

School Lunch Tray Table Talk Transcript: June 17, 2021

Presenters: Speaker 1 – Shannon Yearwood, Speaker 2 – Susan Alston,
Speaker 3 – Susan Fiore, Speaker 4 – Fionnuala Brown, Speaker 5 – Monica Pacheco
Speaker 6 – Andy Paul, Speaker 7 – Teri Dandeneau, Sean Fogarty, Hostess – Michelle Rosado

0:03

Speaker 1 - Hi, and welcome to our last School Lunch Tray Table Talk for the School Year 2021. I'm Shannon Yearwood, the Education Manager with the Child Nutrition Programs at the Connecticut State Department of Education.

0:17

Joining me today is who I like to refer to as "Team Awesome," because you have probably the best state administrators that any State could ask for, and they are right here as a resource for you to tap into. You know these are very strange times and just because this is the end of the Table Talk for this school year does not mean we are going anywhere. So certainly keep reaching out to us with your questions.

0:40

Um you guys know who your contacts are out there, who's on our team, so thank you so much for joining us.

0:45

Uh keep in mind, these at this will act as an open office hours, so certainly ask us your questions, type those into the box. We might run out of time, we have a packed agenda today, um and so that will help us be able to follow up with you. Or potentially develop some more resources that we know that that's some information that is good for the entire state, so thank you again for joining us, um and keep in mind these are recorded.

1:09

I know you have bookmarked our program guidance on your browser bars, so make sure you just go there and go out to School Lunch Tray Table Talk, or our training section, and you'll be able to find the recordings and all of the past issues there school year.

1:24

So, just a couple of quick updates before we leap into this. Um USDA did recently released a Q and A around operating meals for July 1st moving forward, into the next school year.

1:37

Please, when you run across that, and you look at it, please know that, as I usually say, and I'm going to remind you uh USDA has to create a national policy that fits for every single state and every single territory.

1:49

That doesn't always work exactly verbatim in our state as it is written at the federal level. So give us a little bit to digest that we have sent a series of questions back to USDA to make sure that we are fully understanding what the intent is and how to move forward. So don't just don't just act on the nationwide waivers. Don't just act on the Q and A's, please wait until you see some communication from us on how that can be implemented here within the context of our state laws regulations, that's just a quick reminder for you.

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2:22

Um a couple of other things, I know that folks are wondering what's happening with these Emergency operating costs, that we have applied for, and we just approved last week, or earlier this week. I can't quite remember time anymore these days, like the rest of us here. And so, we have been approved for that on our schools end, and we are just awaiting the actual funds from the Department from the USDA. Once we receive those, we have a plan to be able to turn those around and get them back out to you as fast as possible.

2:49

We will also host a short webinar to be able to just talk you through how those calculations are done, and what to look for.

2:56

Um so stay tuned. We'll send out more information on that soon.

3:00

We're still working on our Child and Adult Care Food Program, emergency operating costs.

3:05

That is a little bit more nuanced in a lot of ways. So for those CACFP providers out there who might be joining us, please know that we should have more information and updates for you soon.

3:18

So I also want to give a huge shout out to the folks over at Meriden Public schools. I just had the opportunity to be able to come back from an amazing summer outreach event that kicks off the Summer Meals Program, and we had a national speaker there from Hunger Free America, Joel Burn, a lot of you know him.

3:35

A really great discussion.

3:36

Governor Lamont came out to help celebrate and really, really recognize all of the work that you're doing.

3:43

We also had our acting commissioner from the Department of a, Department of Education Commissioner Russell-Tucker, and we had Commissioner Hurlburt, along with the CEO and President of Food Share and Connecticut Food Bank, and we had the President of the School Nutrition Association and the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut.

4:04

We had a few other folks around the table, but it was a really great discussion and great president. And so, I know a few of you, I heard from our team as I have already seen some of the live coverage, but I believe there will be more coverage on that. So what, what I do want to do is say thank you for everything that you're doing, really focused on all of the work that goes behind these programs.

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4:25

The health and safety risks that you take every day and took from the very beginning of this pandemic, um to make sure that kids never, never had to go a day and not know where their next meal will come from, and we can't thank you enough for that.

4:40

Um another quick update is are on the webinar, you'll see two different handouts, these were just recently released by the Department of Education.

4:49

We have invested 8.6 million in the ACER funding to be able to support 236 Summer enrichment programs across the state this summer.

5:00

These enrichment programs will serve 97,000 additional students over the summertime, and you can better bet a lot of you will probably be feeding those kids too. So we are here to help support those efforts.

5:12

Um that said, keep in mind, we are a small but mighty team, so certainly, work with us, read our instructions, follow those before you reach out to us, because we definitely have our hands full and helping support you and make sure that you are authorized to do what you want to be able to do for the summer.

5:27

Um with that, I believe oh, yes, the last thing I want to say is make sure that you are, so as we are working to furiously approve your summer applications, whether you're operate through the Summer Food Service Program, or the Seamless Summer Option, um, as you know, you guys spend a lot of time at the district level, writing and submitting the information, putting the information together for those applications.

5:51

So, imagine when we get them from across the state on our end, and then we provide that individualized technical assistance support.

5:58

So we may be a little bit delayed in getting some of that information, that site data out on that location finder um for summer meals this year.

6:08

So that's just reality, is how it is, it takes a while for us to take that information back out of our system, to provide it to our partners, so make sure that once your sites are approved and officially ready for action, um that you make sure to promote those on your website, to, we are going to be telling public, that they can find information at the school districts, websites too, and from the schools, as well as, our community based organizations who are participating in summer meals.

