School Lunch Tray and looking at that waiver. Looking at the criteria that it is applicable, then, you can check off participating in waiver and add that application right here. So, your consultant who is reviewing your waivers and improving them, would, would be looking for that if you check off participating raver. And, I'm going to check off no waiver for this, for their school, and, I think I'm all done, and, I'm gonna save it, and let's see what happens.

33:03

It has been saved, so, then, let's go back, and let's take a look that is submitted.

33:13

Um, didn't answer everything, is not participating, right. So, the waiver that were not participating in, obviously, I'm not checking off all the month, so I did it correctly. I was trying not correctly to get an error.

33:28

That is okay, and so now I have that one school all set, and submitted, and then I would move on to the, to the next school.

33:40

And I think I've covered um everything. Caroline is going to jump on now and talk a little bit about SFSP. And I guess the only other thing I'll mention, and kind of we'll go through this in the guide. It was the last few pages have resources available to you.

34:02

Um a link directly to the USDA waiver and Q and A and things like that. So if you are confused, you can certainly click in and click in there.

34:14

Caroline, are you with us?

34:15

Speaker 4 - I am, I'm here.

34:18

Can you see me?

34:22

Okay, so I am actually in the process of starting what I was going to talk about, I think, answer a couple of questions that have popped in as Fionnuala was talking.

34:32

So, one of the questions is since we submitted the non congregate waiver for all schools last fall, do we also mark individual schools for non congregate if only some are using that.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

34:46

So, the answer to that is that you are indicating information on your waivers, at the site level.

34:53

As Fionnuala clicked into each site, she was able to answer the questions specifically related to that Sites operations. So you're going to see a list of all of your site.

35:05

So you're going to answer those questions for each site individually because you of that very reason.

35:11

So we know that in many cases, you may have implemented some waivers at some of your locations, but not necessarily at all of your locations.

35:22

Then there was another question as to whether or not the waivers, number, four, five, or six.

35:29

So remember, those are the, the waivers we've been referring to as the trifecta only apply to open sites and it's not, not necessarily. So that's the non congregate feeding, parent guardian pickup and mealtime restrictions.

35:46

That could potentially still apply to a Closed Enrolled school if you are having pick up for your enrolled students. So you may choose to have your students picked up from the school that they're enrolled at, but you may still be allowing them to get meals for remote learning days or for weekends.

36:05

So you need to stop and think about your operations.

36:08

Anytime they're taking those meals and leaving the premises to consume them at another location or at another time, those waivers would still apply for that site.

36:19

Um, and then there was a question as to whether or not there's a place online where a district can verify which waivers if filed, and that's actually the sticky note I was going to start with.

36:31

And so, no, the answer is no, there's not.

36:36

It's really important that we don't get um buried in 180 e-mails after this call asking which, which waivers you've applied for, um you to look at the list of waivers, you need to consider the purpose of each of those waivers and the applicability to your operations, that's what it's going to help you understand whether or not you're implementing that waiver. So all of you should be implementing the first waiver at all of your sites, because you're participating in SSO or SFSP. The only sites that's not going to be indicated for those waivers are the NSLP sites, which granola has already indicated they will not be completing this, this process.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

37:21

So once you look at the list of waivers, once you make sure you understand what the applicability of the waivers are, then you're going to have to look through your records and confirm whether or not you apply for those waivers that needed an application.

37:37

And make sure that you have records of your application and your records of our approval of that application.

37:45

Fionnuala, did you want to jump in?

37:47

Speaker 2 - I did. Just for one second everything, obviously, that you said was completely accurate.

37:52

And I just wanted to point out on, can you see my screen, where, where I have the waivers. Can you see my screen Caroline? Speaker 4 – Yes.

37:59

Speaker 2 - So for SSO sponsors', there's only a few waivers that you, whoops, submitted. So it's not everything.

