

Crediting Smoothies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

This guidance applies to meals and snacks served in child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, and adult day care centers that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). For information on the CACFP meal patterns for children and crediting foods, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpages. For information on the CACFP adult meal patterns and crediting foods, visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages.



Smoothie ingredients that credit toward the preschool meal patterns include full-strength vegetable juice and pureed vegetables (vegetables component); full-strength fruit juice and pureed fruits (fruits component); milk that meets the fat content and flavor restrictions for each age group (milk component); and yogurt or soy yogurt that meets the preschool sugar limit (meat/meat alternates component). Creditable ingredients in smoothies must provide at least the minimum creditable amount to credit toward the preschool meal patterns. The minimum creditable amounts are $\frac{1}{8}$ cup for the vegetables component; $\frac{1}{8}$ cup for the fruits component; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup for the milk component (applies to smoothies only); and $\frac{1}{8}$ cup for yogurt.

Creditable ingredients in smoothies must provide at least the minimum creditable amount to credit toward the CACFP meal patterns. The minimum creditable amounts are $\frac{1}{8}$ cup for the vegetables component; $\frac{1}{8}$ cup for the fruits component; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup for the milk component (applies to smoothies only); and $\frac{1}{8}$ cup for yogurt or soy yogurt.



CACFP facilities must maintain appropriate documentation to indicate the crediting information for smoothies. For example, to credit a strawberry smoothie as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component and 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, the documentation must indicate that the serving contains $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pureed strawberries and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of yogurt. For more information, refer to “[Required Crediting Documentation](#)” in this document.

If a smoothie contains less than the full serving of a component, the menu must include an additional food from that component to meet the full requirement.

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP

Required Crediting Documentation

To credit smoothies made from scratch, CACFP facilities must have a recipe that indicates the meal pattern contribution of each component in the serving. For information on recipes, visit the [“Crediting Foods Made from Scratch in CACFP Child Care Programs”](#) or [“Crediting Foods Made from Scratch in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers”](#) sections of the CSDE’s CACFP webpages.

To credit commercial smoothies, CACFP facilities must obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) or Child Nutrition (CN) label (applies only if the smoothie contains yogurt). For information on CN labels and PFS forms, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP](#) and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP](#), and the USDA’s PFS forms and [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement](#). For additional guidance on documentation for commercial products, visit the [“Crediting Commercial Processed Products in CACFP Child Care Programs”](#) or [“Crediting Commercial Processed Products in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers”](#) sections of the CSDE’s CACFP webpages.

Recommended Daily Limit for Smoothies

The USDA recommends limiting smoothies to one CACFP meal or snack per day. For example, if a smoothie is served at breakfast, the CACFP menus for lunch, supper, and snack should not include a smoothie.

Crediting Fruits and Vegetables in Smoothies

Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies credit only as **juice** toward the vegetables component and fruits component. Crediting is based on the volume (cups) of pureed fruits and vegetables per serving. For example, a smoothie that contains ½ cup of pureed strawberries credits as ½ cup of fruit juice. CACFP facilities must document the amount of pureed fruits and vegetables per serving (refer to [“Required Crediting Documentation”](#) in this document).



- **Juice limit:** Juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one CACFP meal or snack per day. Juice includes 100 percent juice (fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate), including fruit juice, vegetable juice, and juice blends; pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies; frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice; and juice from canned fruit served in 100 percent juice. For example, if the menu planner credits pureed blueberries in a smoothie as the fruits component at breakfast, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or the vegetables component at lunch, supper, or snack. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Juice in the CACFP](#).

