



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 13, 2019
CE Edition

No attachments with this issue

2019 NSLP Equipment Grant

The 2019 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant **Application** is open now through **Friday, June 7, 2019** at 8:00 p.m. Passwords for accessing the application were emailed to the Child Nutrition Director this week. Additional details, frequently asked questions, and scoring criteria are posted on **SquareMeals**. You may contact your **local ESC** for additional assistance.



TX-UNPS Updates



Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Intent to Operate for Program Year 2019-2020

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) intent to operate for Program Year 2019-2020 is due in TX-UNPS no later than **June 30, 2019**. All continuing CEP CEs and any CEs who will participate in CEP for the first time in PY 2019-2020 must submit the TX-UNPS application packet indicating their intent to operate CEP as described below on or before **June 30, 2019**. Submitting the TX-UNPS application packet is the only way to indicate intent to operate CEP.

Application packet sections that have CEP questions/data include:

- the Contracting Entity Application (Question #28).
- the site application (Question #11. Pricing Option- Non-Pricing CEP), and
- the CEP schedule

IMPORTANT: CEs should complete the CEP application **first**, then the site application(s) and then the CEP schedule. Please contact your **local Education Service Center (ESC)** if you need technical assistance.

Please note that Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCI) cannot participate in CEP.

2019 Universal Breakfast Program Waiver

The Universal Breakfast Program Waiver application is now open! The application period runs from March 15 – June 30, 2019! 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, as required by Senate Bill 376. TDA notified all mandated schools by mail in January 2019. 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 2019-2020 form through TXUNPS Download Forms (SNP-000). All waiver requests must be submitted by **June 30, 2019**. Please refer to the [Universal Breakfast page](#) for details and instructions or contact your Education Service Center for assistance.

2019 Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Age/Grade Exemption

Applications Opened May 1

The SSO Age/Grade Group Meal Pattern Portion Sizes Exemption is now available in TX-UNPS. CEs participating in SSO that are operating open and restricted open sites and have difficulty implementing the age/grade group requirements may apply for an exemption. The exemption waiver, if approved, will allow the CE to serve the portion size consistent with the most commonly served age/grade group at that site. CEs that wish to apply for an exemption must use the SSO Age/Grade Group Meal Portion Sizes Waiver form through TX-UNPS download Forms (SNP-000).

Policy News

Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT) 2.0 Enhancements

FNS has released new enhancements to the Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT) 2.0. The new enhancements include the capability for users to update profile information such as role and job title (for both themselves and/or their employees) more efficiently. It also includes an update to accommodate users who have a hiring date of January 1 or later to automatically adjust the required training hours listed on the tool. This enhancement addresses the Professional Standards Final Rule stating that if the hiring date is on January 1 or later, an employee must only complete half of the required training hours. FNS will promote the new functionalities via multiple venues. Instructions on accessing the new tool can be found on USDA's website [here](#).



Updated Guidance on Paid Lunch Equity Exemption for School Year (SY) 2019-2020

USDA has extended the SY 2018-2019 PLE flexibility to SY 2019-2020 in SP 27-2019 (released April 18, 2019). TDA will be updating *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 15, Meal Pricing*; however, in the interim CEs may use the following guidance for SY 2019-2020:

For School Year (SY) 2019-2020, USDA has provided a PLE exemption that is based on the CE's financial condition. CEs with a zero or positive fund balance as of January 31, 2019 have **two** options:

- Complete and apply the SY 2019-2020 PLE calculation to the CE's meal pricing structure. If a CE chooses this option, the CE will adjust meal prices as appropriate to the PLE calculation.
 - *Records to Retain: The CE must retain the completed PLE calculation tool and other documentation demonstrating how the CE determined the meal prices to be charged.*
- Choose not to complete and not to apply the SY 2019-2020 PLE calculation. If the CE chooses this option, the CE may increase meal prices, but is not required to do so.
 - *Records to Retain: The CE must retain financial documentation that demonstrates that the CE has reconciled all costs incurred and income received since the end of the most recent fiscal year and January 31, 2019 and determined that it has a zero or positive fund balance. If the CE chooses to increase meal prices, the CE needs to retain documentation demonstrating the amount of the price increase.*

Special Guidance for Determining a Zero, Positive, or Negative Fund Balance

The status of the CE's funds as zero, positive, or negative for this flexibility is based on the CE's financial reconciliation of costs and income as of December 31, 2018.

Did the nonprofit school food service account have a zero, positive, or negative fund balance after accounting for all income and all expenses from the time period between the end of the CE's most recent fiscal year and December 31, 2018?

The following definitions will assist the CE in this determination:

- The *fund balance as of December 31, 2018* covers the period of time between the end of the CE's most recent fiscal year and December 31, 2018.

- *Costs incurred* includes the costs for products that were delivered and/or cost of services that occurred prior to January 1, 2019 which have been paid or will be paid after December 31, 2018.
- *Income received* includes reimbursement for claimed meals, a la carte sales, catering, and any other income to the School Nutrition Program for activities that occurred prior to January 1, 2019 for which payment has been received or payment will be received after December 31, 2018.

CEs with a negative fund balance as of December 31, 2018 do not have the option to be exempted from completing and applying the SY 2019-2020 PLE calculation to their meal pricing structure.

Texas Farm Fresh Initiative



Registration is Now Open for the 2019 Farm Fresh Challenge!

Eat Local. Teach Local. and Be Social. this October with schools across the state! Have fun and earn recognition for your efforts to serve more local foods and teach students the importance of Texas agriculture.

Participating schools will receive a toolkit of Farm Fresh materials, including a choice of buttons, stickers or static clings for the celebration in October. Register by **July 15th** to ensure you receive your Farm Fresh Fridays materials before September 1.

Pledge Now

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

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

USDA Foods Update

Customer Service Feedback

The Texas Department of Agriculture recently requested feedback from Contracting Entities participating in the National School Lunch Program regarding the customer service provided by their warehouse in PY 2018-2019. You can view the CE's responses on Squaremeals [here](#).



Second Round Surveys

TDA **will not** re-open the annual or processing surveys in TX-UNPS for the second round of ordering USDA Foods for school year 2020.

This decision was made to avoid exceeding the States overall allocated entitlement. The estimated costs per pound from January to May have significantly increased, affecting 43% of the foods ordered for SY 2020. This increase caused the State entitlement levels for program year 2020 to almost be fully utilized.

In July 2019, USDA will publish the true rate of assistance for program year 2020. If the rate of assistance increases and the over-all entitlement for Texas increases, then TDA will re-open surveys for another round of ordering. If another round of ordering is offered, the anticipated close date of these surveys will be late-August 2019.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [Angela Hodapp](#) or 512-463-3394, or [Manuel Flores](#) or 512-475-0063.

Previous Issue



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

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