

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

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

0:05

Speaker 1 - Hi.

0:06

Thank you so much for joining us for today's School Lunch Tray Table Talk on this beautiful Thursday afternoon of School Breakfast Week, so also Happy School Breakfast Week for all of you joining us today. I'm Shannon Yearwood with the Connecticut State Department of Education, and I am joined by my fantastic team and the Child Nutrition Programs unit.

0:26

So as you have joined us before, you know we will go through every topic in the School Lunch Tray, take a deeper dive into those topics, then we will round out the rest of the webinar with our resource roundup where we help you find the resources you need, that we have and how to use them. Um so keep in mind, this also is our, our virtual office hours for you.

0:50

So if you have questions, type them into the question box, ah certainly submit them in ahead of time. We always include a link to be able to submit those questions in the School Lunch Tray that is issued each Wednesday.

1:03

Um and so certainly don't feel limited for having to stay to those topics for the questions you asked.

1:08

With that said that doesn't mean we'll be able to answer them all today, so certainly just let us know what's on your mind, and we will do our best to get back to you. If there are individual questions that seem very individualized, we'll reach out to you after this, after this webinar at some point this week to make sure that we are in communication with you, but certainly submit those questions to us, and let us know what you need help with. I'm going to go ahead and get us started with the very exciting news about the nationwide waivers that were just released this week.

1:41

So you are, right trustee navigator, if you can get to that section that would be great.

1:51

Thank you. So, there are eight nationwide waivers that were released.

1:55

And really what they are doing is allowing a lot of the flexibilities that are, that you're implementing right now the school year when you are operating your seamless summer option of the National School Lunch Program or the Summer Food Service Program.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

2:10

These, these, these waivers really will allow you to operate in that same way through the summer. So, we hope a lot of you will continue to, continue your operations there this summer when we all know that just because school and doesn't mean that hunger does.

2:25

So, one of those, the number 74 is the meal pattern flexibilities for summer.

2:32

It just wanted to point out something very important about this one, it does allow Seamless Summer Option sponsors to continue to opt into meal pattern flexibilities, but it does not extend to Summer Food Service program operators.

2:48

So you should definitely, if you are a summer food service program operator, get prepared to whichever your meal pattern, and I ask Caroline to be my lifeline on this pattern. Inside and out, in case you have any questions or in case, you want to point out some of those different.

3:04

So Caroline, if you If you want to add on to that, you can certainly do so.

3:12

Of course your screen froze, but in a lovely way though it says she gets back on.

3:17

Um well, let's let her go that, and so it does allow you to continue your non congregate options. Are you back, sort of.

3:28

Second, you're back.

3:32

Speaker 2 - I'm going to try. I don't know what happened to my computer all of a sudden. As you can see, as Shannon said, the meal pattern flexibilities that have been an option to have for NSLP and by um extension to SSO, they do not apply exercise have been related to vegetable subgroups, whole grains, or the need for multiple types of milk, and none of those would apply to the SFSP meal pattern. And so, I would just encourage any of you that are participating in SFSP. Um if you have concerns about the meal pattern, definitely reach out to either myself or Terese, whoever has been working with you on your application.

4:26

And we can just explore which meal pattern you want to use during the summer, if you feel like it might be an option if you want under SFSP but, the meal pattern flexibilities will not apply under SFSP. So, let us know if you have questions.

4:46

In fact to that, it will be an issue for most of you. Speaker 1 - I think were having a little bit of technical difficulty, Caroline, you're going in and out. I think if you're having a little bit of technical challenges with us being able to hear you.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

5:12

Alright, so I'm gonna ask Caroline to come back on when she's able to. Fionnuala, if you're able to speak?

5:19

Everybody's disappearing. We're keeping, we're keeping you on your toes today and so um.

5:24

If Caroline comes back and it's able to be heard, we'll certainly ask her to go through that again. Otherwise, we will cover this additionally.

5:30

Next, they are you look like a little more clear, so obvious that we are cutting in and out a lot so I don't think folks were not able to hear your theory.

5:41

Speaker 2 - Okay, I'll try again. I'll make it really brief that as Shannon said, the meal pattern flexibilities that have been an option up until this point beginning with July 1st will no longer be an option for SFSP.

