



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.

December 17, 2018 CE Edition

Attachments with this issue:

[Final Rule - Meal Pattern Flexibilities for SY 2019-2020](#)

Happy Holidays to our partners!

Wishing everyone a wonderful holiday season!

We at TDA are looking forward to another year of providing nutritional support to the children of Texas with the help of our valued partners!



TX-UNPS Updates



2019 Texas 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 2018 claim. All mandated school districts received an email notification of their requirement as well as instructions for submitting their intent in TX-UNPS.

Please submit your intent for summer 2019, or submit a mandate waiver request in TX-UNPS by the January 31, 2019 deadline. More information as well as the instructions, list of mandated CEs per ESC region, and the notification letter that CEs received can be found at www.squaremeals.org/summerwaivers.

Policy News

Updated Guidance: Micro-Purchase and Small Purchase Threshold

For procurement conducted on or after January 1, 2019, CEs may apply a micro-purchase threshold of \$10,000 unless the CE is subject to a more restrictive micro-purchase threshold amount. CEs must continue to apply the most restrictive existing small purchase threshold as required by the appropriate local or state agency. For more information on the small purchase threshold, see the *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 17, Procurement* with updated micro-purchase threshold guidance later this week.



Additional Guidance: Special Education Student Receiving Services at Another School

When a school allows a special education student to receive services at another school, but the home school retains the student's enrollment, the student is counted as enrolled at the home school. Students may be claimed by eligibility status in either the visiting school or home school as described in *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 7, Counting and Claiming*. Please note, students attending another school may be included in that school's Identified Student Percentage (ISP) for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) as described for special situations in *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 5, Special Provisions*.

Child Nutrition Programs: Flexibilities for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium, Final Rule

USDA released the final rule for meal pattern flexibilities on December 12, 2018. The attached document provides guidance on the new flexibilities. **These flexibilities are effective for School Year (SY) 2019-2020**. For SY 2018-2019, CEs must continue to the flexibilities as described in the interim final rule.

Updated Guidance: Shelf-Stable, Dried and Semi-Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Snacks

USDA released new guidance on shelf-stable, dried and semi-dried meat, poultry, and seafood snacks in SP 08-2019. These products may now credit toward the meat component for a reimbursable meal or snack. To credit these products, operators must follow the crediting guidance for other products made from meal, poultry, or seafood as described in the *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Section 8, Breakfast; Section 9, Lunch; Section 10, Afterschool Meal Programs; and Section 11, Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Meal Pattern for School Nutrition Program (SNP) Operators*. USDA plans to release guidance on additional products not currently creditable for a reimbursable meal or snack in the future.

Texas Farm Fresh Initiative



NEW! Resource Available to Support Taste Tests in the Cafeteria

Taste testing at school is an interactive way to boost healthful eating habits and get students excited about food grown and produced in their home state! Their feedback can be used to enhance menus – whether for tasty, nutritious meals or inventive new snacks. By consistently updating menus and introducing students to local foods and flavors, we can appeal to their taste buds while building an appreciation for the amazing bounty of flavors available in Texas.

The *I Tried Local Taste Testing Toolkit* provides:

- Simple steps for launching your first taste test
- Recommendations to make taste tests part of regular programming
- Tips to plan and promote a special tasting event
- Tools to help collect feedback and more!

Stay Connected — Subscribe to TDA's Farm Fresh E-Harvest

This newsletter provides a monthly update on farm to school and includes resources such as funding opportunities, a schedule of upcoming trainings and webinars, and more. Archive issues of the E-Harvest are available [here](#). **Subscribe today!**

Connect with your partners at TDA today at FarmFresh@TexasAgriculture.gov.

USDA Foods Update

Free Pounds Available in the Texas State Accounts:

TDA has completed its annual "Sweeps" process to move excess and unused carry over pounds at the processors into the state account. TDA would like to make these pounds available to CEs who can utilize them by May 31, 2019, at no charge to entitlement. CEs may now request these free pounds beginning

Monday, December 17 and up to Friday, February 15.

Requests should be sent to CommodityOperations@TexasAgriculture.gov with the Subject Line: <<School Name>> – Additional Pounds Request.

TDA will evaluate requests utilizing the below criteria:

- Pounds will be granted on a “first come, first serve” basis;
- Request will be compared to the CEs average monthly usage to determine reasonableness;
- Pounds will not be granted to CEs that had pounds swept for the requested processor; and
- Completed commodity calculators must be submitted with the e-mail request as supporting documentation (calculators can be obtained from the processors).



Swept pounds were allocated to the state in SY 2017-2018; therefore, they will not roll over into SY 2019-2020. These pounds will be swept on July 1 if unused.

Please review the preliminary list of Carry Over Commodities available here by copying and pasting this site in your browser: <http://www.squaremeals.org/Portals/8/files/commodities/Processor%20SY%2017-18%20Carry%20Over%20List%20for%20squaremeals%2012.14.18.xlsx>

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