

Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

This guidance applies to reimbursable 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 meeting the requirements for the CACFP meal patterns for children, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage. For information on meeting the requirements for the CACFP adult meal patterns, visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage.



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Overview of Crediting Requirements

Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the name of the “legumes (beans and peas)” vegetable subgroup to the “beans, peas, and lentils” vegetable subgroup for consistency with the [2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). The CACFP meal patterns do not require the vegetable subgroups. However, the USDA’s [CACFP best practices](#) recommend that CACFP menus include at least one serving per week of each vegetable subgroup (dark green; red/orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other).

Beans, peas, and lentils are pulses, which are types of legumes, i.e., plants that include pods. Pulses are the dried edible seeds of legumes. Examples of foods in the beans, peas, and lentils subgroup include black beans, black-eyed peas (mature, dry), edamame (soybeans), garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, soybeans, split peas, and white beans.

- Beans, peas, and lentils may credit as either the meats/meat alternates (MMA) component or the vegetables component, but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal or snack. A ¼-cup serving credits as 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) of the MMA component or ¼ cup of the vegetables component.
- Beans, peas, and lentils may credit as the MMA component or the vegetables component in different meals. For example, lentils may credit as the vegetables component at one lunch and as the MMA component at another lunch.
- If the meal includes two servings, the menu planner may choose to credit one serving as the MMA component and one serving as the vegetables component. For example, ¼ cup of garbanzo beans in a salad may credit as ¼ cup of the vegetables component and ½ cup of kidney beans in chili may credit as 2 ounces of the MMA component.

Menu planners must determine in advance how to credit beans, peas, and lentils in a meal.

Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as Vegetables

Foods in the vegetables component credit based on volume (cups), not weight, e.g., ½-cup serving of beans, peas, or lentils credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component. The minimum creditable amount for the vegetables component is ⅛ cup (2 tablespoons).

The meal pattern serving refers to the amount of beans, peas, or lentils without added ingredients. For example, to credit as ½ cup of the vegetables component, a serving of

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baked beans must contain $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of beans, excluding added ingredients such as sauce and pork fat.

Menu planners must round down the amount of beans, peas, or lentils to the nearest $\frac{1}{8}$ cup (2 tablespoons). For example, a recipe with $2\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons of kidney beans per serving credits as $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of the vegetables component. If the menu item contains less than the full serving of the vegetables component, the meal must include additional vegetables to provide the full serving for each grade group.

Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils as MMA

Beans, peas, and lentils credit as the MMA component based on volume. A $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup serving (4 tablespoons) credits as 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) of MMA. The minimum creditable amount is 1 tablespoon ($\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq of MMA).

When crediting MMA toward the daily and weekly meal pattern requirements, menu planners must round down to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq. For example, a recipe that contains $2\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons (0.625 oz eq of MMA) of kidney beans per serving rounds down to 0.5 oz eq of the MMA component. Table 1 shows the meal pattern contribution for different serving sizes of beans, peas, and lentils.

Table 1. Crediting beans, peas, and lentils as MMA component

Serving size (volume)	Meal pattern contribution
8 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup)	2 oz eq
7 tablespoons	$1\frac{3}{4}$ oz eq
6 tablespoons ($\frac{3}{8}$ cup)	$1\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq
5 tablespoons	$1\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq
4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup)	1 oz eq
3 tablespoons	$\frac{3}{4}$ oz eq
2 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{8}$ cup)	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq
1 tablespoon ($\frac{1}{16}$ cup)	$\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq (minimum creditable amount)

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Crediting Hummus and Bean Dips

Hummus and bean dips may credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component, but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal. To credit as the MMA component, the serving must contain at least $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq of MMA combined from the beans, peas, or lentils and tahini (sesame paste) or other ground nut/seed butters.



- **Beans, peas, and lentils:** A $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup serving of beans, peas, or lentils credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. The minimum creditable amount is 1 tablespoon ($\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq).
- **Tahini or other ground nut/seed butters:** Two tablespoons of tahini or other ground nut/seed butters credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. The minimum creditable amount is $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon ($\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq).

