

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: May 6, 2021

Presenters: Speaker 1 – Shannon Yearwood, Speaker 2 – Susan Alston, Speaker 3 – Allison Calhoun-White, Speaker 4 – Susan Fiore, Speaker 5 – Caroline Cooke, Speaker 6 – Fionnuala Brown, Teri Dandeneau, Sean Fogarty, Terese Maineri, Andy Paul, Hostess – Michelle Rosado

0:04

Speaker 1 - Hi, and Happy Friday Eve, as I prefer to call Thursdays. I am so delighted that you're here to join us for our School Lunch Tray Table Talk from the Department of Education.

0:14

Um I am your hostess this for this. This is, I am Shannon Yearwood I'm the Education Manager with the Child Nutrition Programs, and I am joined by my amazing team of people who just accomplish absolutely unbelievable things every single day.

0:30

So, you can see them here, know that as we're going through this, they're going to be off screen for a large amount of it, but they are here.

0:36

So if you have questions, if they have things to say, to a pop in.

0:40

You've been part of the table talks, though, we like to keep them as conversational as informal as possible.

0:45

So, you might see a few events appear as we go.

0:49

But I do want to remind you that we do use these table talks as a form of virtual office hours.

0:55

So even though we take this opportunity to take a deeper dive into the School Lunch Tray Newsletter, which, as a reminder contains very important information, we only send you what we know you need to know to operate these programs.

1:09

And so, make sure you pay attention to that. But we also know that you get a lot of e-mails. And so it's not always easy to absorb everything. So hopefully, the table talks are helpful to you, as we take a little bit of a deeper dive into them.

1:21

With that said, we do not limit the topics to this, to what topics are in the School Lunch Tray. So if you have something on your mind. We saw a lot of you are starting to really use that. Submit your questions ahead of time, link. Thank you so much for doing that. Certainly keep doing that.

1:37

That really helps us know what kind of resources, kind of technical assistance you may need from us.

1:43

Um it also helps us know what questions you're dealing with out in the field.

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1:46

We don't know that unless you let us know, so certainly submit those questions, using that link at any time. It doesn't go bad. It never expires, though, you find it in this School Lunch Tray on our School Lunch Tray Table Talk page. You can certainly just click on that. It's easy to use.

2:02

The other opportunity we have here is for our question box, so certainly as we're going through, something pops into your head submitted in the questions.

2:11

What we will do if I remember to do the timing right this week, as right after we go through the School Lunch Tray topics.

2:18

Before we dive into resource roundup, I'm going to do my very best to remember to field questions then if I neglect to do that.

2:27

We do need to end a little bit early today. Some of our colleagues are also going to be using this platform in a few minutes after we are.

2:33

So we're going to shave, shave a few minutes off the end, but just because we aren't able to get to your questions, just keep submitting them because we have future table talks we asked them on.

2:43

So that said, I also want to wish all of you Happy School Nutrition Professionals week. And we know we it is called Nutrition Hero Day Tomorrow. So you are our heroes. We are so honored to be part of your team as you navigate this very strange times and make sure that um kids still have access to those nutritious, well balanced meals and that you're still following all the rules.

3:07

So thank you so much, and with that, I'm gonna go ahead and pass it along to Susan Alston.

3:16

Oh, you're on mute, Susan.

3:20

Speaker 2 - One day, one day I'll get this ready to go. So good afternoon, everyone. I'm going to kick it off with the first thing in the School Lunch Tray. So we just wanted to bring your attention to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web um site Safety and Distributing meals during COVID-19. So, this has been out there for a little while, but, yeah, if you haven't seen it, and it's definitely worth looking at. Um they kind of go over some different topics, if you haven't clicked in there already. Talking about meals that are eaten away from school. Meals eaten in school.

3:52

They give you some good mitigation strategies for keeping your staff safe during um pickup times, and while they're preparing food, things like that. And also goes through some of the different meal distribution model, grab and go, drive thru, those types of things. One thing that we just want to caution you about, or just to mention.

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4:13

As you read any resources, whether it be USDA guidance, um CDC guidance, ICN guidance, we always want you to remember that you need to kind of cross-reference that to what the CSDE has provided and guidance for what we're doing as a state. Sometimes it's a little bit different as far as what we are um asking you to do after the fact.

4:34

So while a lot of things may be allowable, we may just need a little bit more for you. I'm going to bring this up for you, because one of the examples on the page, or from the CDC talks about, you know, a way to mitigate.

4:47

You know contact and exposure to other people and possible know what you want to could possibly do a week's worth of milk at meals given to the parents, right at one time, while this is allowable.

5:01

And we know that as CDC, just, like we did during spring break or winter break, require a little bit more information to improve you, to be able to do so.

5:11

We want to be able to make sure that the items that you're providing to your families, want you to think about the menu, food, safety, and all of that stuff. So as you're kind of looking through this guidance, think about those things.