38:09

So I just wanted to point that out, and the beginning of the year, in the, over the summer, before, we got the green light to be able to operate summer, the summer programs, through the school year, we had sent out an application for sponsors that we're looking to participate in these waivers under the National School Lunch Program, but once we switched and when SSL or SFSP for SSL, we did not collect on these waivers, either at the district level or the state level, for specific ones. So, I'm just gonna point that out. So, as Caroline said, the first one, right, you should have on record an application because you do apply to participate the same for number two, which is the area eligibility, and that would be applicable also for number three, so, 4, 5, and six, seamless Summer Option, We did not select data, so, you did not submit an application for 4 or 5 and 6. We're doing that at this point to collect data in the online system. For that, for the district demo site level. So, you won't have anything on record for the Seamless Summer Option. Again, we hit send something out for our NSLP sponsors when we thought all of our operators will be operating under NSLP.

39:27

Um, so, I just want to clarify that and then yes, you should have on record. If you applied for the meal pattern flexibility, so, I just don't want sponsors to be looking for a seamless summer application for waivers 4, 5 and 6 because they don't, they don't exist. Thank you, okay, great.

Speaker 4 - So, I think in the tool tips for any of those that did require an application though, it would be indicated. Is that right Fionnuala?

39:54

Speaker 2 - Yes. Yes. Yeah, references. If an application, you have to participate, they have to submit an application. Exactly, that's for the meal pattern one, and for those other ones exactly, Caroline.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

40:05

It says we've collected an application. Speaker 4 - Perfect, very good.

40:10

Um, okay, so I'm gonna set that aside for the moment. And we understand that you will need some assistance, there may be some specific questions that you still have to help documented properly.

40:24

But just know that unfortunately, there's not enough of us to be able to take and respond in a timely fashion to an e-mail from everyone saying, can you please let me know which waivers apply to me.

40:36

And there will be some cases, we know, where your operations have had to shift along the way to meet the needs of your community.

40:45

And we have tried to the very best of our abilities to keep up with what each of you are doing. But, sometimes, if we don't happen to ask the right question, we may not know that something is going on.

40:55

So, it's really going to be up to you to make sure you understand what each waiver pertains to and whether or not that applies to each one of your individual sites. So we still want to provide technical assistance. We're here to assist you, but we really need you to do your part of the homework as well.

41:12

So Fionnuala has gone over very, very carefully all of the Seamless Summer Option waivers listed in the module, those seven waivers and the first seven waivers in the SFSP module, are exactly the same. So it's the same waivers.

41:29

Plus, we have a few additional ones that you're going to need to respond to for each of your sites, for SFSP sponsors, and you will see those additional instructions in the SFSP specific instruction guide.

41:45

So the SSO sponsors have already received their instructions. SFSP sponsors will be receiving their instructions individually, rather than through the School Lunch Tray, we expect that to happen next week, so please be on the lookout for that.

42:00

And the four additional waivers are Offer Versus Serve.

42:05

And so that's going to apply to any sponsors that are either not School, Food authorities that are implementing Offer Versus Serve, or any of our, any of our School Food Authority sponsors that are implementing offer versus Serve, with the Summer Food Service Program meal Pattern.



## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

42:23

So if you are implementing offer versus serve with the NSLP and SPP meal patterns, you are not implementing that offer, versus serve waiver, but if you are summer food service program sponsor, that is a School Food Authority, and you are utilizing the Summer Food Service Program meal Pattern and Implementing Offer Versus Serve, you are implementing that waiver.

42:48

The next one, which would be waiver number nine, is On-Site Monitoring.

42:54

So, if you have chosen to do your monitoring for this program year as a desk, audits style monitoring, rather than in person observation, then you are implementing that waiver.

43:08

The 10th waiver is first week site visits.

43:12

So, if you have chosen to waive first week site visits for any of your veteran sites, sites that you operated last year, that operated successfully without operational challenges, then you are implementing the first week waiver, um, first week, site visit waiver.

43:32

And finally, uh, reimbursement for meals served prior to written notification.

43:40

So we know that with the Summer Food Service program we have the caveat that we remind you of that every time you make changes to your site operations that any changes to site operations must be approved in writing by the SDE prior to implementation.