Hummus and bean dips credit as the vegetables component (beans, peas, and lentils subgroup) based on the amount of beans, peas, and lentils per serving. For example, hummus that contains $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of chickpeas per serving credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the beans, peas, and lentils subgroup. The minimum creditable amount of beans, peas, and lentils is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup.

Bean dip is a spread made from ground pulses (beans, peas, and/or lentils) with one or more of the following optional ingredients: ground nut/seed butter (such as tahini [ground sesame] or peanut butter; vegetable oil (such as olive oil, canola oil, soybean oil); seasoning (such as salt, citric acid); vegetables and juice for flavor (such as olives, roasted peppers, garlic, lemon juice); and for manufactured bean dip, ingredients necessary as preservatives and/or to maintain freshness.

CACFP facilities must maintain crediting documentation for hummus and bean dips that indicates the amount per serving of beans, peas, and lentils and tahini or other ground nut/seed butters. Commercial products require a Child Nutrition (CN) label or manufacturer's product formulation statement (PFS) (refer to "[Crediting Documentation for Commercial Bean, Pea, and Lentil Products](#)" in this document). Hummus made from scratch requires a standardized recipe (refer to "[Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in Recipes](#)" in this document).

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Crediting Roasted or Dried Beans, Peas, and Lentils

Roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils, such as roasted garbanzo beans (chickpeas) and roasted soybeans, may credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component, but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal or ASP snack.

- **MMA component:** Roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils credit as the MMA component based on weight (ounces). A 1-ounce serving credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component.
- **Vegetables component:** Roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils credit as the beans, peas, and lentils subgroup of the vegetables component based on volume (cups). For example, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of roasted chickpeas credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the beans, peas, and lentils subgroup. Menu planners may credit roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils toward the minimum weekly $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup requirement for grades K-12 at lunch.

The USDA recommends using discretion when offering snack-type beans, peas, and lentils (such as individually wrapped soy nuts) as part of reimbursable meals because they may be perceived as snack foods. While these types of products credit in CACFP meals, they may be better suited for meals served off site, such as bagged lunches for field trips. When offering snack-type beans, peas, and lentils as either the MMA component or the vegetables component, make sure that CACFP menus clearly identify how they contribute to the reimbursable meal or snack.

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding whether to offer roasted or dried beans, peas, and lentils in CACFP menus. For additional guidance, visit the "[Choking Prevention](#)" section of the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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Crediting Documentation for Commercial Bean, Pea, and Lentil Products

Commercial processed products that contain beans, peas, and lentils (such as black bean burritos and vegetarian chili) require documentation stating the amount of the MMA component per serving. Acceptable documentation includes:

- the original Child Nutrition (CN) label from the product carton or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton (refer to the CSDE's resource, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)); or
- a product formulation statement (PFS) signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of each meal pattern component contained in one serving of the product.

For example, to credit a black bean burrito as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, the product's CN label or PFS must state that one serving contains $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of black beans. To credit vegetarian chili as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vegetable component, the product's CN label or PFS must state that one serving contains $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of beans, peas, or lentils.

Commercial processed bean, pea, and lentil products without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in CACFP meals and snacks.

CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS for all commercial processed products that are not CN labeled. Crediting documentation must be maintained on file. The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

For more information on PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#). For guidance on how to review a PFS, refer to the USDA's [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#) and [Reviewer's Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements \(Product Analysis\) for Meat/Meat Alternate \(M/MA\) Products](#).

Additional guidance is available in the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage.

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Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in Recipes

CACFP facilities must have standardized recipes on file to document the crediting information for all foods made from scratch, such as lentil soup, bean burritos, hummus, and chili. Foods made from scratch credit based on the volume (cups) of beans, peas, and lentils in the recipe serving. The crediting information depends on whether the menu planner credits the beans, peas, and lentils as the vegetables component or the MMA component. To determine the amount of beans, peas, and lentils per serving, the menu planner must determine the total volume (cups) of beans, peas, and lentils in the recipe.