5:24

Um we may have provided guidance that we, we want you to reach out to us for that, we need additional things.

5:31

Two of the other things that just come to mind as what you might see and have to do with home delivery and meal pattern. We do have an extra step type application for that.

5:41

Just so that we're aware of what you're doing so that we can make sure it's compliant and we would approve you to move forward with those. If you're thinking, oh, I don't even know where to look for CSDE guidance at this point.

5:55

You're in luck because later on in the lunch tray and part of our research roundup, Susan Fiore is going to kind of take you and show you where all these additional guidance would be, any additional applications that we have and where they're located on our website. And as always, if you have questions, you see something you're not sure how, what you're doing, please just reach out to your own, your SSO Consultant, or whoever is helping you with SFSP and we will be sure, we can help and guide you from there.

6:25

And that's it about the website.

6:34

Speaker 3 - Good afternoon everybody. Thanks Susan. Uh this week we just have a couple of quick updates and reminders about USDA Foods.

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6:42

And, believe it or not, we are nearing the end of the school year, so please plan on taking delivery of all remaining direct delivery, USDA Foods Inventory from HPC and HPC will continue on their regular delivery schedule through June.

6:58

Um all through May, we will continue to accept request to donate excess USDA Foods.

7:04

So, if you are going through your inventory and you find you just can't take delivery, you don't have room to store things or what have you, you can um submit that request to donate USDA foods form. There is a link in the School Lunch Tray to that, or you can always find that on our webpage, and it is under order and donation forms for COVID-19 related inventory at HPC.

7:28

If you're looking for that form, okay. One thing that wasn't in here, but I just wanted to update you guys really quickly, on the orders for April USDA Foods.

7:40

We realize the timing is tight, we have been working furiously to process all of these orders. We got an overwhelming number of orders.

7:49

So, um our target to have these all done should be by the end of next week, so you should be hearing from Sybil or myself, to let you know whether we were able to fulfill all your order, part of your order, or none of your order, and then that way, it will hopefully give you enough time to fulfill all of those that you got into your district before the end of the school year.

8:10

And on that note, too, if anyone has any issues with getting deliveries, just, know, talk to HPC. If you can't get anywhere with them, let me know, but they've been really good about accommodating deliveries, so, hopefully our partnership is going to go smoothly until the end of the year.

8:27

Um, I think that's it on that, and one other note, I just wanted to let everybody know, um Monica has given me permission to share with you that this week she had knee replacement surgery, so she is going to be out for about a month, so any USDA Food issues, you don't need to send them to Monica for a while and so please be patient as I'm kind of navigating this all by myself for the next month or so, and that's all I have for you. But I'm going to be on the call if there's any questions for the rest of the time.

9:01

Speaker 1 - Thank you so much. We're going to be calling your team Allison for the next month. So it is, it is a large amount, but, once Monica, it's actually stronger than ever and ready to hit the ground running, quite literally.

9:15

Um so the next topic I'm going to talk with you a little bit about, and, and before I do talk about it, I want to point out in the chat message, um tonight, the School Nutrition Association of

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Connecticut is having their Honor Palooza, starting at 5PM, where they are going to award the 20-20 and 20-21 School Nutrition Heroes.

9:37

As you may remember, right before um COVID hit.

9:40

We were getting ready to celebrate one of our very own Jackie Schipke, who, although she retired more than a year ago, now. We absolutely, she's still part of the team and honored in every way here, so please join the heroes tonight at five o'clock and help celebrate there is so much to celebrate, um and take a moment and celebrate yourselves, too.

10:03

Moving on to the topic here, I want to um talk with you a little bit about an initiative.

10:08

Now we've talked a little bit about learning over into our periods are at risk of homelessness, and we know that your districts are seeing this and you're making sure that kids have those nutrition benefits.

10:19

So our colleague has asked us to share some information. As you're aware in the American Rescue Plan Act, there was, there was some funding that is available to help districts be able or not just districts, but to help be able to identify children or youth who are homeless.

10:35Um provide wraparound services and help identify different ways to help children and youth engage fully and participate fully in school activities.

10:45

So before we issue a grant to make this available, we really wanted to solicit some ideas from the field and get some of your thoughts. So, if you can share this blurb with your friends, with your colleagues, make sure that, if you are working with your, well, I know you're working with their homeless liaison in the district because you have to, for our programs, certainly sunlit to them. And maybe they have some ideas of other folks who might have some creative ideas. But really, it's an information gathering opportunity to help shape how we, at the Department of Ed will make that grant opportunity available to achieve the goals that are outlined here. So, pretty straightforward um you can certainly contact our colleague, Louis, if you have additional questions. He is amazing and great to talk to, so I certainly can help you navigate any of your McKinney Vento questions and any questions you have around children who are experiencing homelessness.

11:37

So with that, I'm going to go ahead and pass it along to you Susan Fiore.