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP

- **Mixed fruits and vegetables:** Smoothies that contain a mix of pureed fruits and vegetables, or 100 percent fruit and vegetable juice blends, credit based on the greatest fruit or vegetable ingredient. Commercial smoothie products credit as the fruits component if the first juice ingredient is fruit juice, and credit as the vegetables component if the first juice ingredient is vegetable juice. Smoothies made from scratch credit as the fruits component if fruit juice is the greatest juice ingredient in the standardized recipe, and credit as the vegetables component if vegetable juice is the greatest juice ingredient in the standardized recipe.
- **Breakfast:** The CACFP breakfast meal pattern requires a serving of vegetables, fruits, or both. Smoothies that contain the required amount of juice (including pureed fruits and vegetables) for each age group may credit as the entire vegetables/fruits component at breakfast. For example, a serving of smoothie that contains $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pureed mango credits as the full fruits component for ages 3-5, ages 6-12, ages 13-18 in emergency shelters and at-risk afterschool care centers, and participants in adult day care centers.
- **Lunch and supper:** The CACFP lunch and supper meal pattern requires a serving of the fruits component and a serving of vegetables component. CACFP lunch and supper menus cannot offer a smoothie and juice as the only two servings of fruits and vegetables because both credit as juice. For example, the lunch menu cannot offer a strawberry smoothie as the fruits component and tomato juice as the vegetables component. At least one of the required servings of the vegetables component or fruits component at lunch/supper must be a whole fruit or vegetable (i.e., fresh, frozen, canned, or dried).
- **Snack:** The CACFP snack meal pattern requires two of the five components. Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies may credit as either the entire fruits component or the entire vegetables component, but not both in the same snack. Smoothies containing juice and milk may credit as either juice or milk, but not both in the same snack. The snack menu cannot include juice (including pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies) when milk is the only other snack component.
 - **Snack examples for ages 3-5:** The required servings for the snack components in the meal pattern for ages 3-5 are $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of meat/meat alternates, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits, and $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce equivalent of grains.

Example 1: A smoothie recipe contains $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pureed fruit (credits as fruit juice) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of unflavored low-fat milk per serving. The menu planner may choose to credit the smoothie as either the full fruits component or the full milk component but not both in the same snack. To be reimbursable, the snack must include the full serving of a second component that is **not** juice, fruit, or milk (such as meat/meat alternates, grains, or vegetables). For example, the snack menu could include a 1-ounce whole-grain corn muffin (grains component) as the second component.

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP

Example 2: A smoothie recipe contains $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pureed fruit (credits as fruit juice) and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of unflavored low-fat milk per serving. The pureed fruit provides the full fruits component. However, the milk cannot credit as the full milk component because it is less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. To be reimbursable, the snack must include the full serving of a second component that is **not** juice, fruit, or milk (such as meat/meat alternates, grains, or vegetables). For example, the snack menu could include $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of diced cucumbers (vegetables component) as the second component.

Note: The smoothies in these examples cannot credit as the milk component for age 1 because the CACFP meal patterns for children require unflavored whole milk for age 1.

- **Snack examples for ages 6-12 and ages 13-18 (emergency shelters and at-risk afterschool care centers):** The required servings for the snack components in the meal pattern for ages 6-12 and ages 13-18 are 1 cup of milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of meat/meat alternates, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of vegetables, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of fruits, and 1 ounce equivalent of grains.

Example 1: A smoothie recipe contains $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of pureed fruit (credits as fruit juice) and 1 cup of unflavored low-fat milk per serving. The menu planner may choose to credit the smoothie as either the full fruits component or the full milk component but not both in the same snack. To be reimbursable, the snack must include the full serving of a second component that is **not** juice, fruit, or milk (such as meat/meat alternates, grains, or vegetables). For example, the snack menu could include a 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce whole-grain corn muffin (grains component) as the second component.

Example 2: A smoothie recipe contains $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pureed fruit (credits as fruit juice) and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of milk per serving. The pureed fruit provides the full fruits component. However, the milk cannot credit as the full milk component because it is less than 1 cup. To be reimbursable, the snack must include the full serving of a second component that is **not** juice, fruit, or milk (such as meat/meat alternates, grains, or vegetables). For example, the snack menu could include $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of diced cucumbers (vegetables component) as the second component.

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP

- **Snack examples for adult participants:** The required servings for the snack components in the adult meal pattern are 1 cup of milk, 1 ounce of meat/meat alternates, ½ cup of vegetables, ½ cup of fruits, and 1 ounce equivalent of grains.

Example 1: A smoothie recipe contains ½ cup of pureed fruit (credits as fruit juice) and 1 cup of unflavored low-fat milk per serving. The menu planner may choose to credit the smoothie as either the full fruits component or the full milk component, but not both in the same snack. To be reimbursable, the snack must include the full serving of a second component that is **not** juice, fruit, or milk (such as meat/meat alternates, grains, or vegetables). For example, the snack menu could include a 2-ounce whole-grain corn muffin (grains component) as the second component.

