

# Guide to Menu Documentation

for the National School Lunch Program and School  
Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12



School Year 2024-25 (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025)



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Connecticut State Department of Education  
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs  
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## Guide to Menu Documentation for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide\\_menu\\_documentation\\_nslp\\_sbp\\_k12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_menu_documentation_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf)

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## About this Guide

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) *Guide to Menu Documentation for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12* is part of the CSDE's menu planning guidance series for the school nutrition programs. (refer to "[CSDE's Menu Planning Guidance Series](#)" in this section). This guide provides comprehensive information and resources to assist school food authorities (SFAs) with maintaining the required records to document compliance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) meal patterns for grades K-12 in the [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#), [School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#), and [Seamless Summer Option \(SSO\)](#) of the NSLP. Meals offered in the SSO follow the NSLP and SBP meal pattern requirements.

The requirements in this guide apply to all public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) that participate in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO.

This guide reflects the USDA regulations and policies in effect as of the publication date. Please note that this information may change. The CSDE will update this guide whenever the USDA issues new meal pattern guidance for the nutrition programs. Please check the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guidance for School Meals for Grades K-12](#) webpage for the most current version.

The mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations does not imply approval or endorsement by the CSDE or the USDA. Product names are used solely for clarification.

### Requirements for School Nutrition Programs

Links to the USDA's regulations and final rules for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns are available in the "[Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs](#)" section of the CSDE's [Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. The USDA provides guidance for implementing the school nutrition programs through the policy memos on the [FNS Documents & Resources](#) webpage.

The CSDE's [Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage provides links to information and guidance on the federal and state requirements for the school nutrition programs, including the meal patterns and dietary specifications, crediting food and beverages, menu documentation, and meal service. The CSDE's weekly e-newsletter for school nutrition programs, [School Lunch Tray \(SLT\)](#), provides important guidance and resources to help SFAs comply with the federal and state requirements, and identifies deadlines for completing required activities and submitting required reports.

## CSDE's Menu Planning Guidance Series

The CSDE's menu planning guidance series includes five comprehensive guides designed to assist SFAs with meeting the NSLP and SBP meal pattern and meal service requirements for grades K-12.

- Guide to the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program
- Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
- Crediting Guide for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
- Guide to Menu Documentation for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
- Guide to the Meal Service Requirements for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

These guides are available on the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guidance for School Meals for Grades K-12](#) webpage.



## Contact Information

Questions regarding this guide may be directed to Susan Fiore, MS, RD, Nutrition Education Coordinator, at 860-807-2075 or [susan.fiore@ct.gov](mailto:susan.fiore@ct.gov).

For questions regarding the NSLP, SBP, and SSO, please contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE's Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs.


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For a list of all CSDE Child Nutrition Programs staff, refer to the CSDE's [Child Nutrition Staff and Responsibilities](#). For information on the school nutrition programs visit the CSDE's [School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AMS	Agricultural Marketing Service of USDA
APP	alternate protein product
AR	Administrative Review
ASP	Afterschool Snack Program of the NSLP
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
C.G.S.	Connecticut General Statutes
CN	Child Nutrition
CNP	Child Nutrition Program
CSDE	Connecticut State Department of Education
FAR	Federal Acquisitions Regulations
FBG	<i>Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs</i> (USDA)
FDP	Food Distribution Program
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
HHFKA	Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296)
ICN	Institute of Child Nutrition
LEA	local educational agency
MMA	meat/meat alternates
NSFSA	nonprofit school food service account
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
OVS	offer versus serve
oz eq	ounce equivalents



PFS	product formulation statement
RCCI	residential child care institution
SBP	School Breakfast Program
SFA	school food authority
SSO	Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
WGR	whole grain-rich

For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [\*Common Acronyms and Abbreviations in School Nutrition Programs\*](#).

## 1 — Introduction

Schools and institutions that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) must offer meals that comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) meal patterns for the school nutrition programs. Meals offered in the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP follow the NSLP and SBP meal pattern requirements.

