



This information is to keep you informed of any changes in policies and procedures and of new communication originating from the State Office this month.

May 21, 2018
CE Edition

Attachments with this issue:

[Federal Register Posting for Income Eligibility Guidelines](#)

Summer Meals Notification

Federal regulations require School Food Authorities (SFA) to notify families about the availability of SFSP meals even if the SFA does not serve summer meals.

All Child Nutrition Directors (CNDs) will receive a shipment or shipments of materials in both English and Spanish that TDA is providing to assist CEs with achieving compliance for the federal School Nutrition Program requirement. Shipments are currently being sent and should be arriving at schools soon. The shipment(s) will include SFSP posters (3 per school) and SFSP parent information cards (1 card for each student). The estimated arrival date will vary among districts. **CEs operating SSO be sure to provide notification as described in Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 12, Seamless Summer Operation (SSO).**

Once the shipment(s) arrive, please open all boxes and distribute the materials to schools so they can be distributed to students before school is out for the summer break. It will be the CNDs job to distribute the correct number of cards and posters to each campus.

TDA is providing the following materials as a service to SFAs and asks that CNDs take the steps necessary to ensure successful receipt and utilization district-wide before the summer break.

SFSP Posters - Three Posters for Each School

- Purpose: Inform students and families about how to find summer meal sites.
- School Action: Display immediately upon receipt throughout school campus.
- For Example: If a CE has 20 schools, the shipment will contain 60 posters.

SFSP Parent Information Cards - One Card for Each Student

- Purpose: Provide take-home information about how to find summer meal sites.
- School Action: Distribute to students immediately with instructions to deliver to parents.

For more information and resources, please contact your [Education Service Center](#) or visit SummerFood.org.





Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Applications Due May 31

The SSO module (located under Site Applications) is open and available in the **2017-2018 Application Packet**. When processing SSO site applications, CEs must ensure that they also submit the application packet for approval as the last step of the submission process.

SSO site applications in Submitted status cannot be reviewed by TDA until the application packet is also in submitted status. Claims cannot be processed on unapproved site applications.

Texas Eligibility List Management System (TX-ELMS)

This summer TDA will be updating the Direct Certification/Direct Verification System to rename it the Texas Eligibility List Management System or TX-ELMS. The system itself will not change. Contracting entities (CEs) will still use the system to identify households that participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and specific Medicaid programs.

2018 SSO Age/Grade Waiver Now Available

The SSO Age/Grade Group Meal Pattern Portion Sizes Waiver is available in TX-UNPS under Download Forms: SNP-104. CEs participating in SSO that are operating open and restricted open sites and have difficulty implementing the age/grade group requirements may apply for a waiver. The waiver, if approved, will allow the CE to serve the portion size consistent with the most commonly served age/grade group at that site. Click [here](#) for more information.

2018 Universal Breakfast Program Waiver

The Universal Breakfast Program Waiver application is now open! The application period runs from March 15 – June 30, 2018.

School district campuses and open-enrollment charter schools participating in NSLP, in which 80 percent or more of the students qualify for a free or reduced-price breakfast, must offer a free breakfast to each student or seek a waiver from TDA required by Senate Bill 376. TDA has notified all mandated schools by mail. CEs that are mandated to offer free breakfast to all students and wish to apply for a waiver should use the Universal Breakfast Waiver School Year 2018-2019 form through TX-UNPS Download Forms (SNP-103). All waiver requests must be submitted by June 30, 2018. Please refer to the [Universal Breakfast page](#) for details and instructions or contact your [Education Service Center](#) for assistance.

Policy News

Revised SNP Forms Related to Accuclaim

The following revised SNP forms related to Accuclaim have been posted and released:

- *Daily Record/Accuclaim Form (first tab) and Lunch Attendance Factor Calculator (second tab)*, including Directions
- *Daily Record/Accuclaim Form | Provision 2 (P2), Non-Base Year (first tab) and Lunch Attendance Factor Calculator (second tab)*, including Directions
- *Daily Record/Accuclaim Form | Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) (first tab) and Lunch Attendance Factor Calculator (second tab)*, including Directions



The revised forms and directions can be accessed from the [TDA website](#).

Federal Register Posting

The Federal Register posting with the new Child Nutrition Programs Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs) for July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 is attached.

Paid Lunch Equity

USDA released SP 12-2018, Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for School Year 2018-2018 on April 19, 2018. TDA will be releasing additional guidance on how to implement the flexibility option described in the memo. CEs should take no action until that additional guidance is released. Please note, USDA has not released the PLE Calculation Tool.

TDA recognizes that CEs are renewing their program applications for the upcoming year at this time and that CEs are required to record the meal prices for SY 2018-2019 in the program application. CE's should not wait to submit their program applications because USDA has not released the PLE Calculation Tool. As soon as the tool is released, a CE can update an approved program application with the prices that will be used for SY 2018-2019.

Low-Fat Flavored Fluid Milk

CEs are not required to request an exemption to serve low-fat flavored milk as a milk choice for a reimbursable meal for School Year 2018-2019.

