

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONAL SCHOOL

3E'S OF HEALTHY LIVING
EDUCATION, EXERCISE AND EATING RIGHT

Lunch Program

October 2023 Monthly Newsletter



Resources on SquareMeals.org

Click [here](#) for recordings and slides from past School Webinars.

Click [here](#) for archived program newsletters.

Available Now! Local Foods for Schools Funding

Don't forget to opt in for the Texas Local Food for Schools grant opportunity! This grant can help CEs establish or strengthen connections to Texas farmers, ranchers, and small businesses and get more Texas food on your students' trays. This is a one-time funding opportunity. TDA encourages CEs to **Opt-in for LFS Grant** - now before the closing date of October 17, 2023. The opt-in process is simple and TDA will support CEs with training and resources. For more information, visit www.SquareMeals.org/LFS.

Final Rule Reduces CEP ISP Threshold from 40% to 25% for SY 2024-2025

The Final Rule, Child Nutrition Programs - Community Eligibility Provision—Increasing Options for Schools, will lower the Identified Student Percentage (ISP) threshold to participate in CEP from 40% to 25%. This option will go into effect for SY 2024-2025, based on ISP data from April 1, 2024. Note the following:

- The new threshold for implementing a fifth CEP “grace year” is 15%.
- There is no proposed change to the 1.6 multiplier, so school districts should consider the financial impact of implementing CEP at a lower threshold.

USDA's Revised Menu Planner for Schools

USDA's Menu Planner for School Meals has been revised to reflect the 2022 final rule Child Nutrition Programs: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium. This technical resource is designed to help school nutrition professionals plan, prepare, provide, and market great tasting, nutritious, and safe meals. The content covers information on the following topics: nutrition, food safety, Farm to School, USDA Foods, seasonal foods, marketing and the administrative review. The resource consists of seven chapters intended to stand on their own in addition to the introduction, quiz answer key, glossary and appendixes sections.

You may access the Menu Planner for School Meals at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/menu-planner-school-meals>

Verification Timeline

The verification process begins on October 1, 2023, and ends on November 15, 2023. The Verification Report is due on November 28, 2023. Prepare for SY23-24 school year by accessing Verification Reporting Resources [here](#). CEs operating standard counting and claiming, Universal Free feeding, RCCIs with day students, and Provision 2 in the base year must conduct verification. All CEs must complete the required Verification Report. The Verification Report is in jotform, and can be found in TX-UNPS, in the application packet, and under Download Forms: SNP-123. The Verification Report is due to TDA on November 28, 2023. Click the headline for more information.

New Verification Letter Sample Templates Suite (English and Spanish)

TDA has released a new Verification Letters Sample Templates Suite (in English and Spanish) that consolidates all verification notifications, information request forms, and verification results letters into an intuitive, single document of resources. The new Verification Letters Sample Templates Suite is located on the NSLP/SBP Administration/Forms page as well as the dedicated Application Verification page, where more information is provided on each individual template. Click the headline for more information.

Updated Guidance on Meal Service during an Unanticipated School Closure

TDA has received several waivers and additional guidance about the options schools have to serve meals should an unexpected event close a school. If an unanticipated school closure occurs, schools will have the option of serving non-congregate summer meals (SSO or SFSP) if the closure occurs during October through April, non-congregate CACFP At-risk meals at any time in the school year, or non-congregate NSLP/SBP at any time of the school year if virtual instruction is occurring. Click the headline for more information.

State Reimbursement for Reduced Price Breakfast - Schools Offering Universal Breakfast

TDA has updated its guidance for schools that choose (are not mandated) to serve all children breakfast at no cost. Now, all schools offering Universal Breakfast (all students served breakfast for free), whether by choice or by mandate, will receive \$0.30 per reduced-price breakfast claimed from TDA unless the school opts out. Click the headline for more information.

Now Available! New Food Yields Added to the Food Buying Guide

New yields are now available in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Web-based (FBG) Tool and FBG Mobile App! New yield data is available for: individually quick-frozen (IQF) black beans, IQF pinto beans, roasted soybeans, roasted chickpeas, fresh oranges, grape tomatoes, and ready-to-use diced and sliced onions. Click the headline for more information

Attachment B Uploads due October 31, 2023

CEs operating standard counting and claiming, Universal Free feeding, RCCIs with day students, or Provision 2 in the base year must complete the Attachment B Upload module in TX-UNPS. CEs must answer Question 1, upload their template school meal application, application instructions, and the template eligibility notification letters used, and click the attestation at the end.

CEs that are RCCIs without day students or operate CEP or Provision 2 not in the base year are not required to complete the Attachment B Upload module.

FSMC Contract Timelines

[Click here](#) for the Food Service Management Company Contract submittal and approval timelines.

