

# HSMA Feedback Resources

CDE School Nutrition has compiled common themes and supporting resources below to address the feedback received from SFAs on impacts the Healthy School Meals for All Program has had on foodservice operations. Please continue to share feedback with CDE School Nutrition so we may continue to identify new ways to support your child nutrition programs.

- Increase in meal modification requests
  - Visit the CDE School Nutrition's [Civil Rights webpage](#), which has resources to support accommodating special diets, template medical statement forms, and letters to parents.
  - Review the USDA's memo [Accommodating Disabilities in the School Meals Programs: Guidance and Q&As](#) which has more detail on this topic.
  - Communicate your policy and the process to request accommodations on the website and in newsletters.
  - Partner with your district's nurse to assist with household communications and implementing meal accommodations.
  - Contact peers to discuss best practices, menu planning, and products. See your [ACSN region and contacts here](#).
  - Plan alternate menus to accommodate as many accommodation needs as possible. For example, if multiple students cannot consume gluten-containing foods, create a gluten free menu. This can allow students and households to see what is being offered and clarifies meal preparation and service for site staff.
- Confusion from families regarding the components of a reimbursable meal, portion sizes
  - Use [Offer vs Serve signage](#) in your serving line to clarify components of a reimbursable meal.
  - Utilize resources in CDE School Nutrition's [Outreach Toolkit](#) to customize messages to address feedback from your school community.
  - CDE School Nutrition is currently working on additional resources and will share via [The Dish](#) when they are finalized.
- Increase in participation above what was forecasted
  - Stay in communication with your contracted vendors and share updated forecasting data with them to help mitigate product shortages. The ICN has resources to support [forecasting product needs](#).
  - Adjust menus and staff schedules accordingly to manage operational changes due to increased participation.



- Time to eat and school scheduling requirements
  - Learn more about best practices around time to eat with this [CDC Fact Sheet](#).
  - Understand state level requirements by reviewing the [School District Calendar and Instructional Hours Guidance](#).
  - Review tips on [how to get students through the line quickly](#) from Action for Healthy Kids.
  - Instructional time is a topic with the State Board of Education, and could include time to eat. Stay up to date on this work on the [CO State Board of Education website](#). [CSNA's Public Policy & Legislation committee](#) may have additional information to share.
  
- Equipment needs
  - In SY24-25, sponsors participating in the Healthy School Meals for All program can use up to 10% of your [Local Food Program](#) allocation for operating and administrative costs, including equipment purchases.
  - Review the [Capital Equipment Approval Tree](#) to determine if equipment purchases are allowable and if you need prior approval from CDE to purchase the equipment.
  - SNA will open [additional equipment grant opportunities](#) in January 2024.
  - The [Equipment Options for Efficiency resource](#) provides ideas of equipment that may help reduce labor needs and/or be used to process fresh produce.
  
- Staffing needs
  - View the recording of the [October On the Menu webinar](#), which discussed strategies sponsors use to address hiring challenges.
  - View the recording of the [November On the Menu webinar](#), which discussed the Healthy School Meals for All program Wages and Stipends funding.
  - In SY24-25, sponsors participating in the Healthy School Meals for All program will have access to funding to support [wages and stipends](#) for frontline foodservice staff.
  
- Outreach to educate local producers
  - Review [Farm to School resources](#) to support procurement from local producers.
  
- Continued flexibility to spend down balance
  - Learn more about [Excess Net Cash processes](#) to be prepared if your SFA will be required to submit a spending plan.
  - CDE has recently adopted the flexibility of only requiring a spending plan if a sponsor's net cash is in excess of six months average expenditures. Please note that this does not change the federal regulation that requires the level of net cash resources not exceed three months average expenditures as reported in the food service fund.