

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

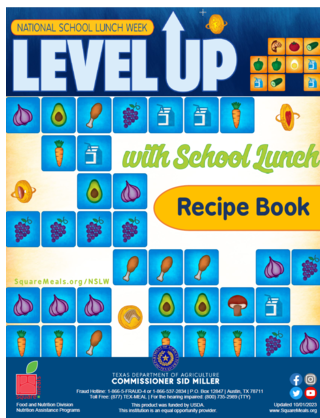
NATIONAL SCHOOL

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

July 2023 Monthly Newsletter

MENU Module Not Supported after August 31

TDA will not support MENU Module after August 31, 2023. Find MENU Module Q&A document for offboarding and options for CEs after contract period ends on www.Squaremeals.org/MENUmodule. Please send any additional questions to your regional Education Service Center.



Get Ready for 2023

National School Lunch Week

In addition to partnering with School Nutrition Association, TDA is offering new resources for National School Lunch Week 2023. Look out for the order form soon but don't forget to also check out our digital artwork, Recipe Book, Social Media Assistance Packet, and more on SquareMeals.org! Explore our "NSLW Implementation Toolkit" where you can learn about each NSLW resource and how you could incorporate them into your celebration

week plans!

Celebrate National School Lunch Week with the "Bite Seen Around Texas" Taste Testing!

Level up during National School Lunch Week (NSLW) by participating in TDA's first statewide taste testing event! Prepare the "Beta Bake" recipe and have your students taste sweet potatoes and **October's Harvest of the Month** produce item: Gala apples! Visit SquareMeals.Org/NSLW for the recipe and our planning guide on how to conduct a taste testing event. Be sure to promote it on social media using [#NSLWBiteSeenAroundTX](https://twitter.com/NSLWBiteSeenAroundTX) [#NSLW23](https://twitter.com/NSLW23)!

Local Food for Schools

TDA recently announced \$22.3 million in grants through the Local Food for Schools program that will be made to NSLP and SBP CEs. CEs will be able to apply for funds to purchase minimally or unprocessed foods produced in Texas to serve in their meal programs. More information on how to apply will be coming soon.

SquareMeals COVID-19 Page Retired

With the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency, TDA has retired its dedicated COVID-19 page. Materials and resources (for example, FAQs and webinar links) have been moved to other locations.

Remaining COVID-19 Flexibilities and Keep Kids Fed Act Provisions Expired June 30, 2023

All waivers and flexibilities associated with the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and the Keep Kids Fed Act (KKFA) of 2022 expired June 30, 2023. These include the end of higher KKFA reimbursement rates, the end of area eligibility waivers for Tier II day care home providers, waivers of onsite monitoring requirements, non-congregate flexibilities tied to COVID-19 outbreaks, Local Wellness Policy triennial assessment deadline extensions, and TDA's discretion to not issue fiscal action in the event of a supply chain disruption. Click the headline for details.

Updates to Civil Rights Nondiscrimination Statement

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has updated the required Nondiscrimination Statement on their website to include a link to the new USDA Complaint Form. However, there has been no formal announcement about the change. Until further official notice from FNS to begin updating materials, no updates are currently required, although TDA will be including the newer version as resources are updated. TDA will provide further instructions once the new NDS is officially announced.

Independent Review of Applications

Contracting Entities (CEs) that exceeded the 9% threshold for application errors are required to conduct an independent review of applications.

The Attachment B Upload Opened July 1, 2023

The Attachment B Upload module in TX-UNPS opened on July 1, 2023. All, contracting entities (CEs) must upload the school meal application, application instructions, and the template letters used for free and reduced-price eligibility. The completion of the Attachment B Upload module is due by October 31, 2023.

NSLP Transitional Sodium Limits effective July 1, 2023

Sodium Target 1A, as promulgated by the [Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains and Sodium - Final Rule](#), goes into effect on July 1, 2023, in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) only. There will be no change to sodium limits for breakfasts served through the School Breakfast Program (SBP). Please refer to this [chart](#) for specific Sodium Target 1A limits by grade level.

SY2023-2024 TX-UNPS Allocation Starting Date

USDA Foods for School Year 2023-2024 will kick-off with TX-UNPS allocations in mid-July! Click the headline link for more information.