11:46

Speaker 4 - Okay, thank you, Shannon.

11:48

Hi everyone, so the next update is about Healthy Food Certification, and submitting the information for the current next, school year 21-22 and you should have received information on this earlier in the week. We send out an operational memorandum a while ago, and this is the follow up that gives you instructions on how to actually submit the Healthy Food Certification

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Application. And as a reminder, HFC must be submitted by all public schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program.

12:24

So really the key thing to remember is it's a two-step process and when you're trying to get your school system ready to go to get the HFC Statement going, there's two things you have to do, and the first one is enrolling the district in the 2021-22 application for school nutrition programs. This has to be done before the HFC statement can be entered into the online system. So, it's critical to know that the claims preparer is the person who does this step, and then once the claims preparer has enrolled the district in the 2021-22 application, process for school nutrition programs, they stop. They don't do anything else, their role is done.

13:08

The next step is that authorized signer, either 1 or 2, completes, certifies, and submits the HFC statement. The claims preparer cannot complete this process, so, it's really important to remember that there's these two steps. We get a lot of questions every year, about why we can't go further in the process.

13:28

We can't enter our application, and that's why the claims preparer enrolls and authorized signer 1 or 2 submits. So there's a lot of resources to help you understand this process.

13:40

We have instructions that we sent out with this e-mail, and they're outlined with snips, so you can very clearly see what to do. And we also have guidance in the Apply section of the HFC webpage.

13:53

There's also a presentation on submitting your application, as well, that helps you walk through that process. So an important reminder is when you go in, please just complete the HFC module. The system is not yet open for your applications for the next school year. The CSDE will notify you at the time that this is available. So until then, just go in and complete the HFC module and please do not do any other activities in the CNP system with next year's enrollment until you're instructed to do so.

14:29

And certainly, if you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me about the HFC application process.

14:39

And the next item is our new webpage, which is Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID.

14:47

And up until now, all of the resources and information that apply to Child Nutrition Programs have been located on our main Child Nutrition Programs web page. And the information has really outgrown the webpage because there's so much in so many resources. And we know that people have been struggling to try to find things. And it really seemed to make sense to put everything onto one webpage and make it a little bit easier. So, the goal of this new webpage is to make it easy for you to navigate and find the resources that you're looking for in terms of implementing the requirements from USDA for operating school meal service during COVID. A

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couple highlights this, and we're going to get in and take a look in a little bit, but the webpage does address all of our Child Nutrition Programs.

15:37

So, it includes information for the School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Seamless Summer, the Summer Food Service Program, and the CACFP, as well. So, not all resources on this webpage will be applicable to all programs, but everything is clearly defined in terms of the programs that it applies to. So, it should make it easier for you to find the resources that you're looking for. So, we will take a few minutes and a little bit to actually go through the webpage and take a look at how to find things. And I would encourage you to bookmark it, because you're going to be needing a lot over the next year in terms of how to implement and meet the requirements for the waivers under our current public health emergency. So, with that, I will pause and turn it back to Shannon for the questions and then we'll come back into the Resource Roundup and dive into the actual website.

16:33

Speaker 1 - Thank you so much, Susan, And I was, I was actually going to remember that time, so, I really do appreciate the reminder, and we did have questions submitted ahead of time, so, well, I get those queued up and while you enter your questions into the question box, ask Caroline to combine and give you a preview of foreshadowing update, that wasn't true, but it will be very interesting for you.

16:59

Speaker 5 - I know you are all probably looking at your calendar for next week, and feeling a little sad that you didn't see a School Lunch Tray Table Talk schedule there. Terese Maineri and myself, has stepped in to fill that void in your weekly calendar with the SFSP training launching next week. We are, unfortunately, not going to be together with all of you for our annual summer meals, kick off with snow in the background, the way we traditionally do. So we have shifted to the virtual world for our annual summer meals training, that's going to be split up into some more manageable chunks, then sitting you in front of a computer for four hours. So we're gonna do a series of five webinars that will be very exciting and entertaining and captivating lunch next week. So, I'm just jumping on to let you know to keep your eyes peeled for an e-mail coming out in the next day or two with that registration link, and we are very excited to see all of our SFSP sponsors there.

18:06

Speaker 1 - Thank you so much, Caroline. And if our virtual platform allowed us to have virtual backgrounds, we would probably put that snow background up just in honor of that was happening for the SFSP training or somewhere.

18:19

Uh so, we do have some questions here, and I do think that those trainings are going to be great. It's gonna, we are going to record them, like we do. These will make them available.

18:28

But we do want these to be live, so that we can actually talk with you, hear your questions live, and all of that, and then play along now, that day.

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18:38

But if it does, well, just remind ourselves. We're in Connecticut, where you just never know what you're going to have.

18:43

Teri said, in Connecticut, where there's like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get. I'm sticking with that. All right. So, I will go through the questions first that were submitted ahead of time. And I asked my team members to come back on to be able to help answer these.