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6:34

Certainly make sure that you are publicizing your site and we will get that data out to our partners. We typically publish that as soon as we possibly, humanly can. So with that, I have taken up much more time than I usually do in this introduction.

6:48

And I will go ahead and kick us off by handing over um our presentation to Susan Alston, who will walk you through some more fantastic things.

6:59

Speaker 2 – Good Afternoon, everyone, so I'm gonna kick off the first bullet we sent out yesterday in the School Lunch Tray. I know this as much awaited, so if you haven't had a chance to look at the school lunch tray, I urge you to do so. We sent out the information on State Match. Um State Match was paid um last week.

7:19

It may have even been later that previous week, but this OM outlines the process. So every year, the uh state of Connecticut distributes 2.354 million dollars to the schools that are participating in the National School Lunch Program, um and that happens every year, and you're, if you remember, usually, it's a fall payment and maybe to payment in the Spring. Um this year because schools are operating at additional programs, right, SFO and SFSP.

7:50

Um State match couldn't be paid out as it normally would or it was, right, we had to wait for USDA to provide guidance um on how we could do that, so they finally did.

8:00

So, the memo explains um how we used to pay it and what guidelines we use um to determine how we were going to pay it out this year and to keep it on an even playing field with all sponsors of our program this year.

8:15

Um we use just the numbers for NSLP prior to um COVID, so anything that was, any counts that we had for National School Lunch Program from the start of the school year, up through um when all the schools transitioned or where they are at.

8:33

So that's all I outlined there, and I want you to just kind of make sure when you open up the OM, to be sure to scroll past, there is an attachment that with it, and this will actually show how much every district was paid out.

8:46

So if you're wondering, you know, what money funds came, and you're not sure what they were for, this is what they were for recently.

8:54

And it will say, Public State match, and in your coding for however you are paid, I mean, you can refer back to this list to ensure that the money that was put into the account is actually what the non-profits service um is was receiving.

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9:10

Um, if you have questions about this or about your total amount, you can just reach out to me, I'd be happy to kind of walk you through it, but like I said, the payments are made last week. So, you should have them. Um you know, however, you get paid.

9:27

Look for the person that gets it to you, I'm not sure how your payments make it to you, but kind of look for them because they were paid.

9:34

Um, so, yeah, that one payment this year. So, there won't be any other additional payments made and you know, quickly, we'll figure out what we're going to, how we're going to pay out.

9:44

State Match for next year's Fair Are, you know, very little NSLP count for our district as most districts did SSO or SFSP so. Stay tuned for that. But at least we got these out before the end of the school year. Let me know if you have any questions about it.

10:05

Susan?

10:10

Speaker 3 - Thank you, Susan.

10:11

So I have a few updates regarding some upcoming deadlines on July 1 and the first one is related to Healthy Food Certification. And just as a reminder, this only applies to public schools. Private schools and residential child care institutions are not eligible for HFC. So as I'm sure you're familiar by now, the deadline is July 1, and I just want to remind you that if you have not done so already, this is a two-step process to submit your HFC Statement in our CNP system. And the first step involves having the claims preparer enroll your district in the school nutrition programs for next school year, 2021-22.

10:52

And after the claims preparer does that, then authorized signer 1 or 2 can go in and actually complete the HFC Statement, upload the minutes, and certify the statement. And so that's the two step process. We get a lot of questions from folks saying, I can't get in. I don't see anything when I go in, and that's probably because you're the claims preparer. And you cannot go in and certify and finish that HFC statement. So once you've done that, just turn it over to your authorized signer 1 or 2, and they'll be able to get that HFC statement completed and done by July 1.

11:26

And, if you are looking for this specific information on, what those steps are, we do have the instructions there. The link is in this, in this blurb on submitting the HFC statement and it contains all the information you need and for in terms of the process for getting your application uploaded.

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11:44

And the next update, I want to give you, if we can scroll down, is on the Interschool agreements, which are also due July 1, in terms of the Full-service Interschool Agreement. If you are contracting with, or not contracting.

11:59

If you are vending meals to another school or district, and you have a Full-service Interschool Agreement, as you know that that site that Recipients site can choose to participate in HFC and to do so they must complete section three of the Full-service Interschool Agreement, and sign it. And so that is due by July 1, and we must receive it by July 1, if that recipient site is to be included in the districts counts for HFC funding for next school year. So you want to make sure that you don't miss that July 1 deadline. And for the Vended Interschool Agreement, the deadline's a little bit later, it's by August 30th.

12:40

Or no more than at least two weeks prior to the start of the school year. So, keep that in mind.

12:46

And you can find all of those forms on our forms webpage under I for Interschool Agreements.

12:54

And I believe that's it for me, so I'm turning it to Fionnuala, I think who's next, for School Wellness Policy.

13:05

Speaker 4 - I think so.

13:06

Okay, thanks, Susan.

13:09

So, um, USDA on Friday, June 11th, released the waiver regarding the assessment of the training and assessment of your local school wellness policy. So, as you all are aware, this was originally due June 30th, 2020, and some point in April of last year, and they push that off to June 30th, 2021, and just on Friday, they issued this waiver that now is extending the new deadline to June 30th, 2022.

13:44

So, we know that many sponsors have been working hard over this past year to complete their training triennial assessment. We have worked diligently with the writing center to provide webinars, resources, videos. We have everything available for you regarding completing the triennial assessment on our webpage, what's next, which links to and so, we are encouraging you to continue to complete that process. I know a number of sponsors have reached out to me, that they may be are at the final stages of um completing their trail triennial assessment. And our recommendation of the state agency is to, in fact, finish that.

