

Checklist for Healthy Food Certification

This checklist provides guidance on the application and implementation process for Healthy Food Certification (HFC) under [Section 10-215f](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.). All Connecticut public school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must take action annually to certify whether foods sold to students separately from reimbursable school meals **will** or **will not** meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS). Public school districts include regional educational service centers, the Connecticut Technical High School System, charter schools, interdistrict magnet schools and endowed academies. The HFC Statement must be submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) by **July 1** of each year. For more information on HFC, the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and allowable foods and beverages, visit the CSDE's [HFC](#) Web page.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Schedule **time on the meeting agenda** of the board of education or school governing authority to vote on the district's HFC participation **prior to the July 1 deadline**. Districts are strongly encouraged to make the HFC vote a standing annual board agenda item during January to June of each year. The [HFC Statement](#) (Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs, ED-099) is available on the CSDE's [HFC Application Forms](#) Web page.
- Obtain **approval** from the board of education or school governing authority for the district to participate in HFC. The board of education or school governing authority must **vote** on HFC participation and whether to allow food exemptions.

Foods that do not meet the CNS can only be sold to students on school premises if the board of education or school governing authority **votes** to allow exemptions and the following **three criteria** are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food is not sold from a vending machine or school store. The **"school day"** is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. An **"event"** is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals and debate team meetings are not.

The board of education or school governing authority must **take action** to permit the sale to students of any food items that do not meet the CNS. This approval must be reflected in the **official minutes** of the meeting of the board of education or school governing authority. Section 3 (page 2) of the HFC Statement includes an exemption statement for the sale of foods that do not meet the CNS, provided they meet the three criteria specified above.

- Designate a **district contact person**. The district contact person is the point person identified by the district for coordinating, implementing and monitoring HFC. This person will also field questions, organize trainings and contact the CSDE for assistance when necessary. The district may consider using the leader for the school wellness team in this capacity. For additional information, see the CSDE's handout, [Responsibilities of District Contact Person for Healthy Food Certification](#).
- Complete the **District Contact and Information Sheet**, which is available on the CSDE's [HFC Application Forms](#) Web page. This form must be returned to the CSDE with the HFC Statement. HFC districts should notify the CSDE if the HFC contact person or any contact information changes during the certification period.
- Submit **two (2) signed originals** of the HFC Statement (signed by the local board of education or governing authority) and the completed **District Contact and Information Sheet** to the CSDE by **July 1** of each year.

Checklist for Healthy Food Certification, continued

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

- Use newsletters, memos, e-mail, Web sites and other communication tools to **notify the school community** (including families, school staff and applicable organizations) about the district's commitment to implement HFC.
- Schedule **meetings and training sessions** with applicable school staff and school organizations to provide information on HFC, the CNS requirements for allowable foods, and district implementation procedures. Organizations and groups to inform include school principals; school food service staff; culinary arts programs; athletic directors; family and consumer sciences teachers; advisors and coordinators for school stores, kiosks and school-based enterprises; parent groups, school organizations and individuals who coordinate fundraising activities; vending machine operators; recipient schools under interschool agreements; coordinators of the USDA Afterschool Snack Program; summer school programs (e.g., enrichment or exploratory) operated by board of education; adult education programs operated by board of education; and individuals or organizations responsible for coordinating any other food and beverage sales to students in the district. The CSDE's [HFC](#) and [CNS](#) Web pages provide many resources to assist with communicating this information, including PowerPoint presentations and handouts.
- Use the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) to identify brand-specific foods that meet the CNS. All purchased foods must be reviewed for compliance with the CNS **before** they are sold to students.
- Evaluate all recipes for foods sold to students separately from reimbursable meals for compliance with the CNS. All school-made foods must be reviewed for compliance with the CNS **before** they are sold to students. For more information, see [Guidance on Evaluating School Recipes for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#).
- Maintain **documentation** to demonstrate that all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable meals in all district schools comply with the CNS. This includes all purchased and school-made foods sold in the cafeteria, school stores, vending machines, fundraisers and any other sources of food sales to students at school. Examples of documentation include a database or list of acceptable foods and beverages, an inventory of items sold in district vending machines and school stores, a school log system to identify acceptable fundraising events and a description of the process used to ensure that all food items meet the CNS. The CSDE's HFC documentation forms and guidance materials are available on the CSDE's [HFC Documentation](#) Web page. For more information on the documentation requirements, see [Guidance for Documenting Compliance with Healthy Food Certification](#) and the PowerPoint Presentation, [Documentation Requirements for Healthy Food Certification](#).



For more information on HFC, visit the CSDE's [Healthy Food Certification](#) Web page or contact Susan S. Fiore, M.S., R.D., Nutrition Education Coordinator, Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457, 860-807-2075, susan.fiore@ct.gov.

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