School food authorities (SFAs) must maintain specific records to document the service of reimbursable meals to students. These documents must indicate that:

- all foods and beverages offered in reimbursable meals credit toward the required meal components; and
- school menus offer the minimum daily and weekly servings of each meal component and meet the weekly dietary specifications (nutrition standards).

SFAs must ensure that school food service personnel understand how to complete and maintain the required menu records.

### Overview of Menu Records

The table below summarizes the records required to document the meal pattern compliance of school menus. SFAs must maintain these records on file for the CSDE’s Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

**Table 1-1. Required documentation for school menus**

Commercial foods	Foods made from scratch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Menus</li> <li>• Production records</li> <li>• Child Nutrition (CN) labels</li> <li>• Product formulation statement (PFS) forms</li> <li>• Compliance with Buy American requirement</li> <li>• Nutrition information (Nutrition Facts labels and ingredients) <b>Note:</b> Many commercial products require nutrition information to determine crediting information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Menus</li> <li>• Production records</li> <li>• Standardized recipes</li> <li>• Nutrition information</li> </ul>

## Training on Menu Records

Training on the required menu records for the NSLP and SBP is available in “Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation” of the CSDE’s training program, [What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

## Records Retention

The NSLP regulations ([7 CFR 210.9\(b\)\(17\)](#)) and SBP regulations ([7 CFR 220.7\(e\)\(13\)](#)) require that all records pertaining to school food service must be retained for a period of three years after the date of the final claim for reimbursement for the fiscal year to which they pertain. If audit findings have not been resolved, the records must be retained beyond the three-year period, for as long as is required for resolution of the issues raised by the audit.

For detailed guidance and resources on the records retention requirements, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Records Retention Requirements for the School Nutrition Programs](#).



## Determining Food Yields and Crediting

The purpose of the required menu records is to document that meals served to students meet the applicable meal pattern requirements. Ensuring that menu planners accurately determine the yield of commercial products and foods made from scratch is a critical element of appropriate documentation.

Yield determines how a food or beverage credits toward the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. Yield refers to the amount (weight, volume, or number of servings) of a product at the completion of the preparation process.

The yield of a product or standardized recipe depends on the type of food and the preparation process. For example:

- 10 pounds of raw ground beef might yield 8 pounds after cooking;
- 5 pounds of fresh carrots might yield 3½ pounds after peeling and trimming;
- a vegetable soup recipe might yield 2 gallons after cooking, and
- a muffin recipe might yield 24 servings after baking.

Processed fruits and vegetables yield less than the purchased amount due to peeling and trimming. Raw meats yield less than the purchased amount because moisture and fat are lost in the cooking process. Rice and pasta yield more than the purchased (dry) amount because water is absorbed during the cooking process.

## Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs

The USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG) is the definitive resource for determining yields and crediting information for the Child Nutrition Programs. The FBG provides yield information for common types and customary sizes of milk, meats/meat alternates (MMA), vegetables, fruits, and grains, including commercially available foods and USDA Foods.

The FBG helps menu planners determine:

- a food's specific contribution toward the meal pattern requirements;
- how many servings a specific quantity of food will provide;
- what quantity of raw product will provide the amount of ready-to-cook food in a recipe; and
- how much food to buy.

SFAs should ensure that menu planners use the FBG to determine accurate crediting information for foods and beverages served in reimbursable meals

The FBG helps menu planners determine how standardized recipes and purchased foods contribute to the meal patterns for school nutrition programs. For example, menu planners can use the FBG to determine how much raw broccoli provides 50 servings of ½ cup of cooked vegetable or how much uncooked brown rice provides 100 servings of ½ cup of cooked rice. This information is essential for documenting meal pattern compliance.

The FBG is available as an interactive web-based tool (which includes the Exhibit A Grains Tool, Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW), and Product Formulation Statement (PFS) Workbook), a mobile app, and a downloadable PDF. These resources are available on the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. The FBG webpage also includes training modules and recorded webinars.

### FBG resources

The resources below provide guidance on using the FBG.

- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs: Training Resources (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-training-resources>
- Exhibit A Grains Tool to the Rescue! (USDA webinar):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/exhibit-grains-tool-rescue>
- Food Buying Guide Goes Digital! (USDA webinar):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-goes-digital>
- Navigating the Food Buying Guide FBG Calculator (USDA webinar):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/navigating-food-buying-guide-fbg-calculator>

For additional resources, visit the “[Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs \(FBG\)](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.



## Determining In-house Product Yields

The yield information provided in the FBG represents average yields based on research conducted by the USDA. Many factors affect yield, including:

- the quality and condition of the food purchased;
- storage conditions and handling;
- the equipment used in preparation;
- cooking method and time;
- the form in which the food is served (such as whether potatoes are mashed, fried, or baked); and
- the serving utensils and portion control methods used.

If a food service operation consistently obtains a higher or lower yield for a product than the yield listed in the FBG, the SFA should conduct an in-house yield study to determine the actual number of portions of a specified size that the product provides. In-house yields are also required for products not listed in the FBG. The CSDE allows SFAs to use in-house yields to determine a product's meal pattern contribution, if the process is properly documented and follows the CSDE's yield study procedures.

### Yield study procedures

SFAs can use the procedures below to determine and document in-house yields for food products.

1. Select a day when the product is served on the menu. Use at least four separate samples of the product to determine yields. A "sample" is the product pack unit, such as number 10 cans or 5-pound bags. If the food service operation uses more samples, the yield data will be more accurate.
2. For the best yield estimate, at least two people should independently portion and count the samples. Each person completes half of the samples. For example, with a sample of four cans, each person works alone to measure and count the servings from two cans.
3. Select the appropriate measuring utensil for the portion size being served, such as a number 16 scoop/disher or ½-cup measuring spoon. For information on measuring utensils, refer to the Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) [Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster](#) and visit the "[Weights and Measures](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
4. Fill the measuring utensil level to the top of the measure.
5. Carefully count and document the number of portions in each sample.

6. Add the total number of servings from each of the samples.
7. Divide the total number of servings by the number of samples to get the average number of servings per sample.
8. Complete the CSDE's *Yield Study Data Form for Child Nutrition Programs* and maintain on file for review by the CSDE staff during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

For additional assistance with yield studies, contact the CSDE's [school nutrition programs staff](#).





## 2 — Menus

SFAs must maintain lunch and breakfast menus that document the service of reimbursable meals to students. Menus must identify the date of the meal service and reflect all offered meal choices and types of milk.

Menus are not required to itemize specific portion sizes or food items (such as the vegetable subgroups) if this information is listed on the school’s production records. For example, a menu may list “daily salad bar,” “fruit choice,” or “vegetable choice” if the school’s production record includes all food items and portions served, and the appropriate crediting documentation is on file (i.e., CN labels, PFS forms, standardized recipes, and nutrition information).

Cycle menus or menus developed in advance of the meal service must specify the month and day and indicate any substitutions that occur.

SFAs must maintain all menus on file with other required records in accordance with the NSLP and SBP regulations (refer to “[Records Retention](#)” in section 1).



## Using Cycle Menus

The CSDE strongly encourages SFAs to use cycle menus for school meals. A cycle menu is a series of menus planned for a specific period with a different menu for each day. At the end of the cycle, the menu repeats in the same order.

A typical cycle menu might be four to six weeks. Offering a cycle menu of at least four weeks increases the variety of offered meals and ensures that children are not served the same combination of foods too often.

Cycle menus allow flexibility for variations like holidays, seasonal foods, special items, and the use of USDA Foods. For example, SFAs could have a different cycle menu for fall, winter, and spring.

### Benefits of cycle menus

Using cycle menus in the school nutrition programs has many benefits.