14:31

But we know that there are a number of sponsors who might be just getting started or haven't even had an opportunity to um avail of any of the webinars or look at any of the

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resources. Certainly, this is a positive thing that USDA is now extending that first deadline to June 30th, 2022.

14:53

Um, so there's more information, if you click into it, and then also, I'm going to say that in the fall, we're going to gather information. We'll be working with the Rudd Center again next year, to support sponsors in this effort.

15:09

So we'll be gathering information in the fall to capture, where everyone is, who has completed it, who's still needs to complete the Triennial Assessment. If you have completed it, we're gonna look to see where you've posted on the results of your assessment, and, then, we'll be able to really target our technical assistance for those sponsors that need support to, to meet that, the new deadline.

15:35

So, is great for those who are already have it done, and for those who haven't, it's, it's really good as well, that USDA has recognized the need for this waiver and has pushed to push it off to next year.

15:52

Alright, that's it for, for me and, um, there is Monica.

15:59

Speaker 5 - Thanks Fionnuala. I'm just going to jump in and talk about the USDA Foods and the reminder for your final deliveries through your DOD program. The DOD program, and for the regular school year with deliveries that come in for June 30th. So this is a reminder that the last orders placed, which I believe will be June 24th for a June 30th delivery, if that's part of your schedule.

16:25

Um the, June/July 24th is the deadline, so no order should be placed after that date. Its delivery by June 30th, for the end of the school year. And it is critically important that for those of you who are getting some of these late in the year orders, um to make sure that you remember to receipt your orders, they are still required to be reseeded within five days. And for those of you who may not be doing summer feeding and therefore are out of the office, you need to make sure those are done before you leave the office. USDA will come looking for us. And then we will be trying to look for you if you have not received those last orders before you left the summer. So please remember that.

17:00

I'll sit there if we can move on to the next.

17:09

Okay, so the next point here is about reconciliation of USDA Foods by School Food authorities that have contracted with food service management companies.

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17:17

So we've also come to that time of the year where the end of year has come and this is a required step done in regulation with districts that are contracting with the Food Service Management companies to do a reconciliation of USDA Foods.

17:33

So we want to just speak briefly to the fact that there were a large number of transfers this year, um and you need to make sure you're accounting for those. And some of those transfers were out of your district. And some were in, so for those of those.

17:46

But those items that were in your district that you transferred out, because you could not use, you'll have the value of those products on your repetition status report listed there, as it was purchased. However, you also may have taken in an additional offerings that were made throughout the year, which is great, that you were able to avail of that. Um and that is why, on the receipt that you received when you had a transfer of items, it included the value of the product, so make sure that you go to that receipt. The sheet gives you your dollar value for those products, so you can account for those. Also, remember to list any additional DOD funds that you got throughout the year. Many of you took advantage of that opportunity, which was also great.

18:29

And, and very important to remember that this information and this uh reconciliation is to be completed by the staff of school, of the school food authority, this is not to be done by a food service management company staff person, and I see Andy has jumped on, that she, I think, wants to reinforce that.

18:48

So, I will let him have a final comment on that.

18:54

Speaker 6 - Good afternoon, all, um thanks for having me here.

18:57

Um, yes, I just want to re-iterate that this is a requirement of the district, and not the food service management companies. It is the requirement of the food service management companies to manage on the entire USDA Foods Program for the district.

19:14

However, when it comes to the reconciliation, this is something in regulation um, and in the contracts, for that matter, um that the district must complete this reconciliation. The actual reconciliation form was uh provided to all districts with the annual renewal documents, um, so everybody should have it.

19:37

If the SFA, I'm assuming I'm speaking to mostly food service directors here, or, maybe, there's some business managers on the line that would be great.

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19:47

Um, but if you're a food service management company staff member who's been delegated this by your SFA, unfortunately, you need to go back to them and tell them that you cannot do this, it's not your, it's not your responsibility.

20:00

You can work with the food service director, with the business manager or whoever the SFA has overseeing food service management company monitoring.

20:12

You can talk with them, and the two of you can work together.

20:17

Food service directors that work for the food service management company cannot do this in a silo, and they just hand it off to the district to sign off and submit it to me.

20:27

If you have any questions about specifically that aspect of it, um feel free to give me a call or e-mail me. I will be at the office tomorrow, but I'll be back in the office on Monday. Thank you.

20:41

Speaker 5 - And I will just add to any questions about finding the value of your USDA Foods. Please feel free to reach out to me. Thanks.

20:48

Alright, I think Susan's here for the next step.

20:52

Speaker 4 - All right, so last week on Wednesday, we sent up instructions on updating your SSO site applications and the online system. If you are continuing the summer and your sites are one or many of your sites are going to continue past the last day of school up through the first day of school. This is what we want you to do. We sat on instructions for what a nice manual, which Fionnuala is going to go over, and they be Resource Roundup portion of today's Table Talk.

21:22

So, if you haven't started yet to do that, you know this will be great, because we'll kind of give you some tips of what you need to do. Please follow the instructions in the manual, lays it out all of what we need as we approve event. At the information isn't there. It's going to delay the approval process if we have to come back to you to find information that you didn't list um in there.

21:46

One thing I just want to mention too with this is that if you indicated on your survey that we sent out um maybe I think it was last month at this point you indicated that you weren't going to participate and SSO this summer, but something has happened between then and, and your last day of school and you will be doing, and that's fine. Um you can just follow the instructions that were sent out to everybody and start that process. Also, you know, I might encourage you to reach out to your county consultant, just so that they're aware that to be expecting an application, um coming in from you.