5:57

The meal pattern flexibilities that we've had, questions about where people that have had concerns about have really been related to vegetables, subgroups, whole grains, and the need for multiple types of milk which would apply to the NSLP meal pattern and not to the SFSP meal pattern. So, I don't expect that we will have as many of you that are having concerns about the meal pattern flexibilities.

6:24

But if you do, just reach out to myself or Terese, whoever has been helping you, with your application approvals, um so that we can get you from here before the summer arise.

6:35

Speaker 1 - Thank you, we heard it all that time. That, alright. So, the next the next waiver is the non congregate waiver. So the good news is for both of us is that if you are already operating the non congregate waiver at a site that you plan to continue this summer, you don't have additional paperwork.

6:56

If you have a new site or if you're not implementing that non congregate option and you would like to, you will need to indicate that into our system, the CNP online system, please do, do not select them, just if you are. If you think you may use them.

7:12

Only if you are implementing the waiver flexibilities, is when you're going to indicate that into the online system.

7:18

But, as I said, the good news is for non congregate for those sites already approved for it, they can continue in that way, into the summer.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

7:27

The Nation, the next Nationwide Waiver, allows parents and guardians to continue to pick up meals on behalf of the children in their household.

7:34

Again, that's one that, if you have already been approved by the state agency, that's us, to be able to operate that flexibility at one of your sites, that can continue, without any additional, without additional paperwork from us.

7:50

The Area Eligibility Waiver is a little bit tricky. We have some questions submitted to USDA on what exactly we are allowed to do as a state agency.

8:00

Certainly stay tuned, we hope to have additional information on that one available in the near future. So, once we get our questions answered, we'll know a little bit better about how we need to administer that.

8:13

So, the meal service time restrictions are also going to continue into the summer through June 30th, and if you have already been approved at your site to be able to use that, you will get we'll be able to add those approved sites.

8:27

That does not mean that you do not need to establish a timeframe.

8:31

You still need to do that but the restrictions around when you need to serve them or how much time needs to elapse, depending on the program you're operating are those flexibilities will remain.

8:42

The Offer Versus Serve Flexibilities for Summer Food Service program has expanded as well through the summer, um, as is the ability to allow you to use Area Eligibility to establish closed enrolled sites, instead of needing two to collect income eligibility applications from each individual child participate.

9:05

Um we are, and then, the last one that was released was the waiver to waive the first week site visit in the Summer Food Service Program for those summer operations.

9:17

I'm curious, and Caroline can certainly talk with you about what that exactly means. If you have questions and you have any sort of quirky situation, come up, and want to know, does this apply to me, certainly reach out to them for some technical assistance.

9:30

We do know that there's a couple of other waivers we would like to see, and we think you would like to see.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

9:34

So, we are working with USDA to see if we can also secure those flexibilities, so stay tuned. We hopefully will have additional information on that in the future.

9:46

So with that, I'm going to pass it back over to Angela, who's going to walk us through the next section.

9:57

Speaker 3 - Thanks, Shannon.

10:00

Alright, so, um, we're providing information about distributing meals during extended school break, so this will be on potentially spring, great coming up, and um we wanted to give you some guidance on that. So just the same as it was with winter break, that you do need to get a pre-approval from the state agency if you are looking to serve more than one week's worth of um food. But this is for the Seamless Summer option. And the Summer Food Service program only, this flexibility of providing meals during spring break or school breaks does not apply to the National School Lunch Program, or School Breakfast Program.

10:43

And we really just wanted to um this time around, not just indicate that you need to reach out to the State office. For the Summer Food Service program. You'd reach out to either Caroline or Terese, and then for the Seamless Summer Option or Teri or Susan Alston and myself.

11:01

Well, we wanted to make sure that even if you are serving less than a week's worth of food for spring break, which you don't need pre-approval, you do need to consider a number of options. So we've provided you some guidance here and some resources on, and we encourage you to take a look at that.

11:22

So I'm just going to briefly make note here, or point out the second bullet, and we went over this at length during the January 25th School Lunch Tray that any meals being served in a non congregate way, you are required to provide instructions to the students, to help the students and the parents identify how to refrigerate, cook or heat those.

11:49

So we have a great, we have him for a link to the extensive review of those requirements and then we just recently put together wow, a document to support.

12:05

What were things to consider, so this is just example strategies for food safety and then also examples of the instructions you need to provide.