SY 2023-2024 Special Provisions Carryover Reports

An updated version of the SY 2023-2024 special provisions carryover reports is posted to SquareMeals.org.

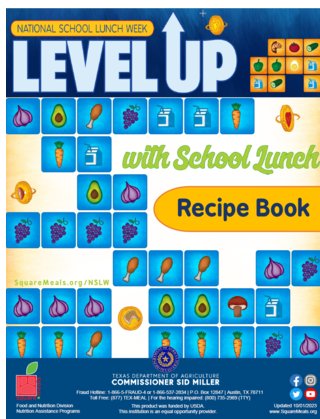
Now available: Guide to Professional Standards in Spanish!

The Spanish translation of the Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs is now available online. The Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs comprehensively outlines the USDA Professional Standards requirements for state and local school nutrition professionals who manage and operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).

New USDA Food Safety Fact Sheets!

Check out these five new Food Safety fact sheets from the USDA!

- [Food Safety Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Food Safety Information and Resources for the Farm to School Community](#)
- [Overview: Good Agricultural Practices \(GAPs\)](#)
- [Food Safety Modernization Act and the Produce Safety Rule](#)
- [Overview: HARPC and HACCP](#)



Get Ready for 2023

National School Lunch Week

It's not too late to participate in National School Lunch Week, visit [**SquareMeals.org**](https://www.squaremeals.org) for available digital items to use during your celebrations and don't forget to fill out [**our survey**](#) to share your plans with TDA! Don't forget to level up and share your photos and stories with us at [**nutrition@texasagriculture.gov**](mailto:nutrition@texasagriculture.gov) #NSLW #NSLWBiteSeenAcrossTX.



Coming Soon: 2023 Farm to School Census

Get ready - The USDA Food and Nutrition Service will release the fourth Farm to School Census in October 2023, and your participation counts! The Census is the only national survey that examines the extent of farm to school activities in schools across the country and over time. It is vital that as many School Food Authorities (SFAs) as possible complete the Census, even SFAs that are not doing farm to school. Data collected through the Census truly shapes the future of farm to school. For your reference, review the [**2019 Farm to School Census results**](#) and

explore the "**F2S Census Checklist**" to help you prepare your responses for the Census survey.

Upcoming Webinars and Availability of Team Nutrition Materials in Print

With School Year 2023-24 in full swing, the Team Nutrition initiative is excited to share upcoming webinar opportunities and a reminder to order Team Nutrition's print materials.

On Thursday, October 12, from 3 – 4 p.m. Eastern Time, Team Nutrition will present Celebrate Lunch Trays Many Ways, a Meal Talk Webinar to highlight the many ways to offer school lunch with inspiration from across the country. Register [here](#).

On Tuesday, October 17, from 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. Eastern Time, USDA's Team Nutrition will present the webinar, Level Up Your Professional Standards Tracking. This webinar will review the basic features of the Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT) and explore the latest updates to the PSTTT. Register [here](#).

Click the headline for more information.

Connecting the Pieces: Supporting the Whole Child Virtual Summit

Join Texas Action For Healthy Kids on October 24 – 25 for their annual Fall Summit. Topics covered include: parent engagement, mental health resources, physical education, connecting communities through SHACs, and youth engagement. Register - [here](#) for this free virtual event.



Turnip the Beet Survey

We appreciate your participation in the USDA's Turnip the Beet award program! We ask that all those involved with the Summer Meals Program take our short 6-question survey to help TDA understand how to best support you in the Turnip the Beet application process. **Take the survey here!**

MiPlato en Español

Celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month with MiPlato en español resources! Explore MyPlate's top [Spanish-Language resources](#), like graphics, tip sheets, and recipes! Check out the [MiPlato toolkit](#) to find meal tips, recipes, and more!

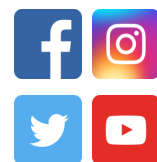
USDA Foods Ordering Updates

- August survey requests for Direct Delivery have been ordered with USDA.
- Total Lunches Served (TLS) will be updated in October, this will cause adjustments to Planned Assistance Levels in TX-UNPS and WBSCM.
- Weighted average price will be updated in TX-UNPS in October.
- TDA is now beginning WBSCM system set up in October for SY 24-25. This includes RA Account Set-Up and will be followed by RA User Access and Roles.
- October Survey to RAs to provide feedback on what USDA Foods items they want is available in the SY 24-25 catalog.
- DoD Participation form will be available October 2nd for RAs that want to participate in the DoD/Locally Grown programs for SY 24-25.
- Reminder for schools to review and update agreements and processes with cooperative vendors. Schools will only order in WBSCM moving forward does this change your needs and services provided?



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

This product was funded by USDA.
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Share this email:



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

P.O. Box 12847
Austin, TX | 78711 US

This email was sent to .

To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.