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22:20

We ask that all application site applications that are going to be updated for the summer are in by next Friday, which is June 25th, that we can get them approved, in a timely fashion. You have questions about, you know, what sites that you want to operate, or how they can operate. Or, if you want to add a new site, reach out to your county consultant, and we'll be happy to help you with that.

22:46

As far as this, please do not start the school year 21-22 application, even if you know what that you're going to do SSO, or go back.

22:56

We have not found captions for that yet.

22:59

We don't want to create more work if you complete something that we're not asking for, and we also haven't provided the forms yet, that you're usually required for the checklist.

23:09

So I would hate for someone to use or upload them, and then us have to, you know, take them down and have, you, know, repeat your process again.

23:18

So please hold off. That will be coming next as soon as we get out of our SSO.

23:23

Waiting for the summer will kind of change gears and work toward that.

23:30

Hi, I also have the next one, which is, scroll down a little bit.

23:38

Alright, so this is really geared this year for sponsors that continue to participate in the National School Lunch Program. I don't know if you can hear, I have this huge plane flying by. I'm sorry, I apologize for that.

23:54

For sponsors that are doing the NSLP, and SBP did that all year. Did you have the opportunity program into this? If the school year was extended, um or, if they're having an academic, summer school, you may remember, we send this e-mail out every, every year for schools that may fall into this category because there is no seamless summer option available to all schools in a normal year if they don't meet the eligibility.

24:23

So, um we directed this e-mail to people that were participating in NSLP and SBP. So, if you're on the call, and you have questions about that, let me know, and I can walk you through the process, and we can get you set up to be able to do that, and to be having a claim for July and or August.

24:44

That's it.

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24:51

I think Andy is coming back on.

24:59

Speaker 6 - Here we go.

25:01

All right, so we get to talk about the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. So the new grant application is out for 2122.

25:10

Um, there was a specific e-mail sent to those districts that are eligible to participate a few weeks ago, and then we did add it to the School Lunch tray last week.

25:29

Here you can find, well within the School Lunch Tray, you can find the specific grant announcement.

25:35

It is due on the 21st, so you would go through um the instructions, which are noted below in the submission process section.

25:48

Um to upload your application, Complete and upload your application within the Coylar system.

25:54

Um, you would need, you will need a Coylar ID and password to access this part of the system.

26:04

Or you can connect with somebody who already has access to it.

26:10

We are using October 2019 data.

26:14

So, when I rank all the participants that submit applications, they will be ranked based on the 2019 free and reduced price data, not the current year or 2021.

26:30

Um this is a different program than DOD, so this is a grant funded program that provides a fresh fruit or vegetable snack during the school day outside of meal service. So obviously, it can't be before school, and it can't be after school. And once again, can't be during breakfast, and it cannot be during lunch. So when you're submitting your application and your plan on how you're going to service.

26:57

Please make sure that you review the Fresh Fruit Fresh Fruit and Vegetable handbook that's also noted below on in the bottom pit in the in the last final paragraph.

27:08

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out. Again, unfortunately I will be out of the office tomorrow.

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27:15

But I'll be back in early, early on Monday morning to assist anybody on last-minute issues.

27:24

Thank you.

27:36

So, this is going to get handed off to Monica.

27:39

Speaker 5 - Yep, and I'm here to take on. So, this is coming soon, the Nutrition allergen and Ingredient Information for USDA Foods. This is actually very exciting. I hope you take a moment to review this. I think this was actually in last week's um School Lunch Tray. USDA Foods has been working diligently for some time now to have a different system in which to assist food service directors in determining what um the ingredient listing is and what the allergen information is for our direct delivery items. You know, those the brown box because, you know, it can be a different vendor at different times of the year for the same material code, um depending on who has responded and received the solicitation, the award.

28:21

Um so, they are developing a database that is called and I just hearing about it myself with these announcement that GS one GDSN. But, basically what it is in a nutshell is going to be a database where you can go in and enter in the material code and the manufacturer. And it will be there the information you need for both the ingredient listing and any allergen information. Um it's going to be required upon the vendor once they receive an award for one of these, you know, solicitations, to have their information uploaded within a, I believe, a 30 day period so that it's available. Um so you can see they're listed that it's going to include the material code, the brand name, nutrition facts, serving size, the allergen information ingredients, and kosher certification.

29:08

There will be more information on this. They want to just get the information out that this is coming soon.

29:14

I believe their goal is to have it up and running for January.

29:19

So that solicitations that occur after January 2022, we'll then have this requirement um to include the fact that this information has to be uploaded and made available um for access by users, you folks for going into 2022. So um I think this is a great step forward. I know many of you have been very diligent about um reaching out directly to vendors once you've determined who they are to make sure you have this updated information. It is critically important as you meet the needs of your student population. And I think this is going to greatly simplify that process, and I hope to be a great benefit to you all. So more to come on that, but um great steps forward there.

30:03

Looking forward to more of that, Thanks, Fionnuala if we can move forward again, and then just a quick update of the information they're providing now that is available. So, I'll start off first with the USDA Foods available list. That is the comprehensive list, and we send that out every year.

30:19

As it is updated annually, usually late December, early January with every item that it's available through USDA Foods. As you know, we um then pare it down at your request to the items that you think you'll best utilized. Because we can't offer 400 plus items. Um but that list is updated every year.

30:37

There also is a link to that list on the Food Distribution webpage, under the Resource link, so, that's always available there, and that gives you the information of what's available every year, and also, if there's new items, those are highlighted.

30:52

So, um that's where we start, and that's usually what we include in the survey, when we say, Is there anything new, different that you want to see, we'll include that updated foods available list for you to review to make that determination.

31:04

The next thing that is always available is a USDA Foods and Schools Product Information Sheets. And we talk about these a lot, also linked under the Resource tab off of the food distribution um webpage.