12:15

So again, anyone serving in a non congregate arm, non congregate meals are being consumed off site and need to need to provide instructions.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

12:29

So in addition to that, we do need to ensure program integrity for quality of the meals and we have some information on bulk feeding for non congregate and I'm actually going to go over that in detail with the resource roundup.

12:47

And then, the last thing here is that really, um whether you're serving more than a week's worth of meals, or just a few days, you, it's very important, and required that households are informed of the availability.

13:02

So you want to make sure that your um website, the way that you communicate out, the distribution of meals in may switch up now, for spring break, for these extended breaks, You need to include all of the information um listed out here.

13:18

And I will say, as a state agency, for winter break, we've posted those districts and schools that had open sites, that were serving over spring break, and we directed the community to the um your website. So you really need to make sure that your website is um up to date with all of the information regarding distribution.

13:45

And again, if you are considering serving more than one week's worth of meals, um you do need to contact the Department of Education and get pre-approval for that.

13:57

That's it for extended breaks in school meals. I'm just going to cover the next item on the School Lunch Tray, which is the Inter School Agreement.

14:08

So, this memorandum goes down annually.

14:11

And this provides you with the template for the Interschool Agreements and gives you all of the information that you need. There are two types of Interschool Agreements, we have the Full Service Interschool Agreement, and then we have the Recipient Site Interschool Agreement. It's important this goes out with the Healthy Food Certification information because if you're eligible and you enter into an agreement with a school that you potentially would qualify for Healthy Food Certification, meals that we do need to get them in before July 1st. So, again, these are the Interschool Agreements.

14:50

The information is, is right in the memo, the templates, the links to the, the two forms are there. But I just wanted to make particular um note of the July 1st deadline for the Full Service Interschool Agreement. If you are looking to avail of the Healthy Food Certification option for the school that you would be entering into that agreement.

15:21

And I think that's it for the two items I was going to cover, and next, we're going into um Healthy Food Certification Statement for school year 2021- 22, Susan Fiore.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

15:37

Speaker 4 - Hi, everybody. I just wanted to give you an update that we finally do have the Operational Memorandum out about our Healthy Foods Certification Statement for the upcoming school year, 21-22, and just as a reminder, this applies to all public schools that participated in the National School Lunch Program. It does not apply to private schools, or RCCIs.

16:00

So for all public schools, and do participate in the National School Lunch program is, you know, you have to submit annually, your HFC Statement to the Department of Education. And what this entails, is having your board vote prior to June 30th, of this year, so that you're able to submit that statement by July one. And I would strongly encourage you. I know we're a little late this year, but to get that board vote scheduled as soon as possible, because it's really important for you to be able to get those minutes and have everything ready to go as soon as we open up the CNP System for the HFC application. And that usually happens sometime in early to mid-May, and we will let you know. So basically, the operational memorandum contains everything you need to know, and there's really three key things for you to consider, and those are outlined, right here in the School Lunch Tray, and the first one is that everybody that participates in the National School Lunch Program.

16:54

It's a public school, has to vote on the healthy food options. And the operation memorandum, that we shared with you has some very specific information, and you must use that language. That's really important, to make sure, that that language is reflected in your Board minutes. And in the motion, that you present to them as well. The second consideration is that if you vote yes to participate in HFC and about 96% of you usually do, then you need to vote on food exemption.

17:24

And that allows you to sell foods that do not comply with the State Nutrition Standards and in an event that occurs after the school day or on the weekend, but not from a vending machine, machine or school store.

17:36

So if you want to have those occasional sales of foods, don't meet the standards, then your Board must have that exemption in place.

17:44

And then the third thing to consider is the beverage exemption. So, beverages are a separate state statute. They're defined under Section 10-2212 of the Connecticut General Statutes and Healthy Food Certification is a different statute altogether. So, if you're choosing to allow beverages that don't comply with the State requirements, you must also have your Board vote on the beverage exemptions. So, those are the three key things.

18:08

And if we can just click into the memo Fionnuala, I just want to show folks briefly what those motions look like and they're all there for you. They're outlined, they're very specific. Let's scroll down a little bit. You'll see the first one on the bottom of the first page, which is the required

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

vote for the healthy food option and there's the most social language, you literally copy it and paste it into your board motion.