- **Vegetables component:** The minimum creditable amount of the vegetable component is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup. To determine the number of $\frac{1}{8}$ -cup servings of beans, peas, and lentils in one serving of the recipe, divide the cups of beans, peas, and lentils in one serving of the recipe by 0.125, then round down to the nearest $\frac{1}{8}$ cup. Refer to [“Steps for calculating the vegetables contribution of beans, peas, and lentils”](#) below for an example of how to calculate the vegetables contribution of beans, peas, and lentils in a recipe.
- **MMA component:** The minimum creditable amount of the MMA component is $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce (1 tablespoon). A $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup serving of beans, peas, and lentils provides 1 oz eq of the MMA component. To determine the oz eq of the MMA component in one serving of the recipe, divide the cups of beans, peas, and lentils in one serving of the recipe by 0.25, then round down to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq. Refer to [“Steps for calculating the MMA contribution of beans, peas, and lentils”](#) for an example of how to calculate the MMA contribution of beans, peas, and lentils in a recipe.

For assistance with recipe calculations, use the equivalent volume measures in the ICN’s [Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster](#) and the decimal fraction equivalents chart (table 6) in the [“Introduction”](#) section of the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG).

The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to use standardized recipes to ensure accurate crediting information. For information on standardized recipes, refer to section 2 of the CSDE’s [Guide to Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) or [Guide to Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#). Additional guidance is available in the [“Standardized Recipes”](#) section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage.

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Steps for calculating the vegetables contribution of beans, peas, and lentils

Example: A recipe provides 50 servings and contains 1 gallon and 1 quart of chickpeas. How many cups of the vegetables component does the recipe provide per serving?

1. **Determine the total cups of beans, peas, and lentils in the recipe:** Use the ICN's [Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster](#) to convert larger measurements to cups. Use the decimal fraction equivalents chart (table 6) in the FBG's "Introduction" section to convert fractions to decimals.

1 gallon (16 cups) plus 1 quart (4 cups) of chickpeas = 20 cups of chickpeas.

2. **List the number of servings in the recipe:** 50 servings
3. **Determine the cups of beans, peas, and lentils per serving:** Divide the total cups of beans, peas, and lentils (step 1) by the number of servings in the recipe (step 2).

20 cups of chickpeas divided by 50 servings = 0.4 cup of chickpeas per serving

Note: If the decimal amount for the cups of beans, peas, and lentils per serving converts to an even multiple of $\frac{1}{8}$ cup, such as 0.5 ($\frac{1}{2}$) cup, 0.25 ($\frac{1}{4}$) cup, or 0.125 ($\frac{1}{8}$) cup, this is the final meal pattern contribution for the vegetables component. Do not complete steps 4 and 5.

4. **Determine the number of $\frac{1}{8}$ -cup servings (minimum creditable amount) of beans, peas, and lentils in one serving of the recipe:** Divide the cups of beans, peas, and lentils per serving (step 3) by 0.125.

0.4 cup of chickpeas per serving divided by 0.125 = 3.2 servings of $\frac{1}{8}$ cup

5. **Round down the number of serving from step 4 to the nearest $\frac{1}{8}$ -cup serving.**

3.2 servings rounds down to 3 servings of $\frac{1}{8}$ cup, i.e., $\frac{3}{8}$ cup

One serving of this recipe provides $\frac{3}{8}$ cup of the vegetables component (beans, peas, and lentils subgroup).

Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Steps for calculating the MMA contribution of beans, peas, and lentils

Example: A recipe provides 50 servings and contains 1 gallon and 1 quart of chickpeas. How many oz eq of the MMA component does the recipe provide per serving?

1. **Determine the total cups of beans, peas, and lentils in the recipe:** Use the ICN's [Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster](#) to convert larger measurements to cups. Use the decimal fraction equivalents chart (table 6) in the FBG's "[Introduction](#)" section to convert fractions to decimals.

1 gallon (16 cups) plus 1 quart (4 cups) of chickpeas = 20 cups of chickpeas.

2. **List the number of servings in the recipe:** 50 servings
3. **Determine the cups of beans, peas, and lentils per serving:** Divide the total cups of beans, peas, and lentils (step 1) by the number of servings in the recipe (step 2).