Target 2 Sodium Level

CEs may continue to implement the Target 1 Sodium Levels for School Year 2018-2019 if the CE is working toward meeting the Target 2 Sodium Levels.

Grain Exemption

USDA extended the Whole Grain Rich (WGR) exemption to serve an enriched grain product in place of a specific WGR product to School Year 2018-2019.

- Contracting entities (CEs) may extend a previous extension if (1) they have taken action to find a new WGR product that is acceptable to students and (2) they have tried new preparation strategies to increase acceptability.
- Contracting entities (CEs) may request an exemption for new products.

To apply to extend an exemption or for a new exemption, CEs must use the form provided in TX-UNPS (Application/Download Forms). The form which includes both options will be available toward the end of June.

Household Meal Applications

TDA provides all forms related to household meal applications on a separate webpage for ease of access. To access this page, use the top navigation bar on SquareMeals.org and take the following steps:

- Roll the cursor over Programs on the top navigation bar.
- Roll the cursor over National School Lunch Program on the pop up menu.
- Roll the cursor over NSLP Administration & Forms on the pop up menu.
- Select School Meal Applications and Verification from the pop up menu.

Policy Statement for Free and Reduced-Price Meals, Attachment B: Meal Count/Collection Procedure(s) (Attachment B)

Any CE that has changed counting and claiming procedures needs to submit an updated Attachment B in TX-UNPS.

Fluid Milk Substitute

CEs that plan to offer a fluid milk substitute must notify TDA using the Milk Substitute Worksheet which is accessible at Squaremeals.org unless the fluid milk substitute is lactose free milk or a medical accommodation. CEs do not need to notify TDA after the first notification if they continue to serve the same fluid milk substitute for multiple years. However, CEs should periodically recheck the product profile to ensure that the manufacturer has not changed the product formulation. Any CE that is currently serving a fluid milk substitute and has never notified TDA should do so as soon as possible.

State-Funded Pre-K Eligibility

For School Year 2018-2019, USDA has granted a waiver to TDA for all state funded pre-K programs. All students attending a state funded pre-K program receive free meals for Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs). TDA is aware that TEA codes pre-K students as enrolled and enrolled in membership or in attendance. For the CNP, any student who is enrolled in a state-funded pre-K is eligible for a free meal. TDA has met with TEA on this issue. We expect TEA will be releasing additional guidance for schools that have both enrolled and enrolled in membership students.

Eligibility Manual for School Meals

The Food and Nutrition Service will not release an updated Eligibility Manual for School Meals for School Year 2018-2019. State agencies and Program operators can continue to use the [2017 Edition of the Eligibility Manual](#) for upcoming School Year. Any new policies will be posted on the [School Meals Policy Page](#).

The Eligibility Manual provides comprehensive information on Federal requirements, policies, and procedures, and is intended to help State agencies and Program operators accurately determine, certify, and verify children's eligibility for free and reduced price school meals and free milk.

Texas Farm Fresh Initiative



Registration now open for TDA's Farm Fresh Challenge

This October TDA encourages schools to Eat Local. **Teach Local. Be Social** and will recognize participants that take the challenge. The **Farm Fresh Challenge** (previously the **Local Products Challenge**) is back for its **5th year**. See what's new and pledge your participation at SquareMeals.org/FamFreshChallenge.

Participating schools will receive a toolkit of Farm Fresh Fridays supportive materials, including buttons, static clings and low tack stickers. Register by **August 15th** to ensure you receive your Farm Fresh Fridays materials before September 1. **NEW!** Resource Available to Help Schools Share the Farm Fresh Celebration with Parents and Family Members

Share your Farm Fresh Challenge celebrations with parents and family members using a new printable resource on SquareMeals.org. This printable resource can be sent to family members via a digital download or as a backpack stuffer.

Learn more about the Farm Fresh Challenge and pledge participation [here](#).

Please reach out to TDA at FamFresh@TexasAgriculture.gov with any questions or for additional information.

Copy Paste Promo Kit to Promote the Farm Fresh Challenge

Thank you for promoting the TDA's 2018 Farm Fresh Challenge. Use the Copy Paste Promo Kit to help build our statewide megaphone. Simply copy one of the messages in this kit into a newsletter, blog, listserv or message on any social media platform. Download high quality images from the [graphics locker here](#).

Stay Connected — Subscribe to TDA's Farm Fresh E-Harvest

This newsletter provides a monthly update on farm to school and includes resources such as funding opportunities, a schedule of upcoming trainings and webinars, and more. Archive issues of the E-Harvest are available [here](#). **Subscribe today!**

Connect with your partners at TDA today at FamFresh@TexasAgriculture.gov.

USDA Foods Updates

USDA Foods Assistance for Disaster Relief

Hurricane season is approaching. Please refer to [TDA's Disaster Relief page](#) on SquareMeals for information on the use of USDA Foods and procedures during emergency and disaster incidents.

USDA Foods Ordering

The Annual Surveys for Regular (brown box) USDA Foods and the Processing Surveys are open in TX-UNPS for a second round of ordering. The TX-UNPS due date for ALL surveys is close of business, **Friday, June 8, 2018**.



[Previous Issue](#)



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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