18:32

The next one, if we scroll down to the second page, is the food exemption language, and again, copy it and paste, and as I mentioned, uh at last week's School Lunch Tray, if you choose to combine foods and beverages, you may.

18:49

And in that case, there is a combined food and beverage exemption which allows you to only have 2 votes 1 for participation in HFC and one for food exemptions.

19:01

So that just kind of makes it a little bit quicker to get through those motions on your, at your board meeting.

19:08

So, if we can scroll back to go back to the main page, Fionnuala. I just wanted to let you know that this information did go out to all of our e-mail groups yesterday for our school nutrition programs, and also this morning, it went out to all HFC Business Managers, as well as HFC Food Service Directors and District Contact. So everybody should have this information. And it's important that you co-ordinate with your school team, just to make sure that everyone's on the same page, and that this language gets into the emotions and a board meeting that occurs as soon as possible, but no later than June 30th of this year. Any questions? Please feel free to reach out to me if something's not clear and let me know.

19:54

I think that's it.

20:02

Speaker 3 - Alright, thank you so much, Susan.

20:05

Um oops next we have USDA Foods update, and Allison Calhoun White. Are you going to join us for that? Speaker 5 - I am, I just wanted to mention before I start that I'm gonna jump off after I finished a couple of things we're going to update you on USDA Foods. So please feel free to type in any questions that you have while I'm talking, and I can talk really quickly at the end if anything comes up. And of course, if you think of questions afterwards, just e-mail me or Monica, and we will get back to you.

20:39

So, um the first thing this week is the reminder that tomorrow deadline took place USDA Foods, direct delivery and processing orders per school year 20-22. Yes, we are already ordering for next year, so I did spend a couple hours this morning reviewing the order, so I think everybody that has taken the time to put those in so far.

21:01

And after I review the orders, I sent a targeted reminder e-mail to anyone who had not placed orders as of this morning.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

21:08

I've heard back from a lot of you that either you're working on it or you got them done, so thanks. I appreciate feedback on that as well.

21:15

Um one note I wanted to talk about is if you are planning just on using DOD, please go in and check to make sure that the allocations are correct in web supply.

21:28

And there are detailed instructions on how to order, run reports, you know, check if your DIDS correct.

21:35

And the original announcement that we sent out about ordering on February 10th, I also put those in the reminder. And if you can't find either of those, um you can always find the web supply manual on our web page.

21:49

And we did take the time to really, look, share, and update it, and there was a lot of information in there that we didn't think was necessary because we really wanted to streamline things, and make ordering and, you know, running reports as easy as possible.

22:04

So, hopefully, anyone who's using that will find that really helpful, okay. Um if you pick onto the next time, you're already there, okay? So, the next thing that I'm going to talk about is, we did post the list of excess USDA Foods for March.

22:20

And Fionnuala if you could scroll down, I could actually show them that list really quickly, please. Yep, so, this is the list, so please only order the items that are listed on here.

22:35

So, to kinda give you guys a little bit of background, we, HBC, doesn't have an ordering system that would allow us to transfer inventory for one RNA to another.

22:49

So last year, when we realized that there were going to be problems with all of the menu changes with COVID, we just kind of created a system, you know, working with SERC, and it was the best system we could come up with.

23:02

And the little time that we had, and knowing it wasn't going to be a permanent system, so we understand this is not the greatest system, there definitely are limitations to it, but we specifically put a um list of inventory that we have available in every month.

23:18

So, please just order the things that you see on this list every month, okay. Um once these orders come out, you have one week to place your order.

23:29

So orders are due Wednesday, March 17th, which just happens to be Saint Patrick's Day. Um and I wanted to kind of clarify a couple of things about orders.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

23:39

So, what if you place an order, and you get an e-mail back saying, we are unable to fulfill your order, that entire order is going to roll over to the following month, okay, but if you get even one thing fulfilled from your order, that entire order will not rollover, you have to start from scratch, okay, so again, the system has its limitations, it's not great.

24:05

But um just keep that in mind, so that if you were also told that you didn't get an order fulfilled, and then the following month, a new item came up, you can in addition, you can additionally order that new item, and then we will kind of order those two orders together.

24:25

So probably clear as mud, but all of this is specified. Yeah, where there's all of the details.