43:56

Um that USDA has been understanding of the fact that the operations have needed to shift and that it has been a strain, both on local staff and state agency staff.

44:07

Um, and, that we want to ensure that children have access to these meals without barriers created by this documentation process.

44:14

And so, they have provided us this opportunity to do that.

44:18

Um, and, in many cases, sponsors are taking advantage of this USDA waiver. So, I would expect that most of you probably will need to indicate implementation of this waiver, but you can certainly reach out to either Terese or myself, if you're unsure of whether or not you have utilized that waiver.

44:40

The next thing that I wanted to talk to you about is what Fionnuala alluded to at the beginning of the conversation, which is phase two of the online application.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

44:52

So we, in order to expedite the process of application approval and make it possible for all of you to claim meals for reimbursement, and make sure that you have that cash flow to pay your vendors, did um break the online application packet into two pieces for this program year. And each of you received a preliminary approval for the phase one of the application. So this is going to be the next step, which we've been reminding you kind of throughout the fall, and early winter was going to be coming.

45:23

And so, a little bit of good news, bad news situation. So, the bad news is that phase two has arrived, and we're ready to launch into the next phase of the application.

45:35

It's going to happen concurrently with your documentation of USDA waiver implementation, but the good news is that it's going to allow you to have a little bit of extra time to go through that USDA waiver documentation, because we know you're going to be doing both processes concurrently.

45:53

And the second, and even bigger piece of good news, is this is going to allow us to dramatically reduce your workload as the summer months approach in preparation for summer months operations. So you're not going to be doing the full application process in June that you normally are right before the Summer Operations Start.

46:16

Obviously, we're still going to need to do a pretty significant application update for many of you, because many of you had some pretty significant site changes as you move from school year operations to summer operations.

46:30

Um so, keep in mind that this is not the end of this story, but it's gonna get you set up really well for the summer months, which we're excited to let you know.

46:42

And I think that's all I had for today, but I'm sure we have lots of questions coming in.

46:50

Speaker 2 - Thanks, Caroline.

46:52

Um you are very clear and provided a lot of great information, and you reminded me to mention that the deadline for the Seamless Summer Option is on February 26<sup>th</sup>.

47:07

So this is not optional for SSO sponsors must report on site level data regarding these USGA waivers. So, we gave you a little over two weeks, and please, if you are not, the person responsible for submitting this, if you can forward this school lunch tray, forward the information, the guide to someone who is, that would be great. Again, sometimes we have individuals who may think, it's not my, my job is to do this within someone else, thinks it's not their job from the district, and then no one does it. So please get together. If multiple people

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

received the communication, received the School Lunch Tray, identify who's responsibility it is, and please get that information for the SSO sponsors by February 26<sup>th</sup>.

48:01

And I don't know if any other of my colleagues before Shannon jumps on with, maybe any questions have anything else to add that we might have missed, or SSO.

48:18

Speaker 4 - I can't hear you Shannon.

48:23

Speaker 1 - Oh, looks like it caught up with me, I was too fast on the pressing the buttons.

48:26

So, what I'd love to do is also, our resource roundup is going to help navigate you to, where are, where you can find all the information you need to review any of this, what the waiver is, and what they mean, and how you find that, and where there might be additional information for you to apply considerations.

48:46

So, I do want to make sure that we have a little bit of time for that, and we have, so, certainly, submit your questions. If we run out of time, we will absolutely follow up with you, or we will take those. If we know that they're going to be good information for everybody, we can certainly also address those on next week.

49:05

We will follow up with you, as well, but we do have one question that I think would be helpful if we want to go ahead and read that and then, if Susan Fiore is ready, we can jump to a resource roundup after that.

49:21

But, Fionnuala I don't know if you were raised your hand if there was a question about the triennial assessments and I just want to briefly say Oops.

49:33

Speaker 2 - Can you hear me?

49:37

Speaker 1 - Yes, now we can hear you.

