

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONAL SCHOOL

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

September 2024 Monthly Newsletter

It's Farm Fresh Challenge Time!

October is coming fast and the time to pledge to join TDA for the Farm Fresh Challenge is now. All National School Lunch Program and Child and Adult Care Food Program operators are encouraged to serve local foods, teach about local agriculture, and share their efforts on social media. We have new resources to help you achieve whichever tier you decide to strive for this year. Find the Success Guide, Word Games, new flashcards, and a tracking tool on [Resources tab on SquareMeals](#).

The pledge form will be open until October 30, but remember to pledge by September 13 to receive promotional materials like "We Serve Local" buttons for staff, "Locally Grown" clings for your serving line, or "I Tried Local" stickers for your students. Let's make 2024 the most successful Farm Fresh Challenge year ever! [Pledge now!](#)

Processing LBS

At this time, most if not all processing accounts should be updated and ready for SY24-25 orders and draw-down in the ProcessorLink and K12. If you are experiencing an issue in the amount of LBS available to your school district, please first reach out to your ESC contact for guidance. Then, if the problem is not resolved, reach out to your contact at the specific processor where the error is occurring. This line of communication should resolve any and all problems as we go into the new school year.

FSMC New RFP/Contract and Renewal Contract Timeline

SFAs (School Food Authorities) looking to begin a contract with a Food Service Management Company (FSMC) or renew an existing FSMC contract must adhere to TDA timelines. Click the headline to access the timelines.

[Next LFS Office Hours](#)

Join us for the September LFS office hours meeting. To view recorded sessions and slides from previous office hours, please visit the [LFS webpage](#). If you are participating in the LFS grant and are not receiving communications, contact localfoodgrant@texasagriculture.gov.

[LFS Fund Usage Survey](#)

Thank you for completing the Local Food for Schools (LFS) Fund Usage Survey! TDA is working on reallocation of funds based on input.

[Back to School Toolkit!](#)

Explore USDA's [Back to School Toolkit](#) that features Social Media Content, Flyers, Fact Sheets, videos and more! Use these items to raise awareness in your school and community on school nutrition programs.

[Direct Certification in TX-ELMS](#)

All school food authorities (SFAs) regardless of their size or if they are operating a special provision (CEP and/or Provision 2), must use the direct certification (DC) component in TX-ELMS each month to identify students who are directly certified without application to receive free meals.

[FSMC Friday Q&A Sessions](#)

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) will host monthly Contracting with a Food Service Management Company (FSMC) Q & A Sessions. The webinars will cover topics related to contracting with an FSMC and CE representatives will be able to get answers to FSMC-contract questions. Invitations will be sent to Superintendents and Contracting Managers

overseeing the FSMC contracts. Please ensure applications in TX-UNPS are up to date.

Excess Net Cash Resource Threshold

- Food service accounts cannot exceed six months' average expenditures (expanded from three months).
 - School Nutrition Program (SNP) operators only but can apply to an SFA's CACFP or SFSP operations when using a single account for all programs.
 - SFAs with an already submitted spend-down plan for an excess of 3 months (based on FY 2023 end balance or self-identified) must adhere to the 3-month plan.
 - Balances exceeding 3 months but under 6 months at the end of FY 2024 do not need to submit a spend-down plan.
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School Year 2024-25 Paid Lunch Equity Tool Walk-Through Recorded Webinar

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service has released a recorded webinar regarding the Paid Lunch Equity Tool. This webinar is a walk-through and demonstration of the School Year 24-25 Paid Lunch Equity Tool.

This webinar includes a brief introduction on what the Paid Lunch Equity requirement is and how to complete the tool based on the method the school food authority chooses to use to meet the Paid Lunch Equity requirement. This webinar is a great resource for individuals who have not worked with the tool before or would like a refresher given recent updates to the tool.

To access the link to view the video, go to: [School Year 2024-2025 Paid Lunch Equity Tool Walk-Through](#).

To access the existing Paid Lunch Equity memo, please go to: [SP 14-2024 Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for School Year 2024-25](#).

TANS Update

As announced at MegaCon 2024, the Texas Department of Agriculture is happy to share we will all be transitioning from the Texas Unified Nutrition Program System (TXUNPS) to a new system in program year 2026 – the Texas Automated Nutrition System (TANS)! For the past decade, TXUNPS has served TDA's nutrition programs as a single integrated web-based application, but the time has come to upgrade. System users from the state,

Education Service Centers (ESCs), and sponsoring organizations will soon begin using TANS to support the same nutrition programs through application process, claims, compliance, and more.