24:32

Know, all of the information that you'll need to place the orders.

24:36

And, again, I'm here for questions now, if anybody has any questions, or on an ongoing basis.

24:44

So, one other thing I did want to mention too is the donation form, so if you're looking through your inventory and you find it, you just can't use everything that you have, certainly those donation forms, and anytime that you want, that does not end here, but I'm just kinda adding that to this, um so, we'll take that on an ongoing basis. There's no deadline for that, there's no specific time. Whenever you realize it, put those in, and then that's going to go up, for offering that next month when those orders.

25:16

So, um two big takeaway tomorrow, USDA Foods Orders for 20-22 and next Wednesday, Saint Patrick's Day, the orders for this year, the excess foods.

25:29

So that's it for me. Are there any questions that we've, that have come in?

25:34

Speaker 1 – Um so there are not questions around food distribution. So we just want to give a last call out, if you do have questions on that, um we will give you another just uh to be able to indicate that in the question box.

25:46

Um and of course if you submit questions and Allison's not on, she's got another commitments she needs to meet.

25:53

We can, we will certainly make sure that Allison and Monica received those questions after the Table Talk as well.

26:00

And if you saw me shaking my head no, that was just to let my kids know not to come barging into the room right now. That was not intended for you Allison in the background. But I'm not

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

seeing any other questions in the question box around food distribution, but we'll certainly follow up with you, if there are additional ones.

26:20

Speaker 5 - So thank you so much, okay, thanks, bye everybody. Speaker 1 - Bye.

26:26

Alright, so I'm up next so this, that worked out pretty well. So just a reminder, we're going to, our official stop for questions, is when we transition from Table Talk into Resource Roundup.

26:37

So, once we have covered our final item and School Lunch Tray, we will go ahead and answer some of those questions that were submitted ahead of time as well as the questions in the box though, certainly, um, enter those questions in, and again, they don't have to be specific to what the School Lunch Tray asked us what you need to ask us and we'll do our best to answer.

26:58

So, there's a resource that is linked here, that is a really neat resource developed by our sister agencies over at the Department of Public Health and the Department of Social Services of Connecticut.

27:09

Um, all of these nutrition programs are really meant to create a nutrition net that, that is there to support households um in the most flexible way as possible.

27:22

And so to the, the really key programs to fighting hunger are the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP, otherwise, a very long time ago, now known as Food Stamps, and then also WIC, which is the program, especially nutrition program, for women, infant and children.

27:41

We are working with those, both of those agencies, to develop another resource that I hope to be able to share with you in the near future, um that will also incorporate how school meals really play into this.

27:52

So when you look at that resource, it's one that you may want to make available to, the households that you are serving right now, as many of those household might be eligible for these benefits, and may not know that um they might be eligible for benefits. And, or they may be receiving these benefits, and may not know exactly the best way to maximize those.

28:12

So, these resources are pretty neat, and they really go through what you, um what, what you need to know, in terms of eligibility, and so, one of the things I learned about SNAP and WIC is that if you receive Medicaid insurance and that in this context, if HUSKY A, C, or D, then you SNAP benefits, or are Temporary Family Assistance benefits.

28:36

You are also eligible to receive WIC benefits.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

28:38

So that's very closely tied to how those how, if somebody is receiving SNAP benefits, TFA, or HUSKY A.

28:47

We are able to directly certify them for free or reduced price school meals. So we're hoping to be able to come up with a quick fact sheet around that, too, and make sure that folks know that school meals are a huge part of being able to make your budget and to eat and still meet your nutritional needs throughout your household.

29:04

So certainly check that out, send it out to make it available to your household is just a really great resource for everyone.

29:11

So, with that, I'm going to ask Fionnuala to come back on and talk about the, all the things we have to celebrate for this month and this week.

29:20

Speaker 3 – Okay. Thank you, Shannon. Yes, so we just wanted to recognize that march's National Nutrition Month and for this year, the theme is personalize your plate.

29:31

Um, many of you are probably doing some great things out there around National Nutrition Month. Obviously, there are many challenges, but we do. We have heard that many students are back in person, um, so maybe you have some, some good activities um to highlight this, this National Nutrition Month, if you're looking for some more ideas, um eatright.org has some wonderful examples.