18:59

Because I answer them and make them nervous, and then they have to come on anyway, like it works.

19:05

Though, the first question I have here is, can we have some guidance about the need to cover food as students walk through a cafeteria? Do all foods need to remain covered?

19:15

Then, the subsequent question is, if the students leave the cafe to eat and another area, must the food be covered?

19:24

Speaker 2 - Okay, so I'm going to take this one. So, with my food service or food safety um background, and there's no particular regulation relating that I'm aware of relating to the cafeteria and food leaving the cafeteria.

19:39

So I'm not sure if this is coming from a directive from your health inspector or the um your public, I can't think what are the local health departments, sorry. If it's coming from your local Health department. So you would really want to reach out to them, if you haven't already, because each jurisdiction might handle things a little bit differently and how they are interpreted, interpreting the FDA Food code or the and food code because we're still kind of juggling.

20:08

So definitely reach out to them if you already have. You want to reach out to me, like, just, we can kind of talk about what this or what, you know, where this came from or if it's just a question. You know, from the principal or a superintendent or wherever we can possibly. I could try to get some more information on how to best guide you from there.

20:33

Speaker 1 - Thank you. I was not very fast on my unmute that time.

20:37

So the next one, I will field, so this is in regard to the very long title in Child Nutrition Programs, Emergency Operating Cost Reimbursement Plan. So, somebody had submitted a question asking about timing on that.

20:53

So, USDA did provide additional guidance to State agencies, and with that additional guidance did move the deadline for the submission of those to next Monday, May 10th.

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21:04

With any luck, we will be submitting ours or the end of today, so we, we are on track to be able to continue to do that. So once our implementation plans have been officially approved by the USDA, then we will start to make some more of that information, specifically on what to expect, when to expect that, how the calculations were done. We'll walk you through that. So there will be that training opportunity for you and to ask any questions. But we want to make sure that you know we are working on that. We are on track for it, and we will make sure that we give you the information as we are able to do so.

21:40

The next question is, if a district decides not to offer summer meals, can they still operate SSO for school year 21-22? It's a great question.

21:54

Speaker 6 – Okay, yeah, anyway the answer, yes. So, the answer is yes.

22:02

So, you don't need to operate on the Summer Food Service Program or SSL during July and August to be eligible for the flexibilities for school year 21-22. So, you can opt in and we will be sending information out.

22:20

I'm not going to say, near future at some point in the future as far as that process.

22:25

Speaker 1 - Thanks so much, Fionnuala. It shouldn't prohibit your summer, though.

22:34

Speaker 5 – I was just gonna say, before the question even comes. Obviously, there is going to be a transition that needs to take place for our SFA's that are operating SFSP. And so, have no fear, we will not forget you. We will have some additional work to get things ready and laid out for you.

22:55

Speaker 1 - Thank you. So, we are working really hard to make sure that we are taking into account all of the new guidance that came, or the new wave of flexibilities that came out. USDA did, right after our table talk, last week, was able to update state agencies a little bit more, provide us some guidance that, when we go through our Resource Rounds up, they'll point out a few of the things that we learned on that webinar as well.

23:18

Um and, then, we also, so, as USDA, provides us some more guidance, and I know they are just tremendous, and making sure that we have the information we need. So, just be patient with us while we figure out exactly what that will mean for you, and operating here in Connecticut.

23:33

As you know, we have our own state rules, regulations, local rules, regulations, and the way that we um are able to administer the program in our state.

23:44

So, one of the things I always like to remind everybody is that the USDA has the enviable position of having to create one policy that fits all 50 states or territories.

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23:55

So when you read the waivers, when you look at the guidance, the Q and A is the flexibilities, please know that you will hear from us on how that will work in Connecticut.

24:05

Because what works here may not work the same as it does in Hawaii or California or any of those other places that have beaches too.

24:12

So the next question we have is, um, okay, so this one definitely for me this is around the pandemic EBT and I am sure more up here have additional questions on this program.

24:25

So, are PSIS Coordinator, so, that's the Public School Information System, that's the way that the Department of Education is able to capture student and school data.

24:37

So, if our, excuse me, our PSIS Coordinator has said that there are no plans for any further updates for the PBT data that was uploaded in February, Parents have called DSS, which said, there will be further updates.

24:52

Um this is, this is definitely a great question. So pandemic EBT is a little bit different. I know we've talked about this, another table talks. And if you missed our March 25th one, certainly check that out on our table talk training page where the recording lives where we really talk through some of those differences between the first round of Pandemic EBT, this row and this round of Pandemic EBT.

25:15

Though we are aware that some districts do need to correct the student attendance data that they submitted to the Department of Education for purposes of being able to reconcile any sort of benefit levels that were determined using that data. That we do have PSIS is open right now.

