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.

**Priority Information**

**Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Reminder**
All schools, regardless of whether they intend to operate CEP, must enter the requested information and complete a Community Eligibility Provision Site List screen by March 20, 2014. Required data that must be submitted by districts includes the number of identified students and enrollment at each campus.

Instructions on how to complete and submit the TXUNPS screen is available at: [http://www.Squaremeals.org/CEP](http://www.Squaremeals.org/CEP) under the section “Resources.”

**COMING SOON: Equipment Assistance Grants**
TDA will be awarding grants authorized by the FY 2013 Agriculture Appropriations Act for NSLP participants. Grants will allow School Food Authorities (SFAs) to purchase nonexpendable, tangible property for schools with a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost of $5,000 or more. TDA will use a competitive grant process to distribute a total of $2,982,315 among Texas schools that best fit the consideration requirements. TDA is working on finalizing the specifications for the application process. In general, SFAs will apply on behalf of their school sites. Individual schools will be rated competitively against all other schools. The application period is expected to be from May 1 through May 30, 2014. The awards will be announced by August 15, 2014. Awarded SFAs must be prepared to obligate grant funds by September 30, 2014, and to fully expend the funds by September 30, 2015. We will let you know as soon as more details are available.

**Operations**

**Meal Pattern Resource**
TDA has created the attached meal pattern resource, “NSLP Meal pattern Chart-with combined grade groups. v.2.xlsx,” which provides information on allowable age/grade group overlaps in the meal pattern. The resource includes information on calorie ranges and sodium limits for those meal patterns where there is overlap of age/grade groupings.

**Crediting Fresh Sugar Snap Peas**
It is acceptable to use the frozen sugar snap pea information in lieu of the fresh. We encourage CEs to document the yield value per pound they get when they measure the fresh sugar snap peas for each ½ cup serving. For more information on this process please see the Food Buying Guide for School Nutrition Programs instructions on pages I-3 and I-4.

**Breakfast**

**2014 Texas School Breakfast Report Card**
In conjunction with National School Breakfast Week (March 3-7, 2014), the [Texas Hunger Initiative](http://www.texashungerinitiative.org), based out of the Baylor University School of Social Work, has released the second
edition of its Texas School Breakfast Report Card, demonstrating what participation in school breakfast programs looks like across the state. You can read it at http://www.baylor.edu/texashunger/doc.php/219549.pdf. Designed with school administrators and nutrition personnel in mind, the Texas School Breakfast Report Card provides an introduction to child hunger in Texas while also laying out pragmatic models for breakfast distribution in schools, a breakdown of associated benefits, success stories and suggested goals for school officials trying to create a healthy, hunger-free learning environment. For information on training and requirements of the School Breakfast Program in Texas, go to https://squaremeals.org/Programs/SchoolBreakfastProgram.aspx AND for resources on expanding your breakfast program, go to http://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/expanding-your-school-breakfast-program.

FRAC School Breakfast Expansion Network
A copy of the Food Research and Action Center’s (FRAC) monthly School Breakfast Expansion Network newsletter is attached. It includes details on how to subscribe to the newsletter, and information about new resources, trainings, policies, webinars and grant opportunities. We encourage you to subscribe.

Policy
New from USDA
USDA released the attached policy memos and guidelines:

- SP23-2014s: Q&A Related to the “Smart Snacks” Interim Final Rule
- SP 25-2014: School Food Authorities (SFAs) Purchasing Produce from U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Vendors Using Section 4 and 11 or Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Funds
- SP26-2014s - New Questions and Answers Related to the Certification of Compliance with Meal Requirements for the NSLP

Summer Outreach
Materials Update
TDA is in the process of printing posters (11”x17”) and postcards for delivery to every school in Texas that participates in the National School Lunch Program. Each package will contain the following summer outreach materials:

- 5 posters to display throughout their school in the month leading up to the summer break
- enough postcards to pass out to every student enrolled
- TDA letter addressed to the “Principal”
- Outreach Guide – tips for increasing the awareness of the Summer Nutrition Program

KEY INFORMATION
- The package will be mailed directly to the school and be addressed to the principal.
- The package is estimated to arrive Monday, May 5.
- We recommended that postcards be sent home with each student at least two weeks before the summer break.
Please start **communicating with the front office staff in your district** about the arrival of this package. Make sure they know to **accept the package**. In addition, the Child Nutrition Director will receive a package that contains the copy of the principal letter, a sample of the poster and postcard, and the outreach guide. This package will be **mailed during the month of April**, ahead of the school packages.