29:56

There's a list of 40 different things to pull from and to celebrate all of food service personnel during National Nutrition Month, and also always the School Nutrition Association website of Connecticut, will have some links there, as well, and some ideas.

30:14

We also wanted to make note that this is National School Breakfast Week, and it's certainly not too late to celebrate that many of you are starting breakfast in schools that you never served breakfast before. So, um again, those two websites could potentially give you some more ideas as well. And then lastly, we just wanted to say Happy Registered Dietician Nutritionist Day um to all you RDs out there, that was yesterday, and we know that we have many dietitians working in school nutrition, and so we wanted to say thank you and um for all that you do.

30:54

So, yes, we have a lot to celebrate here in March, not just Saint Patrick's Day, um so, many things are going on. Alright, oh, and then next we have um an update, I think Terese is going to be talking about the Hunger Free American Summer Associate Program, Terese. Speaker 6 - Hi, good afternoon, everyone. I also want to wish everyone a Happy AmeriCorps week.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

31:24

Um as you know, AmeriCorps provides um volunteers, um the network is of local, state, and national service programs that connect volunteer's opportunities in their community, and areas of focus are environmental, public safety, health, Homeland Security.

31:44

Um AmeriCorps is very important to me, it's the domestic version of the Peace Corps for which I served, and my sister was also an AmeriCorps volunteer. Today, I want to speak to you about the opportunity through the Hunger Free America's Summer Associates Program, um where you can request a VISTA Summer Associate to work with, with your community.

32:08

The AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Associate Program offers individuals the opportunity to become engaged in a community through existing AmeriCorps VISTA project for either eight, nine, or ten weeks during the summer.

32:22

So, here on the School Lunch Tray, there's some information on who to contact if you're interested in finding out if you can host or be involved in having an AmeriCorps Summer Associate.

32:34

And um you can you know, we use this link for the e-mail for that, Vicky Dumbuya uh the VISTA Director, and um she could probably provide you a list of Connecticut organizations that, do currently host bouncers.

32:55

I think next is going to be covered by? Speaker 1 - Definitely not covered by me, but thank you Terese. I'm gonna go ahead and we're gonna break for questions quickly.

33:10

So do you have submitted questions in the question box?

33:13

And then we're going to go ahead and start with the questions that were submitted ahead of time.

33:18

So, one of the initial questions is around the child nutrition, emergency operational costs. So, we are aware that this was discussed during our conference this past week, or perhaps there was this week. And so, just wanted to remind folks, that we did, as a state agency, we did apply for that, that application was due on February 25th. We were, we had it submitted.

33:43

We have just received word in the last couple of days that are out, that our initial application was approved, so we're thrilled about that. Our next step is that we as a state agency have to develop what they're calling an implementation plan. That is due on April 26th.

34:00

And so we have not received USDA guidance yet or the actual plan template, so we are not able to move forward with that at this point.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

34:08

Once we do submit that, and it is approved, we will be hosting a webinar to be able to explain to you how the, how the formula works, how the funds will be calculated, and how you can expect to receive them. Prior to that, I do not have additional information for you, so we will update you as we go. Um we are pretty excited that we were able to get approved for that, so we are moving forward with that full speed.

34:38

Um another question is, where can we find past recordings at the Table Talk webinars, and so, this is a great opportunity.

34:45

I'm also going to ask if Susan Fiore can join us again, since another question came in around Healthy Food Certification, and so one of the things I want to remind you of is our tremendous Program Guidance that is put together and, and it's available on our child nutrition pages of our website.

35:01

If you go to T for training, you'll you will find the table talk, a web page that we've developed that has all of these recordings and transcripts and links to the School Lunch Tray and summarizes what was in those School Lunch Trays.

35:18

It's a tremendous resource, it is a ton of work, and I very much appreciate. To that theory, is going through that.

35:25

It's definitely a really great resource for everybody.

35:29

So certainly, if you can't locate that past Table Talk, or the last School Lunch Tray and yet, you really know you need it. And we sent something out in January, visit that webpage, and you should be able to locate it.

35:41

Speaker 4 – Shannon, it's also under, it's also under S, for School Lunch Tray from Program Guidance as well.

35:47

Speaker 1 – Perfect, and that's why I was going to ask you to come on for that.

35:51

The next question is, and if you want to expand on any more of the Program Guidance, feel free.