25:37

There is a memo that should be going out to superintendents, variation shortly be able to share a little bit more instruction as to how to correct that data. We are offering that opportunity for districts to able to correct it back all the way to the date from the beginning of this school year forward. And so please make sure that your superintendents are aware that that communication will go out. Once it officially does go out. We will share it with you as well so that you're on the same page.

26:07

We know a lot of you at the Food service department are fielding questions around benefits for Pandemic EBT.

26:13

Some of them do live with you because they're there with the flexibilities. We were able to operate this year.

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26:20

A lot of districts were not able to successfully collect income eligibility applications for free or reduced price school meals and there are eligibility determinations that we, that are made specifically from those applications.

26:33

So, some of those will go to you, but when it comes to whether or not a child was learning remotely, or in person, that's the data that is used to set the benefit levels. And that will live with your data manager, or, whoever your PSIS Coordinator is for the district. They may be able to answer some questions, in case there's any sort of questions around attendance.

26:54

So certainly, we are offering opportunities for districts to correct that data.

26:59

Um, what are the other questions is, will we be, be required to continue to collect Meal Application eligibility information for non directly certified students participating in Seamless Summer Option next year.

27:13

Another great question. Um we don't know the answer to this yet. So the USDA is aware of this being a question across the board and has indicated that there will be some guidance coming out on that on the Pandemic EBT side of the house. There is a large push to continue to process those applications and to get them. So we have to do a little bit of work around trying to collect those applications.

27:39

You can collect them at any point in time in the year and certainly let us know we are also encourage you to check out our Pandemic EBT page that lives on our sister agencies website at the Department of Social Services.

27:52

We are constantly updating that with you, with questions and answers, so certainly check that out if you have some questions. And if your question is not on there, let us know what it is, because then it might get on there with an answer.

28:05

Um another question is are waivers number 91, number 95 and number 96, the only waivers applicable to CACFP for the 21-22 school year?

28:17

Those are specific to CACFP. There is. There is another one that talks about area eligibility and I don't know exactly which number that one is around the at risk program, so bear with us. We are working on trying to figure out some guidance for that. But that is very specific to the Child Adult Care Food Program at Risk Afterschool Program.

28:41

Those other waivers, are 95 and 96 are definitely CACFP only ones meal pattern and the other two are monitoring. So, certainly, we do have another one that it also, as part of. So, that was, that was all of our questions that was submitted, were submitted ahead of time.

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29:00

And it looks like we have a couple of questions in the in the inbox, and I get to be on the hot seat on this one, too. So, this one is about state match. I may have missed it, was state match discussed? It was not.

29:13

But I am so delighted to share with you that we have received the much anticipated USDA guidance for that, and we are working to turn it around.

29:23

So, those should have this state match ready to go out in the very near future.

29:28

So, I'm very excited to be able to be to be able to say that. So Susan Alston, who is on my team is really, really the heart and soul of helping figure that out.

29:39

Huge shout out to her for helping navigate through this very strange time and make sure that we can get those state match payments out in a way that really makes sense for you as operators.

29:49

So the next question is, if you don't normally serve over the summer and are currently SSO, do we need to do anything?

29:58

Nobody wants me to answer that one. Speaker 6 - Okay. Alright, so we're actually in the process of sending out an informal survey to, to engage on how many of our sponsors are looking to operate in July and August.

30:12

But after that, we will be, yes, you will need to formally, um, let us know, in the online system, so we'll send out instructions on that. So, the process is for those SSO sponsors that operate in July and in August. You would need to get approved. The online system gets updated approved by the state agency, would make sure all the federal regulations are being followed, so that will happen.

30:36

As always, but we obviously are looking to see how many more participants or sponsors we're going to have for this year to be able to plan out a nice path for the State agency and getting those approvals done in a timely way, supporting our sponsors providing training. So, as a service is going to go out, you'll get some um information or will gather some information and then a more formal instructions will be sent out as far as what you need to do in the online system.

31:08

Speaker 1 - Thanks so much Fionnuala.

31:11

So we hopefully will be able to get that out, that I'm the roadblock on that at the moment, trying to wade through. So hopefully, we can get that out by early next week. And if I put it on a recording, you know, it's going to happen.

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31:27

So we can we can go ahead and move into the Resource Roundup, but I just want to around Pandemic EBT. I just wanted to mention a couple other things that some of the districts we have been thinking have found to be helpful information.

31:40

So, we are still in the process of issuing the Phase One Benefit.

31:45

So some of you are fielding calls around why didn't I get my benefit? My neighbor got, I've got the benefit, my kid at the same school. So, keep in mind, we have to calculate attendance data and learning more data in order to actually figure out which benefit level that they're eligible for.

32:02

But the rest of that, for the rest of the children who are eligible, they will still receive that. But it will be this month. So, if they haven't heard anything, or haven't received a benefit by June, certainly have them reach out to DSS to check into that. But right now, just know that it's been a little bit longer of a rollout process that had been ideal. Just because of the complexities around administering this round of it, though, we know you're fielding those questions, hopefully, with the next, in the next couple of weeks. People were eligible get those benefits, and some of those questions will end.