49:39

Speaker 2 – Okay, so, before I pass it over to Susan Fiore for the resource round job, there was a question about the triennial assessment. So, I just wanted to let the large group now. We are working in offering webinars to all of our sponsors regarding the Triennial Assessment of your local school wellness policies. We have reached out to about 50 sponsors to offer some webinars and in February and then we are planning some in March. So, you will No one will be left out. Everyone will be invited. We're just doing it in stages based on some preliminary work that was done by the Red Center, but everyone will be offered. The tools and the worksheets that we've developed with the red center to help support your accomplishment of the triennial assessment.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

50:28

I am going to pass over my screen and let Susan Fiore take over the resource roundup.

50:34

Susan, are you ready? Speaker 5 - I am ready.

50:37

I'm just going to share my screen, okay.

50:46

Can we see it?

50:52

Speaker 2 – Yes, yes. Speaker 5 - Thank you. Alright, yes.

50:55

Speaker 5 - So, good morning, everybody. I just wanted to take a few minutes to walk you through our COVID section of our Child Nutrition webpage where you're going to find a lot of resources to assist you with implementing the USDA waivers. And we did highlight one of the resources, the comparison of operating the different programs. And I will take a look at that in a minute.

51:17

But I just want to click in to our webpage.

51:29

And give you a little bit of guidance as to where to find things. There are a lot of resources on this page, and it keeps growing every day, so I know it can be a little confusing sometimes to figure out where things live.

51:42

But at the top of the page, there is a little blue box that has some guidance as to the different sections, and that's where you can find the information that you're looking for. The key information for this school year's under Operating Child Nutrition Programs for School Year 2020 21.

52:00

And the resource that we just highlighted in School Lunch Tray, the comparison chart, is here. And I'm just going to click in very briefly to show you if you're looking for questions. And let me just make this a tiny bit larger. If you're looking for information on questions about the types of requirements for your specific program, whether your SSO or SFSP, you're going to find that information here. And so it's very helpful to give you a little bit of guidance regarding the requirements between the different programs. They're not all the same. So in terms of anything you need to know about eligibility, to meal patterns, to operation times, and so forth. So if you're not familiar with that chart, take a look. You're going to find a lot of information. They're available for you that will help guide you in terms of implementing those USDA waivers.

52:52

So, I'm clicking back out.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

52:54

And, the next thing I wanted to highlight on this operating Child Nutrition Program section is several resources that relate to waiver implementation. Again, I'm not going to click into all of them, but I just wanted to show you where they were, information on bulk foods.

53:09

So, if you've, you're implementing your program in providing meal components to children and parents, then this is the resource for you.

53:19

It gives you some considerations to look at in terms of how you're going to implement that meal service, and another valuable piece of information that was highlighted last week by Susan Alston, with some information on food safety. And you can find that here. There's a ton of other information on this page and I know we want to leave time for some questions at the end so I won't click into all of these resources but just know there's a lot of information here for you. And if you're looking specifically for the waivers that are needed for your program, those are here as well.

53:52

And one of the things that I wanted to highlight for you, because, again, this section is very long, if you're looking for specific section on the waivers, you can click in right here.

54:03

And it's going to list all of them for you, all the current USDA waivers, as well as what sponsors must submit to the CSDE in terms of waiver applications, so that information is there for you.

54:16

And one of the other things that may be valuable up at the top of the page, we have a chart on some of the questions that are out of questions and answers from USDA.

54:27

And what that, what this chart does is, let me just make this a little bit smaller, so you can see the entire chart.

54:38

So, what this chart does is it tells you for each of the USDA memos that have been released with questions and answers on how to operate the Child Nutrition Programs, which program they apply to. So, if you haven't taken a look at these, these have a lot of guidance specific to the waiver implementation as well, and those should be very useful to you, and then, at the bottom of the page, there's all the specific waiver information, for each of the programs. I think somebody had asked, you know, where they can find this information, and it's all here. You can click on the specific program that you're operating NSLP, SFSP and SSO and CACFP will click on SSO, SFSP and SSO for example, and we'll click down and it'll show you all of the information that's available regarding the waivers that are currently being allowed for school year 2020-2021.