If you have any questions, please contact Christy Denman, Outreach Specialist at Christy.Denman2@TexasAgriculture.gov or 512-463-0754.

**Website Updates**

**Smart Snacks Webpage**
The “Smart Snacks in Schools” webpage is now available on Squaremeals.org. Please visit [http://squaremeals.org/Programs/NationalSchoolLunchProgram/SmartSnacks.aspx](http://squaremeals.org/Programs/NationalSchoolLunchProgram/SmartSnacks.aspx) to access resources for implementing the new interim rule on nutrition standards for foods sold in school. The link includes a calculator that can be used to determine if food items meet the new criteria. Additional resources will be added as they are available.

**ARM Updates**
The following sections of the ARM have been updated.
- Section 4, Determining Eligibility
- Section 5, Special Provision Options (originally titled, Special Assistance Provision)
- Section 8, Breakfast
- Complete ARM PDF file
- ARM Update Guide

These documents are available in the ARM section of Square Meals at [http://squaremeals.org/Programs/NationalSchoolLunchProgram/NSLPolicy&ARM.aspx](http://squaremeals.org/Programs/NationalSchoolLunchProgram/NSLPolicy&ARM.aspx)

**Form Updates**
The following forms have been created or updated
- Accuclaim_DailyRecord_CE
- HouseholdNotice_Letter_CEP
- OutreachComm_MediaRelease_CEP
- Accuclaim_DailyRecord_P2

These forms are available at [http://www.squaremeals.org/Publications/Forms.aspx](http://www.squaremeals.org/Publications/Forms.aspx)

**Income Eligibility Guidelines**
Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs) for child nutrition programs for the upcoming year were published in the Federal Register on March 5, 2014. The corresponding webpages under each program have been updated on SquareMeals. You can review the new IEGs at [http://www.squaremeals.org/Publications/IncomeEligibilityGuidelines.aspx](http://www.squaremeals.org/Publications/IncomeEligibilityGuidelines.aspx).

**Award Opportunity – Excellence in Texas School Health**
The AFE program awards approximately $13,500.00 in **CASH prizes** to schools or districts that implement effective school health programs to improve the lifelong physical, mental and social well-being of students, staff and the greater school community. Sponsored by the Texas Department of State Health Services and funded by the Texas Health Institute and the Texas Pediatric Society Foundation, this initiative, now in its 25th year, grants programs just getting started with seed money and recognizes and rewards existing, successful programs and those that have made improvements or expansions to programs awarded in the past. The deadline to apply is April 28, 2014. To learn more, visit our Funding and Grants webpage at [http://squaremeals.org/Famp;NResources/FundingGrants.aspx](http://squaremeals.org/Famp;NResources/FundingGrants.aspx).

**Farm to School Updates**

**Grant Funding Available for Farm to School**

USDA has announced the next round of Farm to School Grant funding, to assist eligible entities in planning and implementing programs that improve access to local foods in schools. USDA will host four informational webinars to assist eligible entities in preparing grant proposals. Details about USDA’s Farm to School Grant Program, the Request for Application, the upcoming webinar schedule and Frequently Asked Questions are available at [www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/fy-2014-farm-school-grant-awards](http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/fy-2014-farm-school-grant-awards).

**7th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference**

April 15-18, 2014 in Austin, Texas

*Don’t miss out on your chance to attend! Registration closes April 1.*

Are you interested in incorporating local products into your meals or snacks, including garden-based learning opportunities for your children or connecting with local farmers? If so, the National Farm to Cafeteria Conference is coming to Texas and will offer the perfect venue to participate in field trips, attend workshops and network with others that are creating positive connections between children and local food.

The conference program has been recently updated online! For a complete schedule and to register, visit [www.farmtocafeteriaconference.org](http://www.farmtocafeteriaconference.org).

**Archive Webinars Available**

Archive copies of webinars from USDA’s *Finding, Buying and Serving Local Foods* series are available on SquareMeals at [http://squaremeals.org/FampNResources/FarmtoSchool/FarmtoSchoolWebinars.aspx](http://squaremeals.org/FampNResources/FarmtoSchool/FarmtoSchoolWebinars.aspx). The full webinar schedule and registration information is available on the same page.

Please contact [Alyssa Herold](#), Farm to School Program Specialist, with any questions regarding farm to school activities, including procurement of local food items, nutrition or agricultural educational opportunities for students or school gardening.