32:38

Another question that districts are getting are, what about those kids who moved and you're doing the right thing, telling them to make sure they update their address with the Postal Service.

32:47

What you need to know is that when we open PSIS, I asked that back in June or up again in June, that will also be to update addresses, the only data that we can use for the Department of Social Services.

33:00

PSIS the data that is entered into the system, so don't give households, letters, or certifications, or documents to say, hey, we entered the data wrong because we can't accept both. They need to correct that NPS, I asked.

33:17

Aye.

33:18

Kind of a funkiness around snap is that with the so PBT pandemic EBT is actually a program under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP formerly food stamps.

33:29

And so, that has this kind of quirky rule, that if a household has moved and has that forwarding address, be in that kind of interim time, before it becomes your permanent address.

33:40

If it's a forwarding mail that can't SNAP cards, so the EBT card cannot be forwarded, so that will be returned.

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33:49

So you'll get some calls from families who will say, but we did what you said and we changed it with the Postal Office.

33:54

And we still haven't received it, have them call DSS, and they can correct their address with DSS in the meantime.

34:00

Make sure that you are entering that corrected address in June, so that well, this round of EBT finishes up in July and also for summer Pandemic EBT that those cards will go to the right.

34:14

That's all right.

34:15

It takes a long and that, I just realized that that's something that we leave, have been fielding a lot. And that's kind of a little bit of a quirk around, mailing those cards out that you just might not be aware of and could lead to something.

34:27

Now, I really mean it, we can go into Resource Roundup. And Susan Fiore and I'm going to ask our team to stay on for a little bit because we're gonna, we're gonna be as casual as we can. And a few of us have things that we want to make sure that we remember to tell you when we go through this page.

34:41

So, it's just easier if we all stay on it, signal to each other, and then you can enjoy our presence of our company while we're going through the page.

34:52

Speaker 4 - Alright.

34:53

I seem to be having a little technical difficulties here.

34:57

Speaker 1 - Hold on a second, the next screen, and you keep talking about our time. Speaker 4 - Can you see the webpage?

35:10

Speaker 1 - Yes, okay, great. Speaker 4 - So, I want to spend a little bit of time just helping you navigate this new map webpage. So, hopefully, it'll be nice and easy for you to find what you're looking for. This page follows the format of all of our pages. And on the overview page, there's a little bit of information about the current public health emergency due to COVID-19 and the information about USDA's waivers as well as the waivers that the state agency has applied to for USDA.

35:43

So, this page includes some quick links, some implementation resources, some USDA, Q&As, and information on PEBT.

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35:54

And one of the things you're going to see at the top of all of the pages when you see this blue bar, it's a quick and easy way to access all of the information on that page.

36:03

So I want to know more information about the USDA Q and A's for example, I just click, and it brings me right down to the section that contains the Q and A. So it's a nice, easy, quick way for you to find what you're looking for. Back up to the top, I just want to call attention to the different sections here. The overview, which is what we're on, the how to, has information on the waiver applications, we will click in to that in a minute. And documentation document, excuse me, Documents and Forms contains information on the USDA Waivers, both for the current school year and for the upcoming school year. It also contains the waivers that CSDE has submitted to the USDA as well.

36:49

Related Resources contains a whole bunch of information from different organizations like CDC and the School Nutrition Association and other Connecticut resources related to implementation of meal service during COVID. And then the other links are Laws and Regulations and contacts. And we'll click into all of these in a minute, but I just wanted to give you an overview of this, this bar on the left side, being able to quickly navigate to all of those sections. If you've if you've gotten to this page from wherever you happen to be, remember, this page applies to all of our Child Nutrition Programs, so probably most of you are with the NSLP and SBP, SSO and SFSP.

37:31

But it does also contain CACFP resources. So when you come from your own home page and you want to get back to it, this is where you get back. This will bring you back to CACFP or SFSP in the back to school nutrition programs.

37:46

So, just scrolling down to Quick Links, this is another easy way for you to get to the places you want to go, COVID Resources.

37:54

Here's a link to our waivers.

37:57

Here's a link to the sponsor applications, remember that the How To section.

38:01

Then USDA memos and guidance are in our related resources section. And again, the waivers for the current school year and the upcoming school year.

38:10

So, if we just click in, for example, to, the sponsor waiver applications, you're going to see the information for the current school year, and I want to emphasize to you that the information here is just for the current school year. We have not yet gotten to the application information for next school year. And that the applications that are currently here may change for next year. So the process may be different. I know that we're trying to get the applications available in to our CNP System, so that you will not have to be doing a paper application. And as that process moves along, we will let you know, and we will let you know where to find those applications.