55:30

And at the very bottom, I'm going to skip over it, there's a list of the waivers that is submitted to USDA, but at the very bottom, there's also additional resources as well. So a ton of information here, this is just a real quick highlight, but if you're looking for something you know, please feel free to reach out to us, we'll help you find where it is, and, again, a lot of resources here.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

55:53

So do take a look. Okay and I think I'll turn it back to you Fionnuala. So, if anyone has any questions, we can get those answered.

56:03

Speaker 2 – Okay, thank you, Susan has a wealth of information on that page. Just to clarify, we do not want you to submit waivers for items that you've already submitted waivers for, so you need to look at your documents. And then we recognize that this was a few months ago, but we kind of went over in detail, those waivers that potentially you would be submitting at this point and, and necessary for a paper application. That would be the home delivery under the non congregate feeding and also the mealtime flexibility is a separate application. Those other applications live on this website, but we are not asking that. You repeat your efforts. We're asking at this point to indicate a site level, How those on the implementation of those waivers there and have any questions come in? I think Shannon was monitoring the questions.

57:04

Speaker 1 - Yes, we do have a couple of questions, but we only have time really for a while, and I think this is one that is probably a circumstance a lot of folks are facing right now. So the question is for the non congregate feeding pickup and mealtime waiver. We're focusing on the site, not the students correct?

57:23

So the situation is that if there's an elementary school that is closed and they're not offering meals for consumption off site in that school, but the students can pick up meals for offsite consumption at another school. We would checkoff not participating for the elementary school four numbers, 4 or 5 and 6?

57:44

Speaker 2 - That is correct, I think this is based on the site implementation of the waivers at that site.

57:52

This is indicating on the site and I do understand that it get confusing because, in the beginning of the year, we were talking about students when we were talking about implementing NSLP waivers. So, for this guidance and what we're collecting, this is site level data regarding implementation of the waiver.

58:10

So, Caroline, do you concur with that? Yes, this is site level information.

58:18

Speaker 4 – Yes, I agree.

58:24

Speaker 1 - Great, great, great answer. Thank you so much. So, we have run out of time today. We know this was packed with, really, incredibly useful information, and we're so excited that we can friendly, allow you to, to streamline how you're telling us what you're doing. By being able to open this module up to you at the site level, to capture all of these different moving parts and flexibilities at the site.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021

58:48

I just want to remind folks that if you look in the School Lunch Tray and see where the tape where you register for Table Talk, you will also see a link to submit questions. You can submit those at any time, that link does not go bad after Table Talk concludes, so certainly send those, and if you didn't have an opportunity to submit your questions now.

59:08

And thank you so much, everybody, and just a huge shout out against my team, who is best state team, anybody could ever wish for, that thank you, all for all that hard work that you're doing.

59:19

And thank you to everybody out there for everything you're doing, and certainly, take care of yourself. Stay, stay. Stay warm, not in the mountain, the Mountain Time zone. Stay with us on the East Coast, but have a wonderful, wonderful rest of your week, and weekend, and we look forward to seeing you next week for Table Talk.

59:39

Speaker 2 - Bye.

## School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: February 11, 2021



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

This document is available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/School\\_Lunch\\_Tray\\_Table\\_Talk\\_02\\_11\\_2021\\_Transcript.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/School_Lunch_Tray_Table_Talk_02_11_2021_Transcript.pdf).

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of age, ancestry, color, criminal record (in state employment and licensing), gender identity or expression, genetic information, intellectual disability, learning disability, marital status, mental disability (past or present), national origin, physical disability (including blindness), race, religious creed, retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, sex (pregnancy or sexual harassment), sexual orientation, veteran status or workplace hazards to reproductive systems, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes.

Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Levy Gillespie, Equal Employment Opportunity Director/Americans with Disabilities Coordinator (ADA), Connecticut State Department of Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 505, Hartford, CT 06103, 860-807-2071, [levy.gillespie@ct.gov](mailto:levy.gillespie@ct.gov).