31:15

This provides you with some details and descriptions for that specific material code. Um very useful for menu planning because two very important pieces that are included in that is the crediting information, as well as the um dietary specification information that you would need as you're doing your menu planning.

31:35

Um and please remember, these are considered, know, allow acceptable documentation of the crediting toward your menu planning and your meal pattern. So, these are available. And I was there for you to check and make sure you one credit incorrectly, and to have that documentation available when necessary. So, please remember that those are always available to you.

31:56

And then, finally, there's product specifications. And those are from the Ag marketing services, and this is the arm of USDA that does the actual procurements for us, at the national level, and buys those truckloads of uh product after we've placed in the orders at each stage.

32:10

So um if you are ever interested in what their specific specifications are for any of those direct delivery items, and, um or maybe you want to see what they're listing, because it might guide you in developing some of your own specifications in your procurement. Those are available through the Ag marketing services website.

32:29

So um they are quite detailed and lengthy.

32:31

But certainly contain a great bit of information if ever you need that type of information.

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32:38

So, again, any questions or needs, you can certainly reach out to myself or Allison. The links are here, but again, both the USDA Foods available list and product information sheets are also linked from our webpage. All set there. Thank you.

32:54

Speaker 1 – Hi, you get me again. So before we dive into our Resource Roundup, which is going to be a great session, I just wanted to take a moment and break for some questions.

33:03

So we have, I did have some questions submitted ahead of time. Thank you so much for doing that.

33:09

And we also do have some questions that were entered, so if you have some burning questions, type those in quickly before we head into research roundup. I'm not sure if we'll have more time at the end to answer questions or not, but if you enter them, we do retain them after this webinars, and that, and we are able to follow up with you. Um, and it also helps us make sure that we're providing you the resources and technical assistance that you need to navigate.

33:33

So, um one of the first questions, so we will go through the questions that were submitted ahead of time prior to the ones that uh were submitted just now.

33:43

So, our first question is, have we officially received word that school meals will continue to be served for free and utilizing the Seamless Summer Option of the National School Lunch Program for 2021-2022 school year?

33:58

I can answer that, but if you, of if one of my team members wants to take it, you're welcome to.

34:03

Speaker 4 - Alright, go for it.

34:07

Speaker 1 - That it's hard on this platform. You can't tell if people are muted or not, but just wait for that, that visual signal.

34:14

So, yes, we have a patiently received word that we are able to operate or authorize National School Lunch program sponsors to use the seamless summer option for the next school year. In the Q and A that USDA released last Friday, there is some different information than what we were provided in previous month, and so, we are working to reconcile that.

34:41

It does look like the seamless summer operations with the higher reimbursement rate uh associated with the summer food service program, do kick in on July first.

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34:50

We were originally instructed that would happen after July first, and when the regular school year begins.

34:57

So, certainly, this is news to us and be patient with us as we figure out how to make our system co-operate with this uh different change, and we will definitely prefer providing additional information.

35:09

So, this one Fionnuala is for you. Is it true that the local school Wellness Policy Triennial assessment has a new due date of June 2022?

35:19

And I know you uh have went through this but it's in case folks joined us late.

35:23

Certainly just do, right?

35:26

Speaker 4 – Sure, yes, I know, it is, mind blowing isn't mind-blowing that they released it two weeks before it was actually do. But, yes, they have extended that deadline to June 30th, 2022. But I'm comfortable, comfortable, and confident that, you know, the sponsors that are almost finished with this process just to finish it out um, a lot of you have done a lot of work, and we really appreciate that.

35:54

But then for those who just couldn't get to it, this will help allow you some time. And we will provide additional support and technical assistance next year because we are going to continue our partnership with the Rudd Center. And um everyone will get everybody done, hopefully, uh support you in getting complete your Triennial Assessment by next June.

36:18

So short answer, yes, it's true.

36:21

Speaker 1 - Thank you so much. So as we mentioned, that was just released just a couple of days ago. So we are working furiously to update our website to, our website resources, to make sure that it does reflect that correct date. So give us give us a few days to get all of this stuff done.

36:38

Alright. So this is a fun one. And I'm guessing Susan Alston you might want this one.

36:43

Is the, it will the afterschool snack program be available during the summer session through the National School Lunch Program, as it is currently and is there an application process?

36:55

And if you don't want it, you can kick it back over.

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36:58

Speaker 2 – I'm going to answer, based on our discussion that we had about this this week or last week.

37:03

I don't know, so afterschool snack needs, too, as far as we know, and our guidance so far and what we're going for, what and as of the last day of school, it is a program that operates along with the school year. And we have received no further guidance to say anything different from that.

37:23

Um so as of the last year or last day of school, afterschool snack, you know, stops, right, as far as what we would reimburse for.

37:33

So and so there is no further application to kind of continue that through the summer month, if you're operating enrichment programs or summer school.

37:43

Yeah, so that's not an option.

37:46

Speaker 1 - Thank you.

37:47

Then just to kind of expand on that for next school year, for those of you operating Seamless Summer Option, we know that you are wondering if you can also operate the Afterschool Snack Program. And we have the same questions. So, that question has been submitted, and not just by us, but by several states, we do have an indication that there are two more sets, a Q&A and clearance, so we are hopeful that that information will be provided in that, but we do not have any additional information on that for you for the next, or after the summer when the regular school year.

38:18

Ah, and we already did address one of the other questions about when to expect those emergency operating cost reimbursement for child nutrition programs. So, we just very recently have that approved and have not received the actual funds to get out to you, but we have everything from our plan in place and ready to go, so that we can move that as quickly as possible.