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38:53

So one of the key pieces, whether it's this year or next year, anytime a program wants to implement a waiver is they must submit an application and must receive prior approval from the CSDE to use these flexibility. So that's a really important piece to remember in terms of the waiver applications from the waivers from USDA.

39:14

So for NSLP and SBP, we click right on, that section brings us down to our Sponsor Applications, and you can see the applications that we have in place for the current school year. And again, those will be changing for next year, but this is in place for the current school year.

39:33

If we want to find more information on what the waivers are, we're going to click on our documents and forms page. And, these are divided by the different school years, so you can see we can get to the USDA.

39:45

USDA waivers for the current school year, to the CSDE waivers that have been submitted to USDA and also the USDA waivers for next school year, so that's all on the Documents and Forms page.

40:00

And then clicking into Related Resources, there's a lot of information to help guide you on making the changes you need to your programs to provide safe and healthy meals during this current public health emergency.

40:15

You can see resources from the CDC, from us, Food and Drug Administration, School Nutrition Association, and then here's where you find you will see memos and guidance related to the current pandemic.

40:31

Then the last links on the left navigation bar are just two Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition programs, simply click in here.

40:40

I won't do that today, but you can see links to all of the final rules, the regulations, and other guidance related to the requirements for child nutrition programs.

40:51

And then the contact information page tells you depending on which program you're participating in, who you need to contact.

41:02

Yeah.

41:04

Yeah, that's a brief overview, and I know the teams here if people have questions, or if anyone needs to add anything about what, it's gonna look like with the application process. Just know that we will have it posted here on the webpage for you, we will let you know when we have

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updates and this is your go-to resource. So bookmark it and just remember that, again, that this webpage applies to all programs. So, there are some resources that may not apply to you.

41:33

One of the things that is indicated, though, if you look down, for example, in our CSDE guidance, you will see after the title of the item, the programs that it applies to. So at one glance, you can see, for example, if it's information on bus stops, its SSO and SFSP. If it's information, this promotional handout, it's NSLP and SBP. So it makes it a little bit easier for you to know what resources apply to your program, but do just take a look and make sure that you're looking at the right resource for the particular program.

42:08

Speaker 6 - And I think that's the overview in a nutshell.

42:12

So, you definitely covered.

42:15

Speaker 1 - Can you just scroll down to the little chart that you have to?

42:20

Speaker 6 - Of course, I just want you hovered over that a little bit.

42:22

Speaker 1 - I just really want to point that out anything, if you can add on to the Screener, cutting, part of it off. But this is a really, really, really good, quick reference to, so that you can just jump on here and, and know that, if this is my program, this is a Q and A, that applies to me.

42:40

I'm sorry to jump in pain.

42:46

Speaker 6 - Yeah, so what I was just gonna say is Susan covered it all fine. You know, just to re-iterate, when under documents or is it under how to their, she identified that, the documents are for 2021 school year and that's just so you don't try and get a jumpstart, right? We have a lot of really proactive sponsors that want to get their documents ready. So, what we're saying is there is no need to utilize anything on this page for next school year. As Susan said, we are trying to incorporate in trying to streamline the process now that we have been given a lot of lead time with, at the very least, the flexibilities that are going to be allowed for next year. So as we get further information from USDA, um we will plan out a process to two, as we said, make it as seamless as possible, in that you're not including things outside of the system as well. So don't get a jump start.

43:45

We will be trying to minimize the number of paper applications or outside applications for the school year 21-22 regarding the waivers and if you will be implementing SSO um in that respect.

44:00

Well, thank you, Susan, for really covering it, yeah.

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44:03

Speaker 1 - So, Susan, if you don't mind, could you please go over to that when the 21-22 waiver page, I just wanted to walk through a few of those. Speaker 4 – Sure.

44:11

Speaker 1 - Last week, last week, we did a little bit of an overview, told you what our thoughts were, and then right after that, you know, we had to move last week's time. And so, we were able to learn a little bit more from USDA.

44:23

So, I just want to get us back on track.

44:25

I got us a little bit off track last, last week with us.

44:29

I just wanted to give you some of those tips that we also have been made aware of, so, in terms of the seamless summer option, So this is, this is just something that has never happened before. So being able to operate it, not just during the school year, but being able to operate it in a way that you, as a School Food Authority can really operate at any site. That really is great, or your kids to the best of your ability.

44:57

Typically, the summer programs require area eligibility, or other types of eligibility in order to be able to operate, and so, this year, a lot of you have been able to operate using the area eligibility waiver for Connecticut, which did require you to submit an application.

45:17

So one of the questions last week was, will we be required to do that again, go through the application process? Will there be some, some other criteria we need to use in order to set that area eligibility, and I did imply that we made that it was very likely we would have an application process that we would need to collect that.

45:36

So I am happy to tell you, I was incorrect on that. So, next year that, I don't think I'm talking about the summer, because this summer, we are still operating under the waiver, so we will still have some paperwork on that.