- Cycle menus provide structure and predictability, which helps SFAs with planning and documenting menus that meet the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. Predictability also provides familiarity for students, who look forward to their favorite meals being repeated in a predictable way.
- Cycle menus can help save time and labor costs. SFAs will spend less time gathering information, planning menus, developing product specifications, and checking deliveries. This also helps to standardize purchasing procedures and reduce time spent on purchasing.
- Cycle menus can help improve staff efficiency. As menu items are repeated, food service staff become more familiar with the standardized recipes and are more efficient in producing them.
- Cycle menus can help control food costs. SFAs can more easily predict the correct quantity of foods to purchase when previous menu data is available. Cycle menus also help decrease food costs by allowing SFAs to purchase regularly used items in bulk and take advantage of seasonal foods. In addition, SFAs may qualify for volume discounts when buying larger amounts of the same items.
- Cycle menus help to reduce food waste. SFAs can more easily predict how much of each menu item to prepare when menus are used repeatedly, so less food is left over.
- Cycle menus help to control inventory and storage costs. SFAs can better estimate the correct quantity of foods to purchase, which helps keep stock at appropriate levels.

For more guidance and resources on cycle menus, refer to chapter 3 in the USDA's *Menu Planner for School Meals* and the CSDE's *Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs*.

## USDA Certification of Meal Pattern Compliance

The USDA's menu certification worksheets indicate whether menus for grades K-12 comply with the NSLP and SBP meal patterns, including the meal components and weekly dietary specifications. SFAs must use these worksheets to demonstrate meal pattern compliance and certify that schools are eligible to receive the additional performance-based reimbursement. Links to these worksheets and additional resources are available on the CSDE's [Certification of Meal Pattern Compliance](#) webpage.

## CSDE Lunch Menu Planning Checklists

The CSDE's lunch menu planning checklists help SFAs determine if lunch menus comply with the NSLP meal patterns. These checklists are available in the "[Menu Planning Checklists for Lunch for Grades K-12](#)" section of the CSDE's [Forms for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For sample menus and more resources, refer to the CSDE's *Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs*. For guidance on menu planning and additional menu checklists, refer to chapter 3 in the USDA's *Menu Planner for School Meals*.

## Cycle Menu and Recipe Resources

The resources below include cycle menus and standardized recipes for school meals. **Note:** SFAs are responsible for ensuring that local menus meet the USDA meal patterns. Verify the meal pattern contribution of all non-USDA cycle menus and recipes before using (refer to "[Verifying Meal Pattern Compliance of Recipes from Other Sources](#)" in section 4).

- Certification of Meal Pattern Compliance for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/certification-of-meal-pattern-compliance>
- Chapter 3 Menu Development (USDA's Menu Planner for School Meals):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/menu-planner>
- Child Nutrition Recipe Box (Institute of Child Nutrition):  
<https://theicn.org/cnrb/>
- Cycle Menus: Let's Cook, Wisconsin School Meals Rock (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction):  
<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/program-requirements/menu-planning/cycle-menu>

- Farm to School Cycle Menu (Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative):  
<https://www.iowafoodandfitness.org/site/cyclemenu.html>
- Healthier Kansas Menus 8-Week Lunch Cycle with Alternate Entrées (Kansas State Department of Education):  
<https://cnw.ksde.org/snp/food-service-facts/chapters/chapter-16-menu-planning/healthier-kansas-menus/lunch-cycle-with-alternate-entrees>
- Iowa Gold Star Menus and Recipes (Iowa Department of Education):  
<https://educate.iowa.gov/pk-12/operation-support/nutrition-programs/school-meals/menus>
- Menu Cycles (The Lunch Box):  
<https://www.thelunchbox.org/recipes-menus/menu-cycles/>
- Menu Planning & Meal Service Ideas Using USDA Foods (Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services)  
<https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/95413/file/UsingUSDAFoods-v3.pdf>
- Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning>
- Menus that Move (Ohio Department of Education):  
<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/Food-and-Nutrition/Resources-and-Tools-for-Food-and-Nutrition/Menus-that-Move>
- Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE’s Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning#Recipes>
- Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbook for Schools (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/recipes-healthy-kids-cookbook-schools>
- Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_menu\\_planning.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_menu_planning.pdf)
- USDA Foods Connecticut Food Distribution Program (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/food-distribution-program-usda-foods>

For additional resources, visit the “[Cycle Menus](#)” section of the CSDE’s Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage. For detailed guidance on crediting foods, refer to the CSDE’s [Crediting Guide for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#) and visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For a comprehensive list of resources with guidance on meeting the NSLP and SBP meal pattern requirements, refer to the CSDE’s [Resources for the School Meal Patterns](#).