20 cups of chickpeas divided by 50 servings = 0.4 cup of chickpeas per serving.

4. **Determine the oz eq of MMA per serving:** Divide the cups of beans, peas, and lentils per serving (step 3) by 0.25 (1 oz eq = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (0.25) of beans, peas, and lentils).

0.4 cup of chickpeas per serving divided by 0.25 = 1.6 oz eq of MMA.

5. **Round down the oz eq from step 4 to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq.**

1.6 oz eq rounds down to 1.5 oz eq of MMA

One serving of this recipe provides 1.5 oz eq of the MMA component



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Pasta Products Made of Bean, Pea, and Lentil Flours

Pasta products made of 100 percent bean, pea, or lentil flour (such as chickpea flour or lentil flour) may credit as either the vegetables component or the MMA component, but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal or ASP snack.

- **MMA component:** Crediting pasta products that contain bean, pea, or lentil flour as the MMA component is the same as crediting beans, peas, and lentils. A ½-cup serving of cooked pasta made of 100 percent bean, pea, or lentil flour credits as 2 oz eq of the MMA component. Bean, pea, or lentil flour pasta must be offered with additional MMA, such as tofu, cheese, or meat. The USDA's intent for this requirement is to ensure that MMA are in a form that is recognizable to children. The nutrition education aspect of the Child Nutrition Programs includes the goal of helping children recognize the food groups that contribute to healthy meals and snacks.
- **Vegetables component:** Pasta products that contain vegetable flours from one vegetable subgroup credit toward that vegetable subgroup. For example, ½ cup of pasta made of 100 percent red lentil flour credits as ½ cup of the beans, peas, and lentils subgroup.

Alternatively, manufacturers and CACFP facilities may credit bean, pea, or lentil flour pasta using the bean flour yield information on page C-1 of [Appendix C](#) of the FBG, or with appropriate documentation on the manufacturer's product formulation PFS. For more information on PFS forms, refer to "[Crediting Documentation for Commercial Bean, Pea, and Lentil Products](#)" in this document.

Identifying vegetable flour pastas on the menu

Nutrition education helps participants understand what foods are in their meals and snacks. As appropriate to participants' ages, CACFP facilities should use signs or other nutrition education to indicate that pasta made of vegetable flour is a "vegetable" and not a grain component of the meal. For example, a 100 percent chickpea flour pasta could be labeled as "chickpea pasta" on the menu with a symbol showing it to be part of the vegetables component of the meal.

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Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/accepting_processed_product_documentation_cacfp.pdf

Appendix C: Food Items for Further Processing, Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_FoodItemsForFurtherProcessing_YieldTable.pdf

Bite Size Module 2: Meal Pattern Documentation(CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize>

Bite Size Module 4: Meat/Meat Alternates Component (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

Guide to Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/guidecacfp_meal_patterns_adults.pdf

Guide to Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/guide_cacfp_meal_patterns.pdf

Meats/Meat Alternates Component (“How To” section of CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-adult-day-care-centers/how-to#MMA>

Meats/Meat Alternates Component (“How To” section of CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/how-to#MMA>

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

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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://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Document_Total_Veg_Fruits.pdf

Resources for the CACFP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/resources_cacfp_meal_patterns.pdf

Reviewer's Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products

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

Standardized Recipe Form for the CACFP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/standardized_recipe_form_cacfp.docx

Standardized Recipes ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-adult-day-care-centers/documents#StandardizedRecipes>

Standardized Recipes ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs 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.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFS_tipsheet.pdf

USDA Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines For Americans (89 FR 31962):

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/25/2024-08098/child-nutrition-programs-meal-patterns-consistent-with-the-2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-for>

USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019, and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-programs>

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/using_cn_labels_cacfp.pdf

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Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/using_product_formulation_statements_cacfp.pdf

Vegetable Subgroups in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/vegetable_subgroups_cacfp.pdf

Vegetables Component (“How To” section of CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-adult-day-care-centers/how-to#Vegetables>

Vegetables Component (“How To” section of CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/how-to#Vegetables>

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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, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_beans_peas_lentils_cacfp.pdf.

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1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
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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