45:48

But starting next school year, should you choose to operate the Seamless Summer Option instead of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, um that you will not have to submit evidence criteria, data, make a case for area eligibility being established in areas that would not typically be area eligible using census data. So, just know that, that is a wonderful thing. And we will be able to authorize you to do that without all of those additional steps, that burden of proof on your end, to let us know that you are really targeting those benefits to kids who are low-income.

46:27

Um one of the other things that that I wanted to also re-iterate as that USDA has, has been able to authorize June 30th, 20-22.

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46:38

So, one of the other things that we were, we're not quite certain of was, is that a hard deadline, or is that also could it and earlier, show the public health emergency that was declared by federal Health and Human Services.

46:54

If that were to end prior to June 30th, 20-22, we were not, we were not certain with these flexibilities come to an end or not, as you read that nationwide labor language, It does courage schools that once you're able to go back, bully in person and congregate safely, um, and responsibly that. That you were that the expectation is that you would return to a more regular, typical way of operating these programs.

47:24

And so, one of the, the other great piece of news I have for you is that this June 30th, 20-22 is a straight up deadline is not tied to the declaration of the public health emergency. That said, we will continue to provide technical assistance, training opportunities, conversations to be able to help you determine when is that sweet spot, when you start to really resume. Back into how programs have looked before.

47:55

Um, the other reason that really Seamless Summer Option is going to be available for you is because it really does decrease the amount of kind of incidences where you may not be able to say, safely, social, social distance. So, that exchange of money, some of the point of service stuff. So it, it really helps you be able to continue to practice those safe, social distancing measures that you've put in place.

48:20

Um, so, there is more information coming about which SFSP reimbursement rate will be used. So, that is USDA's indicated, they will let us know.

48:34

We have some work to do on our system, to make sure that if you choose the Summer Option and are claiming at that higher rate, that our system will co-operate with that.

48:45

So, certainly be patient with us here, figure out that.

48:50

Can you scroll down just a little bit to Susan? I just wanna make sure I'm not missing any of the other tips on it, talk through.

49:01

Okay, so this is: So those are really the, the main points.

49:04

So some of these, especially around the meal pattern, will require an application from you, so just know, as Susan said, we are in the process of developing that. And we will make sure that you understand what you need to do, and that you have the access to the appropriate paperwork.

49:20

It will not only be on the website, we'll send it to you in School Lunch Tray, and we will very likely talk to you about it during a table talk. So, I continue to join us for those.

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49:28

Then, I don't know if there's if any of our team wanted to mention any of the other things they may have come up, that you want to make sure that sponsors are aware of at this time?

49:42

Speaker 6 - Yeah.

49:45

Speaker 1 - Great, great expression Fionnuala. For those of you who didn't catch it, certainly watch the recording and rewind for that. And I'm kicking myself a little bit we didn't think to have blooper reels in the beginning of Essence.

50:00

We've had some technologies now the challenge of the other adventures as you're seeing some of our, our real-world life enter into this virtual space for all in.

50:12

Speaker 6 - Yeah, definitely within embedded within the recording, so I would encourage you all to go back and we started these in January and certainly you can see that peruse it at your leisure. Some glucose, throughout. No, I don't have anything further to add. I think I think you mentioned everything, and, as we get further guidance, we're going to develop, hopefully, as you know, very detailed instructions, how to move forward items to consider, and will be, you know, as needed, changing up any of the resources that this wonderful case that Susan Fiore put together here. Um, you know, it's obviously all of the documents are input from the entire team that we make sure everything is everything you need to know is in there so on.

50:59

So that was my expression. It was not really, Shannon.

51:05

Speaker 4 - I just wanted to add, we, you know, we really want this to be user friendly. So I've taken a lot of time to try to organize things in a way that makes sense. But it may not make sense to you. So if it doesn't please let me know if there's something missing. If you can't find it, if a link is broken, you know, reach out, because the more we can fix those things, the better it is for you and the easier it is for everyone to use. So please, you know, any, any suggestions, thoughts, issues let me know.

51:32

Speaker 1 - And nobody, nobody is faster than Susan Fiore, so she can fix it before you can even blink by the time you refresh your page, and it will look totally different, so.

51:44

Excellent, I learned everything I know from program guidance, though, certainly.

51:48

Certainly if you have a question, if there, and I do want to be respectful of our colleagues who do have this platform reserved for three. So they have a little bit of a chance to get on and get organized before they go.

51:59

So we're shaping their time a little bit already, but certainly, keep submitting your questions to us. For those of you who haven't been able to answer today, we will certainly follow up with

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you, or we will talk about it. After next week's SFSP training then we will have Table Talk again of the following week and will certainly go through those topics as well. So thank you so much for joining us, thanks for telling your friends and don't forget to join SNACT Celebration at five o'clock tonight and happy, happy School Nutrition Appreciation Week and School Nutrition Hero Day tomorrow.

52:33

Please celebrate, you deserve it.

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

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