

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONAL SCHOOL

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

Lunch Program

March 2025 Monthly Newsletter

School Meals Operation Study SY 2023-2024

This study has been suspended. You may have received prior communication about it from Mathematica, but no action is required at this time.

Local Food for Schools Office Hours: March 19, 2025

Join us for the March LFS office hours on March 19, 2025, 3:00-3:30 p.m. CDT to get the latest updates on the Local Food for Schools grant and learn how to make the most of your funds. 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.

NSLP-USDA Foods Inventory and Contract Management

- Your State Contracted Warehouse inventory system is the inventory system used for SY25, so it is highly important that training has been completed for staff that place delivery orders and maintain inventory at your school sites. Ask system questions directly to the State Contracted Warehouse staff.
- Ensure you are organizing your current storage space to make room for your SY25 USDA Foods and monitor your inventory in conjunction with your menu planning. If you have any questions regarding your menus and/or inventory, contact your Education Service Center representative.
- As a reminder, keep your USDA Foods inventory levels less than 6MOH to maintain compliance with the NSLP

for SY25. Monitor your Best-If-Used-By Dates, Expiration Dates, and Pack Dates to maintain inventory at optimum quality.

- Ensure all invoices are paid within 30 days of receiving your inventory/private storage fees.
- TDA has been reviewing the SY25 Private Storage reports from all FDP Regions and has instructed State Contracted Warehouses to force ship inventory that has been sitting over 45 days to your sites. Please place your delivery orders, accordingly.
- As you are aware, the Weekly Commodity Bulletin is no longer available to schools in TX-UNPS. In previous years, TDA has utilized the below reports/resources to pull together the information presented within the Weekly Commodity Bulletin. Each school will need to review the following reports/resources to gather the necessary information:

1. Identify items received/used through the reports below:

WBSCM Reports

a. **Requisition Status Report**

b. Value of Commodities Received – details products that have been shipped to your warehouse or processor:

*State Contracted Warehouse reports

*DOD Usage Reports

*ProcessorLink or K12 usage Reports

2. Once you have items used/received items, you can use one of two tools on SquareMeals.org to determine value of commodities received:

a. Cost Comparison Tool – used to help you determine the value of commodities received to ensure that your school received the correct credit, rebates, or discounts.

b. **USDA Process Material Prices** – provides an average material price for all USDA Foods even though it references Processor Materials.

3. Connect with your ESC should you need assistance with any transfer requests. Ensure you are utilizing the **H4529 Transfer Jotform** for TDA approved transfers.

4. Click **here** for the ESC Contact Information.

2025 Annual NSLP Financial Report

The 2025 Annual NSLP Financial Report must be completed by all school food authorities (SFAs) who participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and/or CACFP At-risk programs. This report must be completed by an authorized representative and is based on fiscal year 2024 data.

The due date for the 2025 NSLP Financial Report is March 28, 2025.

Please click **here** for additional information

TANS Update

The Texas Automated Nutrition System (TANS) will replace TX-UNPS for administration and management of all nutrition programs. Timelines, resources, and updates are available now on the **Systems Hub**.

[Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Awards - Apply Today!](#)

Visit our [SquareMeals page](#) to see our Texas HMI awardees so far! There is still time to apply for this national recognition. Visit the [HMI website](#) for an overview video of each award. **The application deadline is June 30, 2025.** Apply today

[Final Rule Resource Survey](#)

Visit [USDA](#) for more information on the Final Rule and upcoming changes. Let us know what kind of resources would best support you in implementing these new meal standards – [Click here!](#)

[RELEASE - Multiple Sections of the Administrator's Reference Manual \(ARM\)](#)

Several revised Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM) sections were posted and released on February 14, 2025. Most updates were made to incorporate elements of the final rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans as well as recent updates made to 2 CFR 200, the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. Further general updates were made to clarify various existing ARM guidance.