## 3 — Production Records

The USDA regulations for the NSLP ([7 CFR 210.10\(a\)\(3\)](#)) and SBP ([7 CFR 220.8\(a\)\(3\)](#)) require that SFAs must maintain daily production records that document the service of reimbursable meals to students. A production record is a working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods that need to be purchased and available for the meal service. SFAs must keep production records on file with all other required records (refer to “[Records Retention](#)” in section 1).

### Purpose of Production Records

Production records help verify that the SFA’s meal service meets the NSLP and SBP meal pattern requirements for reimbursable meals. They show how the offered meals contribute to the required meal components and food quantities for each meal served to each grade group every day. Production records are also an important communication tool that tells food service staff what foods and recipes to use, what quantities to prepare, and what amounts to portion.

In addition to documenting reimbursable meals, production records also provide information about the meal service, such as the quantities prepared and total meals served. This historical information helps with future menu planning. SFAs can use previous production records to forecast trends, identify student preferences, and plan future menus. Production records also help SFAs with controlling waste, tracking food safety, and conducting a nutrient analysis of menus.



## Required Elements for Production Records

Production records must include certain elements that are recorded at different times. The guidance below indicates what production records must include and when food service personnel should complete the required information.

### Complete before meal service

SFAs may complete the required information days or weeks in advance of the meal service. Information that does not change (such as the basic information below) may be pre-filled before printing the production record.

- **Basic information:** Indicate the name of the school/site, grade groups being served, meal date, menu, meal type (breakfast or lunch), and if offer versus serve (OVS) is implemented for the meal service.
- **Menu:** List the daily menu including all meal choices.
- **Planned menu items:** List the specific type and amount of all meal choices, milk, leftovers, substitutions, and all noncreditable food items like condiments (refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Noncreditable Foods in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for grades K-12](#)). Following the guidance below, list each menu item’s meal component contribution in oz eq for MMA and grains, and volume (cups) for fruits, vegetables, and milk.
  - **MMA (oz eq):** Indicate the correct quantity for each type of MMA. List commercial processed products like pizza and chicken nuggets in oz eq, based on their Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) (refer to the “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage). List lean meat, poultry, and fish, natural and processed cheese, and nuts and seeds in ounces (1 ounce = 1 oz eq); eggs by each ( $\frac{1}{2}$  large egg = 1 oz eq); nut and seed butters in tablespoons (2 tablespoons = 1 oz eq); beans, peas, and lentils, and cottage cheese in cups ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup = 1 oz eq); and yogurt by volume or weight ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup or 4 ounces = 1 oz eq). For more information, refer to the CSDE’s [Crediting Guide for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

- **Grains (oz eq):** Indicate the correct quantity for each type of grain. List groups A-G (baked goods like breads, rolls, muffins, crackers, and pancakes) by weight (ounces) and groups H-I (e.g., cooked cereal grains like rice, pasta, and quinoa) by volume (cups), based on the required quantity for 1 oz eq (refer to the CSDE’s [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#)) or the minimum creditable grains per serving (refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#), and visit the “Ounce Equivalents” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage). For commercial processed products with insufficient information to determine crediting, oz eq are based on the product’s PFS (refer to the CSDE’s [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs](#)). Indicate if grains are whole grain-rich (WGR) (refer to the “[Whole Grain-rich Requirement](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage).
- **Vegetables (cups):** Include the form of the food, e.g., fresh, frozen, canned, or dried. For lunch, indicate the vegetable subgroup contribution (refer to the CSDE’s [Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program](#)). Include all vegetable juices.
- **Fruits (cups):** Include the form of the food (e.g., fresh, frozen, canned, or dried) and packing medium (e.g., canned in juice or light syrup, or frozen with added sugar). Include all fruit juices.
- **Milk (cups):** List all milk choices. Meals must include a variety (at least two choices) of low-fat or fat-free milk, either unflavored or flavored. At least one choice must be unflavored.
- **Planned portion size and number of servings:** For all planned menu items, indicate the planned portion size with the specific unit of measure (e.g., scoop number, measuring cup amount, each, and ladle or spoodle size) and the planned number of servings. This is the total number of servings planned for all meals, including reimbursable meals and if applicable, nonreimbursable meals (e.g., second student meals and adult meals). Use standard abbreviations (e.g., lb = pound, oz = ounces, gal = gallon, qt = quart, c = cup, Tbsp = tablespoon, and tsp = teaspoon) and express measurements in fractions, when applicable (e.g.,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and  $\frac{3}{4}$ ).
- **Recipe name and number or food product name and code:** Indicate the name and number of the standardized recipe for all foods made from scratch. Indicate the product name and code for all commercial products. Indicate the six-digit material code for all USDA Foods (refer to the USDA’s [USDA Foods Database](#)).

