

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONAL SCHOOL

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

Lunch Program

February 2026 Monthly Newsletter

[Get Ready for MegaCon 2026!](#)

Commissioner Sid Miller and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) invite you to MegaCon 2026! This year, the conference will be held on April 6-8, in Waco. Be sure to save the date! More information will be available soon!

[National School Breakfast Week 2026](#)

Celebrate National School Breakfast Week with us, March 2-6, with the theme "The Quest for School Breakfast"! Let us know what you have planned and if you'd be interested in a potential visit from TDA during NSBW –

[Share here!](#)

Please visit [SquareMeals](#) to view and save the National School Breakfast Week resources!

[CEP Eligibility Reporting Begins March 1st!](#)

Community Eligibility Provision [CEP] Reporting for School Year 2024-2025 begins in TX-UNPS on March 1st! Prepare now by reviewing the timeline, requirements, and tips on [SquareMeals.org](#).

[Summer 2026 Rural Non-Congregate Request Form and FAQs Now Available!](#)

The request form for eligible SFSP and SSO operators wanting to serve non-congregate meals in rural areas for Summer 2026 is now available! Before submitting the form, all organizations must follow the guidance

documented in the newly released 2026 Rural Summer Non-Congregate FAQs. All resources are posted on SquareMeals on the dedicated [Rural Summer Non-Congregate](#) page.

New Milk Flexibilities Now Available for School Lunches

On January 14, 2026, the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 was signed into law, providing new milk options and service flexibilities in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). This law modifies National School Lunch Act language that pertains only to lunches served in NSLP and does not apply to breakfasts served in the School Breakfast Program or snacks/meals served in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. TDA is awaiting further guidance about future rulemaking and application to other nutrition programs.

Note also that the following flexibilities are not requirements, and School Food Authorities (SFAs) may continue to operate under the previous, more restrictive regulations if they choose.

Click the headline to view the [full article](#).

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 2025-2026 report, based on October 2025 claims data for non-CEP schools and the April 2025 CEP ISP report for CEP schools, has been posted to SquareMeals in the following locations:

- [CACFP Administration Forms](#)
 - [Summer Feeding Administration Forms](#)
 - [NSLP Administration Forms](#)
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2026 Summer Food Service Program Reimbursement Rates Published

USDA has published the 2025 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) reimbursement rates. The new rates, which reflect a 3.7% increase from 2025, are published on the SquareMeals: [Summer Meals Reimbursement Rates page](#).

RELEASE: Revised Adult Meal Price Calculator

The Adult Meal Price Calculator has been modified to remove severe need reimbursement from the Method 1 calculation for adult breakfasts, as paid breakfasts do not receive severe need reimbursement. The revised Adult Meal Price Calculator can be found on the [NSLP Administration/Forms page](#).

Annual NSLP Financial Report

The Annual NSLP Financial Report opens on January 5, 2026, and closes March 27, 2026. School food authorities (SFAs) will use data from school year 2024-2025 to complete this report.

If the Annual NSLP Financial Report identifies an excess fund balance of the SFA's six-month average operating expenses, the SFA must complete an Excess Net Cash Resource Plan and submit to School.Operations@TexasAgriculture.gov.

The Excess Net Cash Resource Plan can be found [here](#).

[RELEASE: 2026 Ramadan Non-Congregate Service Waiver Request Form](#)

TDA has posted the 2026 Ramadan Non-Congregate Feeding Waiver Request Form to TX-UNPS Download Forms. This waiver allows eligible NSLP and CACFP operators in good standing to offer meals that participants in attendance and observing Ramadan can take off-site and consume after fasting.

Click the headline to view the [full article](#).

[NEW WEBINAR - Rural Non-Congregate Feeding Program Overview](#)

On February 18 at 2 p.m. CST, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) will host the Summer 2026 Rural Non-Congregate Feeding Program Overview webinar. This session will be a deep dive into the requirements, flexibilities, updates, and resources associated with rural non-congregate feeding during Summer 2026.

Click the headline to view the [full article](#).

[USDA Foods for Further Processing](#)

ROUTINELY CHECK ACCOUNT BALANCES

Every month, Recipient Agencies should check their processing end balances in the tracking systems - [Processor Link](#) and [K12Services](#). Routinely checking balances can ensure pounds are being drawn down properly, credit for USDA value has been applied, transfers posted, and correct end products are being ordered. If you do not have access to the tracking systems, contact your local [Education Service Center](#) for technical support.

USAGE ANALYSIS EXERCISE CLOSED

TDA conducts a usage analysis in December to identify accounts with low or no usage to alleviate excess inventory. Multiple notifications are sent to the RAs, requesting a response regarding the low or no usage. RAs not responding to the notification(s) experience a reduction in their inventory levels mid-January.

ANNUAL TRANSFER EXERCISE

Transfers to and from the state account and School-to-School transfers are being conducted from January to April. RAs meeting the transfer criteria of balances being one month or less on hand can request up to three months of inventory, according to their average monthly usage. State account pounds are not always available.

[Seamless Summer Option \(SSO\) for SY 25-26](#)

The Program Year 2026 application for Seamless Summer Option (SSO) is NOW OPEN in TX-UNPS. More information about operating SSO and technical assistance for completing the SSO application are available from

your local Education Service Center. Please submit early to avoid service delays.

The deadline for submitting the SSO application is May 31, 2026.

[USDA Foods Ordering Updates](#)

February's important USDA Foods updates for schools include information and resources to help prepare for PY27 ordering, along with ESC support.

Click the headline to view the [full article](#).

[Join us for the February TANS Talk!](#)

Mark your calendar for [Thursday, February 12 from 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. \(CST\)!](#)

TANS Talk is an office hours session that will allow Organizations (formally known as CEs) to review TANS related updates. We are excited to share all of the new updates about this platform and answer any questions.

How to Participate in TANS Talk:

Use this [TANS Talk Feedback Form](#) to submit any TANS questions you would like to see reviewed during the call. We will cover questions received at least 48 hours prior to the call, allowing our team time to prepare for the meeting. Visit the [TANS homepage](#) and [Resources page](#) for access to past TANS Talks, updates, trainings, and more.





TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

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