38:41

Ah, alright, so, this one is actually Susan Fiore. I don't know if you want to jump on for this one? We're going to jump over into the questions that were submitted for this.

38:51

And so, this is Do we need to wait for approval of the minutes from the board meeting when the vote occurred and submit those as well for healthy food certification?

39:01

Speaker 3 - Great question. So, know, what you want to do, is you want to submit whatever minutes you have from the board vote that occurred by July 1, in many cases. Those could be draft minutes, because, for many of you, the board votes at one meeting, and then at the next

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meeting, or even sometimes several months later, they vote to approve those minutes. We do need the final minutes, but if you do not submit them by July 1, that's okay. When I'm reviewing your application, I'll catch up with you. And I will reach out and ask you to send me your final minutes. So in the meantime, though, just go ahead and complete it with your draft minutes. And as soon as your final minutes are available, if you want to head off my questions later on, you can go ahead and go back into the CNP system when you get those final minutes. And then just upload them on top of your draft minutes, and we'll be good to go. If you don't do that, no worries. I will catch up with you. We'll get them later on.

39:56

Speaker 1 - Thanks so much, Susan.

39:58

And then we have one other question here, and that is any update on the 21 22 Meal Application documents and 21-22?

40:09

Speaker 7 - I'll take that.

40:10

Speaker 1 - Alright.

40:14

They've been revised, and they are in the process of getting approved, so that way, we can get them up on the website.

40:20

So, we are hoping to have them up next week, and we will send out an e-mail to everyone indicating um that they are up on our website and that they're ready to go.

40:33

Speaker 1 - In that, I do want to just mention something really quickly around the applications that is a little bit nuanced, but I'm talking to the right audience about that. You're used to nuances with our programs.

40:43

So, we and we know, and we have been encouraging you, and we know that you're getting a lot of um encouragement from the federal government to continue to collect those free and reduced price applications um for the purposes of Pandemic EBT. So that's P-EBT and I know that's, it's a fun adventure for all of you at the district level, as well, but it is a tremendous benefit. And so, for us, to be able to determine which children might be eligible to receive this benefit, they do need that current information.

41:13

So this is where a little bit of a hiccup comes in that, even though there is a lot of pressure, it really, to be able to continue to collect these over the summer and process them for the Summer Pandemic EBT, the, which we have just been approved for operating as well in the state, there will be a standard benefit level.

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41:34

And that, if you collect the free reduced price applications, we are leaving it up intentionally a little bit longer because of this summer pickup that we're running into.

41:44

So, with this push from the federal level, to try and make sure that households who might be eligible and just didn't submit that application, because they were receiving meals at no cost throughout the school year.

41:54

Um, we know that, that now they're becoming aware that they need to submit this free reduced price application.

42:00

That Summer P-EBT eligibility is tied to current school year, the school year 2021. So, they need to submit the free reduced application prior to June 30th, using the 2021 application, and their enrollment will be looked at from the 2021 school year. So, the other kind of caveat with that is that when you, just when you use those applications, need to determine a child who's eligible, that does not confer eligibility for the 2122 school year beyond October.

42:34

And so, we have that one, that one month rollover and correct me if I'm wrong team, but I believe that that we give our month rollover in September where you're uh where your eligibility continues until that new eligibility kicks in when you're uh applications.

42:51

Did I get that wrong, is that right?

42:54

Speaker 7 - I just want to clarify that what you said that the applications that get approved prior to July first should be on school year 2021 forms.

43:09

And any application that's received after July first should be on 2022 forms, and that's what you can use to um determine eligibility for school year 21-22.

43:22

Just remember that there is an extension of their eligibility for the first 30 operating days into the new school year, and, or until they are determined to be eligible based on Direct Certification.

43:34

All of this can be, is um discussed in the webinar, on application processing, which you can find on our website.

43:44

Um you can certainly ask, you know, e-mail me and ask me questions if you need to, that's not a problem at all. But just remember that there is an extension of eligibility. As always, it's nothing new in the first 30 operating days. Speaker 1 – Thank you. Speaker 7 - Yup.

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43:58

Speaker 1 - Which is a far better way to put it. I just say September and that's wrong, technically it's the first 30 days. Speaker 7 - It's okay.

44:05

Speaker 1 - That so just say just to keep in mind, because we know this is a little confusing with several different versions of P-EBT which is kind of simultaneously being issued at the same time. And what we don't want is to generate more household questions.

44:17

So, if you are processing those applications after July 1st for the next school year, that will not be good for eligibility for the Summer P-EBT, leave that aside to the previous school year.

44:29

Um if you want a little bit more instructions on that, certainly ask me that we are working with the Department of Social Services are continually build up that website that has all of those questions and answers on it. So, I look back at our, at our resources, where P-EBT and you'll be able to like that. So, hopefully, we can get some more clarification around that. As soon to help you be able to answer any questions for households, that might contact you on July fifth day, I want one of those applications and it's already at that point too late for this benefit. But what it will do is for future waves of Pandemic EBT um which have been authorized for any event of coronavirus pandemic public health threat, that would, that's what we're looking for eligibility for those future rounds. Should we also not be back in person learning for them or at least the next school year. I know that's confusing, it's very confusing.

45:21

But I just wanted to, to it was a good opportunity to talk about that and have it, why we why we have this a little bit of a delay here.

45:30

So that it's not as confusing as it couldn't Petitioner, can. Speaker 7 – Hey Shannon, can I just, can I just add something on because there was a question that came up about the DC, the Direct Certification Portal? Just to let you know the rollover and, we understand how districts want the rollover to be sooner than later for students that are directly certified.