Guidance changes and clarifications were made to the following:

- Definitions
- Section 2, Program Application & Agreement
- Section 3, Civil Rights
- Section 4, Eligibility Determination
- Section 7, Breakfast Meals
- Section 8, Lunch Meals
- Section 9, Pre-Kindergarten Meals
- Section 10, Afterschool Snacks & Meals
- Section 14, USDA Foods
- Section 14a, USDA Foods Processing
- Section 16, Financial System
- Section 17, Procurement
- Section 17b, Buy American
- Section 17c, Cooperative Purchasing
- Section 18, Food Service Contracts
- Section 19, Meal Pricing
- Section 21, Meal Service
- Section 22, Competitive Foods
- Section 23, Food Product Labeling
- Section 27, Professional Standards
- Section 29, Local Wellness Policy

Update Guide sections located at the beginning of each ARM section provide more information about the topics addressed in each release. New language is also highlighted in yellow.

You can find the ARM on this [page](#).

Please replace any previous versions of the above sections that you may have been saved.

NSLP: USDA Foods Ordering Updates

School Year 2025-2026

WBSCM catalogs for PY 26 round 1 ordering of USDA Foods closed, February 28, 2025, end of day.

If you opted into the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetables program you will also see your allocation in WBSCM. TDA will load these funds into FFAVORS in late June. The USDA Foods team is no longer accepting reductions to DoD Fresh Program entitlement. Increasing the allotted amount is not an option and all requests to opt-in to DoD have been finalized and will not be adjusted.

The current rate of assistance published by USDA is .45 cents per meal. Initial PY 26 Planned Assistance Level (PAL) is located in WBSCM Reports, Entitlement/Bonus Summary Report.

Requests of USDA Foods can be tracked from the WBSCM Requisition Status Report. Ongoing fluctuations will occur until Purchased Status.

Refer to the Resources page on www.squaremeals.org Food Distribution Program for NSLP for helpful information regarding ordering USDA Foods.

School Year 2024-2025

DoD Fresh FFV Program Participants:

Please remember to complete receipts in FFAVORS for each delivery within 2 business days from the date of delivery.

TDA monitors monthly utilization of DoD funds in FFAVORS to ensure proper use of entitlement. To maximize your DoD entitlement SFAs should be spending, at minimum, 10% per month. SFAs who have not been utilizing funds may be at risk of redistribution.

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

Please check your user accounts in WBSCM to validate that appropriate SFA staff are active, have the correct roles assigned, and that their emails are up to date.

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.

Please check with your contracted warehouse if you need any available surplus.

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.

Summer Non-Congregate FAQs and Comprehensive Webinar Now Available

TDA has published new Summer 2025 Rural Summer Non-Congregate FAQs on the Summer Non-Congregate SquareMeals page. This document serves as the primary "handbook" for operators who serve non-congregate meals in rural areas. While most of the requirements have not changed since last summer, TDA has revised guidance and/or clarified some key topics based on USDA's guidance in January. All substantive updates from last year are highlighted in yellow within the FAQs. TDA will continue to update the FAQs in the coming months as new guidance is received and new resources are developed.

Also available is a recording and the slide deck from the February 27 webinar pertaining to rural non-congregate feeding.

All materials are located on [SquareMeals](#).

RELEASE: School Data for Area Eligibility Report

On an annual basis, TDA must publish a list of schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) in which at least one-half of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The School Data for Area Eligibility 2024-2025 report, based on October 2024 claims data for non-CEP schools and the April 2024 CEP ISP report for CEP schools, has been posted to SquareMeals in the following locations:

- [CACFP Administration Form](#)
 - [Summer Feeding Administration Form](#)
 - [NSLP Administration Form](#)
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RELEASE: Revised SFSP Participant Notification Prototypes

The following revised SFSP participant notification prototypes have been posted to SquareMeals to reflect updated 2024-2025 Income Eligibility Guidelines:

- Participant Notification of SFSP Meals - Closed Enrolled Site - NON-AREA ELIGIBLE
- Participant Notification of SFSP Meals - CAMP SITE
- Participant Notification of SFSP Meals - CONDITIONAL NON-CONGREGATE SITE

These prototypes can be found on the [Summer Meal Programs Administration/Forms page](#).



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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