Example 2: A smoothie recipe contains ½ cup of pureed fruit (credits as fruit juice) and ½ cup of milk per serving. The pureed fruit provides the full fruits component. However, the milk cannot credit as the full milk component because it is less than 1 cup. To be reimbursable, the snack must include the full serving of a second component that is **not** juice, fruit, or milk (such as meat/meat alternates, grains, or vegetables). For example, the snack menu could include ½ cup of carrot sticks (vegetables component) as the second component.

Crediting Milk in Smoothies

Milk in smoothies credits as the milk component based on the amount per serving. For example, a smoothie that contains ½ cup of milk credits as ½ cup of the milk component. CACFP facilities must document the amount of milk per serving (refer to “[Required Crediting Documentation](#)” in this document).



- **Allowable types of milk:** Milk must be unflavored whole milk for age 1 and unflavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk for ages 2 and older, and adult day care center participants. Flavored fat-free milk may be served to ages 6 and older, and adult day care center participants, but the USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only unflavored milk.
- **Minimum creditable amount:** The minimum creditable amount of milk in a smoothie is ¼ cup. CACFP facilities must have a recipe or PFS to document the type and amount of milk per serving (refer to “[Required Crediting Documentation](#)” in this document).

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP

Crediting Yogurt in Smoothies

Yogurt and soy yogurt used as an ingredient in smoothies credits as the meat/meat alternates component based on the amount per serving. A ½-cup serving of yogurt or soy yogurt credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. SFAs must document the amount of yogurt or soy yogurt per serving (refer to “[Required Crediting Documentation](#)” in this document).



- **Sugar limit for yogurt:** Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce). For information on the crediting requirements for yogurt, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP](#).
- **Milk substitution:** The addition of yogurt to a smoothie is not a substitution for fluid milk in the CACFP meal patterns for children. Fluid milk must be offered in all meals to meet the milk component requirement.

For the **CACFP adult meal patterns only**, ¾ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt (6 ounces weight) that meets the CACFP sugar limit may substitute for 8 fluid ounces of milk at one meal per day. This includes yogurt or soy yogurt added to a smoothie.

Additional Ingredients

Smoothies may include additional ingredients to improve flavor and consistency, such as oatmeal and peanut butter. However, these ingredients do not credit toward the CACFP meal patterns.

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP

Crediting Example

Table 1 shows how a smoothie made with blueberry puree, low-fat yogurt, fat-free milk, and oatmeal could credit toward the CACFP meal patterns. **Note:** This smoothie recipe cannot credit as the milk component for age 1 because the CACFP meal patterns for children require unflavored whole milk for age 1.

Table 1. Meal pattern contribution of a blueberry smoothie recipe	
Ingredient	Meal pattern contribution ¹
Frozen blueberry puree, ½ cup	½ cup of fruit juice (fruits component) ²
Low-fat blueberry yogurt, ½ cup	1 ounce of meat/meat alternates
Low-fat milk, 4 fluid ounces	4 fluid ounces of milk ³
Oatmeal, 2 tablespoons	None (does not credit in smoothies)

¹ If a creditable ingredient does not provide the full meal pattern component (minimum amount), the menu must include additional servings of that component to meet the CACFP meal patterns.

² Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies count toward the juice limit. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Juice in the CACFP](#).

³ The minimum creditable amount of milk in a smoothie is ¼ cup. If a smoothie contains less than the full serving, the menu must include the additional amount of milk to provide the full milk component.



Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP

Commercial Products

Commercial smoothies credit the same as smoothies made from scratch. Product formulation and labeling can vary greatly among different products because commercial smoothies do not have a federal standard of identity. To credit commercial smoothies in CACFP meals and snacks, CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS (or CN label, if available) stating the amount of all creditable ingredients per serving, such as pureed fruits and vegetables, juice, yogurt, and milk (refer to “[Required Crediting Documentation](#)” in this document).

- **Crediting pureed vegetables/fruits:** Commercial smoothies made with pureed fruits/vegetables credit only as juice toward the fruits component or vegetables component. Crediting is based on the volume of fruits/vegetables after pureeing and before freezing. The product label must include a statement regarding the “percent juice content,” which is required by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for beverages made with fruit/vegetable juice or puree. For example, an 8-fluid ounce smoothie made from fruit puree labeled with “contains 50% juice” credits as 4 fluid ounces (½ cup) of juice. CACFP facilities may need to obtain a PFS from the manufacturer to document the amount of pureed fruit in the product.

Concentrated fruit puree and concentrated juice are added sugars and do not credit in smoothies unless reconstituted to full-strength fruit puree or full-strength juice.