45:53

And as in previous years, the Direct Certification Rollover it's not usually done until I can't even maybe early August, and the critical thing about that is it's based on the enrollment that's in the PSIS system where the State Department of Education.

46:14

So, if you're a PS, if your enrollment has not been updated, then the students that are going to be directly certified could be students that have already graduated, because they're still being shown in your system and in the system that's um at the State Department of Education.

46:31

So we have to allow time for that to happen for the enrollment to get updated, and that's why it's not done on July first, so please be patient with that.

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46:41

We will try to do it as soon as possible, but it usually doesn't take place until early August, so please keep that in mind.

46:49

Speaker 1 - That's great information. Thank you so much, um and that is an amazing segway into our Resource Roundup, which I know you're the first to be talking about. I'll pop off and let you guys take over.

47:02

Speaker 7 - Okay, um I'm going to be talking about the USDA CEP resource page, and USDA does have this great resource page, if you're interested in learning more about the Community Eligibility Provision, or if you're currently implementing it, or have implemented it in the past.

47:19

You're already familiar with it, obviously, but just want to let you know that you want to check it out. It has a great fact sheet that you can use, especially if you have people, parents, for example, who are interested and inquire about it. There's also webinars that are on the USDA web page that discuss the basics.

47:40

And then, um you know, sometimes, especially if you're close in percentages to implementing CEP, there could be perceived barriers um by people who don't fully understand it.

47:50

So USDA addresses that, and also how to determine CEP eligibility.

47:56

So if you're on the cusp of doing it, you're not quite sure if you're eligible.

48:01

You certainly can go to that and find out if you are eligible and how close you are to doing that.

48:07

And also, you may be getting questions about, well, if we do CEP, how does our Title one and our E rate funding for those schools, how are they impacted?

48:18

And USDA addresses that in a flier, and they gave you some really good tips on outreach and communication suggestions, so that way you don't have to re-invent the wheel. They try to make it as easy as possible, and they give you lots and lots of resources.

48:32

And, one of the resources is um mentioned, and it actually gives you the very basics to, and Fionnuala is showing you the CEP USDA website, and you can see there's lots of different resources that are on there.

48:51

So, um, but when one of the resources gives you the very basics of CEP, I suggest that you put it on your desktop. If you do get inquiries, you can just refer to it quite easily.

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49:03

And um it just gives you information about who can participate the background of it and who benefits from it. So take a look at it, and, you know, some of you may be thinking, well, why? I'm doing SSO next year, and all, the children are going to be eating free of charge. So, why would I even want to think about CEP?

49:21

Well, it depends. If you are current if you've implemented CEP in the past, then you want to think about, well, do I need to recalculate my numbers or my numbers higher?

49:31

Well, I get more money if I do recalculate, and even though I'm good, I won't be implementing it until school year 2223, possibly. So you still want to keep CEP on the backburner and you want to think about it. You know, it does run on cycles, and so you just want to keep that in the back of your mind, and think about whether or not it's worthwhile for you to recalculate even though you're implementing SSO next year.

49:59

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

50:13

Speaker 4 - Thanks Teri. Alright, so I'm gonna go over and see Resource Roundup that went out today, and Susan Alston talked about the application for the SSO sponsors and I'm gonna walk through the instruction manual we put together to um provide support to you. So again, this is only applicable for Seamless Summer option sponsors that are looking to operate for this summer 2021, so this is not for SSO sponsors looking for next year on how to update the online system.

50:59

So, um, with that, I'm going to go right into the manual, and we're just going to take a look at highlight some, some important things to note.

51:15

Um, so this is specific to SSO sponsors and existing sites. So, if you're looking to add a new community site, you are going to need to contact on either Teri, Susan Alston, or myself, whoever is your County Consultant.

51:31

And we will work with you about adding a new community site, but, this manual here.

51:37

It goes over how to update the online application for the Seamless Summer program, so, or existing science questions 1 through 10, you will not touch, and you need to actually know, this is showing you yes, continue to operate. Question number six is very important, so this is the address line, but we're going to use this line for you to communicate very important information about your Seamless Summer site.

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52:13

So in this line, you are going to put the start and end date of your SSO operation, your summer operation.

52:22

June, July, August, When is it going to start, when is it going to end, description of the distribution method and the meals and snacks that will be served? And as a reminder, it's up to two meals for the Seamless Summer Option and the distribution days.

52:40

So, we're utilizing this line, address line number two, because we don't have another way to capture this information. We did it last year using an Excel spreadsheet, and um the state agency entered all of the information, and it was just, it's just too overwhelming to do that at this point. So we are having sponsors enter this information for this school this summer for SSO. And um if you are operating during the summer, you need to pay particular attention to the instructions here regarding question number six, address line two.

53:20

Okay, and, um, I'm not gonna go over everything, I just want to highlight some, some areas.

53:29

Um question number 11, you're going to be indicating open or closed site. And it's important to remember that for many um site operating SSO, you're utilizing the Area Eligibility Waiver. And that's to serve meals and open sites. So we would need to have a very particular reason if you are looking under the Area Eligibility Waiver to be operating a Closed Site. It is allowable and we will work with you to ensure that your circumstances are regulatory and allowed because of space, security, safety, or control.

54:12

So please make note of that. You would be required to have at least one Open Site if you're operating the SSO under the Area Eligibility Waiver.

54:26

We also wanted you to be aware that for Academic Summer School, you must be an Open Site.

54:34

We know that there are a number of programs running, an enrichment program, which is, which is a little different, but for those Academic Summer School, it needs to be um an Open Site.

54:50

So you don't need to update the um qualifying data because that will, for any existing site, you rolled over from the school year. So if you qualify using census data, or traditional Area Eligibility as your areas, about 50% free and reduced, all of that will be in there.