35:57

But the next question is if you have a board policy for beverage exemptions do we, we don't need to do the vote every year for beverage exemptions.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

36:05

Is that correct? Speaker 4 - That is correct, if your Board has voted to allow beverage exemptions as part of a Board policy, that policy remains in effect until such time as the Board decides to change it, that's not true of food exemptions.

36:22

They are required as part of the annual HFC Statement every year, so you can get away with having beverage exemptions is part of your Board policy, but not food exemptions.

36:35

Speaker 1 - That's great, thank you, that's extremely helpful information.

36:38

So that's all the questions we have for right now, but certainly you can keep submitting those and we'll take another pause at the end of the resource roundup to make sure that we can address those questions as they come in through, with that Fionnuala resource roundup is up.

36:55

Speaker 3 - Okay, and I was a little late, but I brought us to Program Guidance and I clipped T I think for training, and then School Lunch Tray.

37:05

So all of both webinars of what started the beginning of January for the School Lunch Tray Table Talk are listed out here with the topic. Speaker 4 – Fionnuala that's fabulous, or, I can just also, just give a little bit of input onto this, if you scroll down just a little bit. I wanted to share that, were mostly up to date, if we go all the way down to the bottom, You're gonna see that some of the transcripts aren't there yet. But we're working on it, and I also wanted to share a quick tip for how to find what you're looking for on this page.

37:39

So if you right click anywhere on the page, you should be able to bring up the um find all, or perhaps it's not in the right click, okay, then go back up to the top of the page and there should be the find, find bar.

38:01

Thanks, um, well, I'm not seeing it my version. You can right click and then you can click find on this page. Yes.

38:13

Speaker 6 - This is Teri, what if you go over to edit and it says file. Click on edit and see if it's there. It's all depends on the browser that you're using. Yeah, under ended up at the top, edit?

38:27

Speaker 4 - Yeah, fine. Thank you, Teri. So edit, edit, yup, then find on this page, there we go, and then you can type in the search bar at the bottom, where it says type here to search.

38:45

You can type in a keyword, all the way down to the bottom of the page, Fionnuala, you see it, bottom left, where it says type here to search.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

38:54

I'm, I see title up here, or find gaps, sorry, just. Type, you know whatever it says, you wanted to search for each USDA Foods and it'll highlight all of the things on that page that apply. Sorry, that was a long way around the barn, but it's supposed to save you some time eventually. So however you do the find in the search on your webpage, if you use that, that'll help you get to where you need to go and see what's out there from School Lunch through pretty quickly.

39:25

Speaker 3 - That's fabulous, I didn't or wouldn't even think of that feature, I would be skimming over and reviewing the whole page. So I don't use that frequently. I know it exists. But just going over that is really helpful thank you Susan, thank you Teri. Speaker 4 - Thank you Teri. Speaker 3 - Teri, because I'm always like where do I find that? I needed to be able to do when I was in the office, but here now, but thank you.

39:48

Speaker 6 - Yep.

39:49

Speaker 3 - Okay, so I think I'm going back to the School Lunch Tray, um, alright, let's see, I think, we're back to the School Lunch Tray and for this week, for the Resource Roundup, was really something to help support those sponsors who are considering serving over the extended break. And if you are looking to do that and looking to potentially serve in bulk, we really wanted to point out this document that was put together.

40:29

Maybe the beginning of this year, and I'm trying to get to the document. Just wait a moment.

40:47

And these are considerations if you're considering are bulk sizes for non congregate eating.

40:57

Again, know, sometimes it can be overwhelming when you're looking to do this, but you know, maybe this time around you are more comfortable, and you know that it would be a benefit for the families, and you have the capacity. So, this document here really just kind of talks you through.

41:19

Looking at, are things to consider for the logistics, you know, or do you have the capability as a sponsor to be able to, to provide this, looking at families? Do they have the opportunity to, to be able to store, you know, all of these items when you're thinking about bulk.

41:38

How much time is it going to be, then, you know, as far as showing how it meets the meal pattern and breaking everything down to show the sufficient quantities for each of the meal components? So documentation is key. You would need to put some time and worked with a few sponsors, who were, who for remote learners, are serving, or in bulk, and some items. And it really does take a little bit of time to be able to, to work through that. To ensure that the number of days that you're providing involved for that student meets all the requirements, when you're looking at the daily and weekly requirements for the meal pattern. So it is not a quick and easy

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

thing. If you are considering to put some of your food items to serve them in bulk. And again, this document here really has everything you need to consider.

