

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

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

Biweekly

December 7, 2020

Embedded attachments with this issue

The NSLP Biweekly has returned!

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Biweekly is back! Your Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) newsletter has returned, but SquareMeals.org/CVNSLP will still be your source for all COVID-19-related regulatory information. The most current information regarding program operations that have been modified due to COVID-19 will continue to be found on our Coronavirus page to ensure that TDA shares updates from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in a way that is timely and consistent.

The COVID-19 FAQ for School Year 2020-2021 (NSLP, SFSP, and SSO) is especially important for NSLP CEs. It provides all the necessary guidance for serving school meals this academic year. Look for the link on the left side of the page at SquareMeals.org/CVNSLP.

Thanks a Million!

Texas school nutrition professionals have carried a heavy load since March. The strength and determination shown during the pandemic has earned the admiration of all Texans. Thank you for taking on daunting challenges and serving your communities without hesitation. We look forward to continuing to partner with you in our mission.



Art Contest is Back!

Each year, the Texas Department of Agriculture's (TDA) You Art What You Eat art contest offers Texas students a chance to earn statewide recognition for themselves and their school. You can help encourage participation in the contest by ordering TDA's promotional items for your schools today. The colorful posters are available at no cost and they can be displayed in school hallways to remind students and teachers that they can participate in the 6th Annual You Art What You Eat art contest. This year TDA is also offering student bookmarks at no cost to remind students and parents to participate in the contest! The posters and bookmarks are in both English and Spanish (front and back). New art contest meal stickers are also available this year. Quantities are limited, so please order soon!



For more information about the contest, to enter, and to order materials please visit www.SquareMeals.org/artcontest. Thank you for your ongoing partnership and please join TDA in encouraging students to focus their artistic talents on healthy school meals by entering the You Art What You Eat statewide student art contest.

Action Required to Replace Internet Explorer

TDA will no longer test applications, including TX-UNPS, MENU and SquareMeals.org for compatibility in **Internet Explorer**. You need to download a new internet browser to continue to access TDA resources without error. Many web browsers are available, including Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Safari (Apple computers only), which can be downloaded free of charge. [Click here](#) for step-by-step instructions to update your computer's web browser.



Financial Report

TDA will be providing a jot form to complete the Financial Report this year. The Financial Report jot form will be available on January 1st and due February 15th, 2021.



A webinar is scheduled for December 11th at 9 am to review the jot form. The webinar will be recorded for those who are unable to attend, or for later review. Invitations were emailed to the Child Nutrition Director. If you did not receive an invitation, please click here to register. This webinar will provide an overview of the financial report, terminology used in the report, and preview of the current jot form. We will also review the excessive fund balance plan for those who have more than 3 month excess funds. All other inquiries regarding the Financial Report may be sent to: school.operations@texasagriculture.gov.

Equipment Grants

The 2021 Equipment Grants Application(s) opened on October 1, 2020. Eligible applicants have the opportunity to win one of four grants, each worth between \$20,000 to \$65,000 of equipment. These grants are the Winston Equipment Grant, the Vulcan Equipment Grant, the Hobart Equipment Grant and the Collection Grant (comprised of donations made by multiple equipment companies). Applications and photos must be submitted by a school nutrition director.

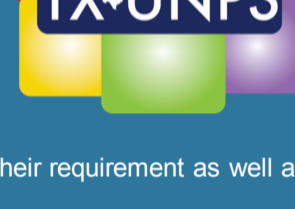


The recipients will be notified in late-March. This year, only finalists will be asked to submit a 2-3-minute video.

TX-UNPS Updates

Summer Mandate Notification and Waiver

Texas Legislation requires school districts in which 50% or more of the enrolled children are eligible to receive free/reduced price NSLP meal benefits to participate in a summer meal program, based on the March 2020 claim. All mandated school districts received an email notification of their requirement as well as instructions for submitting their intent in TX-UNPS.



If requesting a waiver, state law requires the board of trustees to send a written notice of the district's intention to the local school health advisory council (SHAC) no later than November 30. The notice must include an explanation of the district's reason for requesting a waiver of the requirement. CEs should retain this letter for their records, but TDA does not need a copy of this letter as part of the mandate process.

Please work with mandated CEs in your respective regions to either successfully submit their intent for summer 2021, or submit a mandate waiver request in TX-UNPS by the January 31, 2021 deadline. Your assistance is greatly appreciated. More information as well as the instructions, list of mandated CEs, and the letter that CEs received can be found at Squaremeals.org/SummerWaivers.

Policy News

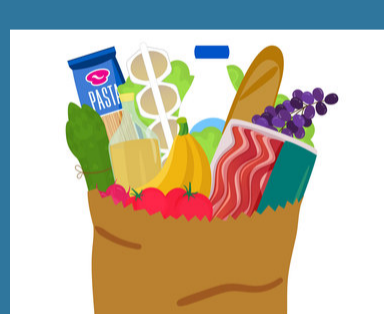
USDA Recently updated its **Civil Rights webpage** resulting in changes to the internal hyperlinks within the Nondiscrimination Statement (NDS). As a result, the full NDS must be updated to reflect the correct website hyperlinks. No other changes have been made to the NDS. Please update your electronic versions of the NDS with the English and/or Spanish versions no later than January 31, 2021. Any printed materials that include the full NDS should be updated prior to the next revision or scheduled printing. TDA is in the process of updating its program guidance, including Handbooks and Forms, to reflect this change. More information, including the full NDS with updated hyperlinks, can be found at www.squaremeals.org/News/Headlines.



Resources

Additional Food Assistance

With high demand at many Food Banks around the state, many families may not be aware of other food assistance programs available to them. The attached one-pager can be provided to families to explain how to access additional food assistance programs.



USDA Foods Webinar: Information to Use for Contract

TDA's upcoming webinar entitled "Save Dollars with USDA Foods: An Advanced Review of Forecasting and Inventory Management Tools" will be presented on Wednesday, January 6, 2021 from 11:00 – 1:00. This webinar will feature several ESC and purchasing co-operative speakers who will highlight tools and best practices for CNDs to use to improve forecasting and USDA Foods inventory management in anticipation of their annual contract renewal due February 1. Registrants will be expected to have a basic experiential understanding of USDA Foods-related processes or have viewed recommended online training resources prior to participating.

Please use the registration link [here](#).

2021 Farm to School Grant

USDA is now accepting applications for Farm to School Grants! Schools and school districts can apply for grant funding to establish or expand their Farm Fresh efforts. Grant funds are available up to \$100,000. Funds support a wide range of activities from creating new menu items and developing local-food partnerships to purchasing equipment and planting school gardens. USDA will allocate up to \$10 million for the grants which will be awarded to farm to school programs that increase access to local food in eligible schools, connect children and agriculture for better health, and inspire young people to consider careers in agriculture. The application submission deadline is January 8, 2021.



For more information on applying, visit the Resources for Farm to School Grant Applicants webpage [here](#). To read more about past USDA Farm to School Grant awardees and their projects, visit the [grant award webpage](#).

USDA Foods Update

Mid-year Inventory Counts of USDA Foods at Contracted Warehouses

TDA contracted warehouses will be conducting mid-year inventory counts of USDA Foods December 21-23, 2020. These physical counts will be utilized to reconcile inventory data in TX-UNPS. This will require that TX-UNPS be locked from any activity from December 21 – January 8, 2020, including CE order entry and processing. CEs should work with their assigned warehouse to reschedule December or January deliveries if they fall within this timeframe.



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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