55:12

Also, if you are qualified using the Area Eligibility Waiver.

55:18

So again, I am encouraging you to go over this in detail, all the questions.

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55:24

I'm just going to use the next few minutes, because I know we have until three o'clock, just pointing out, highlighting some areas in this manual, which, again, is the steps for updating your existing Seamless Summer Option sites just for the summer of 2021.

55:44

It's important that you don't like everything out. You're going to be adding your operating days, any additional operating days for June, um if your summer Program starts at some point, towards the end of June. And you'll be adding operating days in July and August, and you will identify um the end date in number 13. And so, again, you are not updating all of the information in October through May, it's just the areas that you see circled there.

56:19

This is also very important for question 16. This is extremely important if the site is an Open Site, which most of them are Open Site.

56:30

So this is where we're going to extract the information about your distribution time. So, if you're open to the public, we're going to pull your hours of distribution off of this website, off of this question here.

56:45

So, this should reflect what time you'll be distributing to the public for those Open Sites.

56:57

And that's really yeah, you do need to advertise. Those should be some information in there that is a requirement you need to certify, save it. And that is the SSO on site application that you would then submit in the online system. And either Teri, Susan Alston, or myself will review it and approve it. At this point, we have the USDA waivers available in the online system for you to identify which waivers you're going to be implementing for the summer months. So, you'll need to follow these instructions and click through clicking USDA waivers, details.

57:36

You click Revise and then, again, you're not removing October, November, December. You're going to add on the, the, the waivers that you'll be implementing, and certainly on the Seamless Summer Option, would be one that you'll be implementing. Many of you will also be implementing the Area Eligibility Waiver for July and August. And then some of you will be distributing meals. You won't be just serving meals to the students who are congregating at the Summer Program. So you may be implementing a non congregate feeding the mealtime flexibility in the parent guardian pickup that um those three work together. And so, for more information on the waivers, you can click right in here. And it gives you kind of a description as the online system gives you a description, as well. But you will be required to update the USDA Waiver section in addition to your SSO Site application.

58:34

Um and then you would need the status to be submitted, uh, in order for, or complete in order for us to, to review it and approve it.

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58:46

Some more information here, if you're looking to potentially apply for additional waivers, those are updated here as well, meal pattern, flexibility, home delivery, and you would attach it right in the system, save that.

59:04

Alright, that is, looking at the time here. I did the best I could to just quickly go over this manual. And, again, we put these manuals together, we test them out. We know, review them as a team, review them individually, and put a lot of work into putting these manuals together. Susan Alston, actually was the one who started this one, and we encourage you to use it, like, I would have this open, and I will be going step by step. And if I was the Food Service Director entering the information or the person who has access to the online system, entering this information for the Seamless Summer Option. And if I came upon a question or an area that I had questions about, that would be one I would reach out to the County Consultant, but we are putting these together for you to utilize and avail of as you're updating the system.

59:55

So, um, that is it. Oh, everybody's on. Hey.

1:00:04

Speaker 1 - We wanted to join the fun.

1:00:09

Speaker 4 - Something to add, I don't know, Susan Alston that I might have missed, okay.

1:00:15

Speaker 1 - We had one other question that got submitted into the question box. And I do want to make sure that we just answer that, because I think it's very pertinent. Speaker 1 - So one of the question is, can you confirm that seamless summer option can serve weekend meals this summer?

1:00:30

So, the answer is yes. I don't know if my colleagues are going to jump in, but the answer is yes, it, but, it will not be.

1:00:36

So although Seamless Summer Option is uh available to you to operate during the school year of 2122, there is a prohibition on being able to distribute on weekends and holidays for the upcoming school year. That is, that was part of the guidance that was just released last Friday, so we'll certainly let, you know, if any of that changes, you can just jump in.

1:01:01

Speaker 4 - I'm raising my hand arm waving. I am going to say that you need to have approval to serve weekend meals, and it needs your online system for whatever site. You're trying to serve meals from needs to be needs to be entered in there and reviewed and approved because we run into some concerns with that when people aren't really representing the number of operating days correctly. Um and certainly the system is a little different, but operating days would be the days you're intending to be having meals, children to have meals for so many of its seven. If you're doing weekends, then you need to account for that in the online system, and that needs to be approved.

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1:01:44

Just adding to what you said Shannon. Speaker 1 - And just even though I can't even speak, even though Caroline is not able to join us for the webinar today, that is also true for the Summer Food Service Program For operating this summer. If you are going to intend to serve over the weekend, you absolutely need to reflect that within your site application.

1:02:09

That is true across all of our programs. We need to know what you're doing in order to authorize for an authorized Summer program.

1:02:16

So with that, we are two minutes over, we usually give you time back. So I apologize for that, but I just wanted to take a minute to thank again, my "Team Awesome" here, who is just stellar as you could possibly ask for.

1:02:29

They are working night and day to make sure that we are able to support your operations and give you the guidance.

1:02:36

Technical assistance you need: I really want to thank all of you child nutrition heroes out there who are risking your life, your safety, your health, and so much effort.

1:02:47

And you put so much passion into these programs and you make huge difference not just through this pandemic, but every single day for all of the children you serve.

1:02:57

So, I hope that all of you are able to celebrate all you've accomplished for these last many years, um especially in the last couple of years, And certainly the summer, Take a little bit of time for yourself, and make sure that you join our other training series as we make those available to you, and we look forward to joining you in our next venue. So, thank you so much.

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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.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/School_Lunch_Tray_Table_Talk_06_17_2021_Transcript.pdf.

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