You may be asking, "Why do we need to change systems?" Well, the main challenges behind the change is that TXUNPS is a highly customized system managed by a vendor that runs on older technology so our ability to adjust or enhance the system is very limited and the changes that can be made are completed very slowly. These obstacles do not support operational efficiency or effective administration of the programs, so TDA decided to find an alternative to TXUNPS.

Development on TANS is already underway, so you can expect a training schedule and more very soon. Bookmark, subscribe, and [stay tuned](#) to make sure you're ready to dive into the exciting new system!

[Come Work with School Operations](#)

Are you experienced and knowledgeable in school nutrition programs and/or have experience with auditing? The School Operations section of Food and Nutrition is hiring Compliance Monitors to conduct reviews of School Food Authorities. Job postings can be found [here](#).

[Attachment B Upload](#)

The Attachment B Upload module is found under the "Applications" tab in TX-UNPS. To complete the Attachment B Upload, the SFA must:

- Indicate whether they are using the TDA template school meal application,
- Upload the school meal application used by the SFA during School Year 24-25
- Upload the instructions to the school meal application
- Certify the Attachment B Upload module in TX-UNPS
- Submit the Attachment B Upload module.

[Attachment B: Meal Counting and Collection Procedure](#)

School Food Authorities (SFA) must update their Attachment B in TX-UNPS if their meal counting and claiming procedures have changed. If the SFA selected "yes" in Question 24 on the CE Application, the SFA must revise their Attachment B and submit to TDA for approval.

WBSCM Security Updates and Reminders

As part of security management, Food & Nutrition is issuing reminders for all Web-Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM) users including User Administrators. Click the headline for more information about the following reminders:

- Deactivation of WBSCM account
 - Maximum of two (2) User Administrators (UA) per entity.
 - WBSCM account for Food Service Management Company
 - Keep User Information Updated
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NSLP-USDA Foods Inventory and Contract Management

*The SY23-24 NSLP USDA Foods Private Storage and Delivery Fees Report has been posted on SquareMeals. Review your report for your respective region. If you have any inquiries, please submit a Jotform Inquiry Form located on the SquareMeals instructions. Submissions are due by September 9, 2024.**

Visit this link to access the [SY23-24 NSLP USDA Foods Private Storage and Delivery Fees Reports](#).

If your Procurement/Purchasing Department has requested a copy of the awarded contract for SY25, they will need to submit an open records request. Visit this [link](#) for further instructions

Congratulations to our Texas HMI Awardees!

Visit our [SquareMeals](#) page to check out which awards Texas schools have received and learn more about HMI Recognition Awards! Awardees receive national and local recognition, a digital toolkit, and travel stipend to attend a Summit in Las Vegas! The application deadline is June 30, 2025. Apply today!

Ahoy! Set Sail for National School Lunch Week 2024

Get ready for National School Lunch Week 2024 as we celebrate with the theme “**School Lunch Pirates: Find Your Treasure**”! Visit the

[SquareMeals](#) page to explore our digital resources such as a 1-Day Themed Menu, Morning Announcements, Activity Booklet, Digital Images, and more! We also want to hear about your NSLW celebration plans and know if you are interested in a friendly TDA visit during NSLW – Let us know [here](#)!

[2024 Turnip the Beet - Deadline Extended!!](#)

Thank you for serving nutritious summer meals to children across the Lone Star State and participating in Turnip the Beet to gain national recognition of your programs! We have extended the submission deadline to September 17, 2024. Please submit 2024 applications to Nutrition@TexasAgriculture.gov as soon as possible! Visit our [SquareMeals](#) page for more information.

[New Resource! Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast](#)

Explore USDA's new training guide for reducing added sugars at school breakfast! Learn how to determine added sugars in foods and drinks, new added sugar limits, menu planning tips, and tips for reducing added sugar in recipes! Available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

[USDA Foods Ordering Updates](#)

School Year 2024-2025

DoD Fresh FFV Program Participants:

- Please remember to complete receipts in FFAVORS for each delivery within 7 calendar days from the date of delivery.
- TDA monitors monthly utilization of DoD funds in FFAVORS

All ordering is complete for SY25. RAs can validate with a Requisition Status Report in WBSCM and checking "Requisition Status" is "Approved by SDA".

- Sales Orders that are in "Order Received" status are available at your contracted warehouse and must be placed on a delivery schedule as soon as possible.
- Processors have received allocations of state account pounds. Schools can validate cancelled or reduced requisitions based on the final amount loaded into tracking systems.
- Gold Star Foods offers surplus cases through on-going "Advertisements" in their system. For questions, contact the NSLP coordinator at Gold Star.

TX-UNPS Weekly Commodity Bulletin will no longer track entitlement

allocations and balances for SY25. RAs must utilize a combination of reporting from WBSCM, FFAVORS and distributor systems.



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER



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



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