- **Crediting milk:** Milk credits as the milk component when it is used as an ingredient in commercial smoothies. The product documentation must attest that commercial mixes with milk are made using ingredients that meet federal, state, and local definitions for fluid milk.
- **Crediting yogurt:** Yogurt and soy yogurt that meets the CACFP sugar limit credits as the meat/meat alternates component based on the crediting information stated in the product’s PFS or CN label. The product documentation must attest that commercial mixes with yogurt are made in compliance with the federal definition for yogurt. The addition of yogurt to a smoothie is not a substitution for fluid milk in the CACFP meal patterns for children. Fluid milk must be offered in all meals to meet the milk component requirement.

The CACFP adult meal patterns allow yogurt as a milk substitute. For **adult day care centers only**, ¾ cup of yogurt (6 ounces weight) that meets the CACFP sugar limit may substitute for 8 fluid ounces of milk at one meal per day.

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP

- **Limit for crediting amount:** The total creditable amount in a smoothie cannot exceed the volume served. For example, ½ cup of a commercial smoothie cannot credit as 1 cup of juice.
- **Noncreditable commercial smoothies:** Probiotic dairy drinks, drinkable yogurt, and yogurt drinks are not smoothies, and do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns. Commercial smoothies that contain dietary supplements (such as whey protein powder) or herbal supplements (such as ginkgo biloba, ginseng, and echinacea) do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns.

CACFP facilities must refer to the product’s PFS to check for 1) volumes of pureed fruits and vegetables prior to freezing; and 2) documentation that milk and yogurt (if included) meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements (refer to “[Required Crediting Documentation](#)” in this document).

Commercial smoothies cannot credit in CACFP meals and snacks without a PFS (or a CN label for commercial smoothies that contain yogurt). CACFP facilities must review PFS forms for accuracy.

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Accepting_Processed_Product_Documentation_CACFP.pdf

Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children: Module 5: Fruits Component (CSDE webinar)

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Related-Resources#BiteSize>

Bite Size: Meeting the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children: Module 6: Vegetables Component (CSDE webinar)

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Related-Resources#BiteSize>

CACFP Best Practices (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_factBP.pdf

Calculating Sugar Limits for Yogurt in the CACFP – Handouts in English and Spanish (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/calculating-sugar-limits-yogurt-cacfp>

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP

Choose Yogurts that are Lower in Sugar – Handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/choose-yogurts-are-lower-sugar>

Create a Reimbursable Meal Smoothie (New England Dairy & Food Council):

<http://www.newenglanddairycouncil.org/media/SmoothieRecipeBooklet2015.pdf>

Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Adult-Day-Care-Centers>

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Crediting Juice in the CACFP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Credit_Juice_CACFP.pdf

Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Credit_Yogurt_CACFP.pdf

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Fruits Component for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Adult-Day-Care-Centers/Documents#Fruits>

Fruits Component for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#Fruits>

Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Adult-Centers>

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning>

Milk Component for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Adult-Day-Care-Centers/Documents#Milk>

Milk Component for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#Milk>

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP

Product Formulation Statement (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Meats-Meat_Alternates_Fillable_508.pdf

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (USDA):

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Total_Veg_Fruits_Fillable_508.pdf

Resources for the CACFP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/Resources_CACFP_Meal_Patterns.pdf

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast – Handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-meats-and-meat-alternates-breakfast>

Serving Milk in the CACFP – Handouts, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-milk-cacfp>

Smoothies (New England Dairy):

<https://www.newenglanddairy.com/smoothies/>

Standardized Recipe Form for the CACFP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Standardized_Recipe_Form_CACFP.docx

Standardized Recipes in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Adult-Day-Care-Centers/Documents#StandardizedRecipes>

Standardized Recipes in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#StandardizedRecipes>

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf>

USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019 and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs>

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Using_CN_labels_CACFP.pdf

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP

Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP (CSDE):

http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Using_Product_Formulation_Statements_CACFP.pdf

Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Vegetable_Subgroups_CACFP.pdf

Vegetables Component for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Adult-Day-Care-Centers/Documents#Vegetables>

Vegetables Component for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#Vegetables>

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP



For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages, or contact the [CACFP staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, School Health, Nutrition and Family Services, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Credit_Smoothies_CACFP.pdf.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:** program.intake@usda.gov

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