MegaCon Presentations and Handouts on SquareMeals

Presentation slides and resources from the MegaCon sessions are now available [here](#) on SquareMeals. Use the



link to access these materials and provide valuable feedback.

Now Available! MegaCon Special Diets Presentation Resources

Special Diet presentation slides and resources curated from the MegaCon classes are now available on SquareMeals for NSLP and CACFP. See the links below:

- [MegaCon Special Diets Presentation Slides](#)
- [NSLP Special Diet Handout](#) (under Training Resources header) includes resources, trainings, and recipes.
- [NSLP Special Diet Swap](#) (under Meal Planning Resources header) includes menu planning activity with answer sheet.
- [CACFP Special Diet Handout](#) (under Training Resources header) includes resources, trainings, and recipes.
- [CACFP Special Diet Swap](#) (under Menu Planning header): includes menu planning activity with answer sheet.

Test Your Nutrition Knowledge!

Test your knowledge by taking fun quizzes from Team Nutrition! Are you an expert on School Breakfast, Whole Grains, or Child Nutrition Labels? Test your skills [here!](#) You can also access the quizzes in the [NSLP Training Resources](#) section on SquareMeals.org.



Policy Updates

Universal Free Feeding

CEs may operate a universal feeding program under standard counting and claiming, in which all children are claimed at the standard free/reduced price/paid rates, but no children are charged for their meals. To provide universal free lunches, the CE must use funds from outside the nonprofit food service account (for example, funds from the General Fund) to offset the revenue lost by not charging lunch meals to students categorized as “paid.” However, funds from the nonprofit school food service account may be used to cover any expenditures associated with eliminating the charge or lowering the price for reduced-price reimbursable meals. In addition, these funds may be used to provide universal free breakfast meals. For more information, see the Administrator’s Reference Manual (ARM), Section 19, Meal Pricing and Section 20, Counting and Claiming located at <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/National-School-Lunch-Program/Policy-ARM>. Please note that TDA intends to clarify the ARM guidance soon in an upcoming release. Click the headline for additional information.

Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) for School Year (SY) 2023-2024

Any NSLP CE with a negative balance in its nonprofit school food service account on June 30, 2022, must complete PLE pricing requirements for SY 2023-2024. The 2023-2024 Paid Lunch Equity Tool was posted to the **Forms** table. Due to the Consolidated

Appropriations Act of 2023, any NSLP CE with a positive or zero balance in its nonprofit school food service account on June 30, 2022, is exempt from PLE pricing requirements for SY 2023-2024. For more information on PLE and how to complete it, see the Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 19, Meal Pricing located at <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/National-School-Lunch-Program/Policy-ARM>. Click the headline for more information.

RELEASE: School Meal Household Applications

The NSLP and SMP household applications for School Year 2023 -2024 were released in English and Spanish. The forms are located on the Forms table at <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/National-School-Lunch-Program/Administration-Forms>. Note that TDA will release updated eligibility letters and media releases soon. If needed, CEs may still use the current media releases available at the above link. Click the headline for more information.

RELEASE: Complete Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM)

All sections of the Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM) were revised and released on May 19, 2023. The release includes new Definitions & Acronyms and Contact Information sections. Please click on the headline for more information.

USDA Foods Updates

Important Information for Starting the New School Year

Click the headline to view information regarding SY 2023-2024 TX-UNPS Contract Packets; the Farm to School Survey; the DoD Fresh Program; SY2022-2023 Weekly Commodity Bulletin; and more.

SY24 Warehouse Renewals and Delivery Rate Schedules Posted on Squaremeals

The latest USDA Foods warehouse renewals and approved delivery rate schedules are available for all FDP regions. Click on the headline for more information. The USDA Foods NSLP warehouse renewal agreements and delivery rate/private storage fee schedules for School Year 2023-2024 are posted in www.squaremeals.org. To access, [please click on this link](#). The information can be found under the Warehouse Information section for each FDP region (below the Regional Map). The rate schedules include the Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment.



Don't Forget to Turnip the Beet!

Serve fresh, local fruits and vegetables all summer long to help students hydrate and beat the heat! Use [TDA's Turnip the Beet Application Tips](#) and [Best Practices](#) to learn how you can win national recognition with this USDA award for an outstanding summer meal program! The submission deadline is September 1, 2023.



Deadlines

[Review This Month's Program Calendar Due Dates](#)

For upcoming deadlines, see the Program Year Calendar.



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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