42:31

Food safety and sanitation encourages you to potentially reach out to the local health department. So, again, um it's a one page document, but for anybody considering it, and if you are serving more than a week's worth of food, probably a good idea. You know, when you think about the milk alone, you really want to be serving um the small containers, or, you know, would it be more beneficial at this point to be able to provide that, and is it available from the vendor. So again, this is a good document to kind of talk you through all of the different areas to consider with bulk feeding.

43:12

And that's it, nice and simple for the Resource Round up this week.

43:20

Speaker 1 - Thank you so much, Fionnuala, that's great.

43:22

Um, it's really, you know, the Food Safety piece too is so, is so critical to the, to being able to provide those meals in bulk, so really, really great resources that we have available here.

43:35

So, we can either wrap up early or you can submit your questions. I'm not seeing any additional questions in the question box, though.

43:46

We certainly will give you a few more minutes and while you think about if you have questions, I just want to give you a quick update on the Pandemic EBT 2.0. So, we are working on that, making sure that those benefits are administered soon, and so we know that it was very difficult to collect income eligibility applications this year.

44:07

So we, are, there will be one more round after we, after we get these initial benefits out to households.

44:14

There will be an, excuse me, an additional wave of benefits that we will be providing through our partners, at the DSS, so you will have an opportunity to, to do another push for income eligibility applications, and make sure that, that information is relevant and up to date in our PSIS system.

44:35

So if you have kids who might be eligible for that benefit, are missing out, because they didn't submit that income eligibility application, and you're participating in summer food this year and making all your meals available for free. Your families do have another opportunity to make sure that they are submitting that to you, as that will be critical for many of them in determining that they are eligible for EBT benefits.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

44:59

So we are working on a series of outreach materials for this to help guide you. It's a lot more complex this time than it was the last round.

45:10

There's a huge factor around learning modes and attendance and different benefit levels. So we are trying to break it down as it is in a straightforward of a fashion as possible, so that you have the resources you need when your household start asking you questions around that Pandemic EBT benefits.

45:28

So certainly stay tuned, as soon as we have that information finalized, we will make it available through the School Lunch Tray as well. And we will take some time on a future Table Talk to walk you through that as well.

45:40

We do expect that the first round of benefits will be issued sometime in early April, through potentially mid to late April, and then again at the end of the school year.

45:51

So, stay tuned, we'll give you more information on that. Um and I'm not seeing any additional questions. I may have scared all of you by talking about pandemic EBT. Let that raise your typewriter, um typewriter that kind of came out of nowhere. But certainly if your questions to us using that link that is contained in the School Lunch Tray, it does not timeout.

46:14

So you can certainly, if you wake up early in the morning and you just have a question you can't wait to submit to us, certainly just use that link and edit and we will do our best to cover that.

46:23

Several of you have submitted questions that have inspired us to include more resources and information and go through that on these webinars.

46:31

So we do have one other question that popped in here, so that is, uh, will Monica is joining us and she will be able to cover this question for you, So will we be able, I'm having a hard time speaking today.

46:46

Will we be allowed to use our commodities received for this school year for our summer program?

46:55

Speaker 7 - That's a great question. Once you've reshaped it in your warehouses in your store rooms, that is certainly something that you can consider doing. We don't specifically designated for that, but certainly, it can be used that way. That would be your, your product that you bring in it. Not DOD, DOD is a hard stop at the end of June and only those who participate in the other program, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program excuse me, the SFSP Summer Food Service Program pilot of DOD can continue to use it. Um, but the other product, yes.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

47:31

Speaker 1 - That's great. So hopefully that's going to help you be able to support your summer, your summer food programs into the summer by being able to use those commodities.

47:42

Thank you so much, Monica, and I'm not seeing additional questions. So, the great news is, we are giving 11 minutes back to you during this day, and I hope you take those outside, so that you can enjoy this gorgeous weather.

47:54

Thank you so much everybody, for all you're doing, and we will see you next week for our School Lunch Tray Table Talk.

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 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_03_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:

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

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: March 11, 2021

- (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.

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.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.