#### Complete during meal service

- **Temperatures:** For Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food (TCS), formerly known as potentially hazardous foods, food service staff should record temperatures throughout the meal service to ensure that hot foods are held at 135 °F or above and cold foods are held at 41 °F or below. Take corrective action if a food is not at target temperature. For additional guidance, visit the CSDE’s [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

#### Complete after meal service

- **Substitutions:** Indicate any substitutions for the planned menu, such as different entrees or vegetable subgroups.
- **Total servings prepared:** Indicate the total number of servings actually prepared for the meal service.
- **Servings left over:** Indicate the total number of servings left over for each menu item.
- **Total servings selected:** Indicate the total number of servings selected during the meal service. Subtract “Servings left over” from “Total servings prepared.”

For more information on each required element, refer to “[Chapter 4: Meal Preparation Documentation](#)” in the USDA’s [Menu Planner for School Meals](#).





## CSDE Production Record Templates

SFAs may use any production record format that includes the required elements (refer to [“Required Elements for Production Records”](#) in this section). The CSDE’s breakfast and lunch production record templates below help SFAs to include all required information to meet the USDA’s production record requirements.

- NSLP Production Record for Grades K-5, 6-8, or 9-12
- NSLP Production Record for Grades K-8 Option
- SBP Production Record for Grades K-5, 6-8, or 9-12
- SBP Production Record for Optional Grade Groups (K-8, K-12, or 6-12)

The CSDE’s sample completed production records below provide guidance on how to complete a production record.

- Sample Completed NSLP Production Record for Grades K-5, 6-8, or 9-12
- Sample Completed SBP Production Record for Grades K-5, 6-8, or 9-12

These production record templates and samples are available on the CSDE’s [Production Records for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

## Guidance for Completing Production Records

Production records must indicate the specific type and amount of each food item and must be completed correctly to provide accurate documentation of reimbursable meals. When using production records, SFAs should ensure that food service personnel follow the guidance below.

- Use a physical written production for each site, including satellite locations.
- Complete all information. Check production records after the meal service to make sure that information is not missing or incomplete.
- Record the information legibly, i.e., make sure that handwriting can be read.
- Use the proper weight or volume measure for each food item (oz eq for MMA and grains, and cups for fruits, vegetables, and milk). For example, fruits and vegetables must be listed in cups, not ounces (refer to [“Volume versus Weight”](#) in this section).
- List the specific type and amount of each food item separately. Do not indicate foods as assorted choices. For example, instead of “assorted juices,” list apple juice, orange juice, and pineapple juice. Instead of “assorted fruits and vegetables,” list “fruit choices,” or “vegetable choices,” list each type of fruit and vegetable.

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- List each type of milk separately, e.g., low-fat milk, fat-free milk, and fat-free chocolate milk.
- List all condiments, e.g., ketchup, mustard, and salad dressing.
- List portion sizes accurately. Make sure that the listed portion sizes are the same as the amount being served to students.
- List all items prepared for the meal including daily items and alternate meal choices.
- Accurately record the “planned” portions for each age/grade group.
- List the total number of nonreimbursable meals (e.g., second student meals and adult meals) separately from reimbursable student meals.
- Add any extra servings of food needed during the meal service period.
- Indicate if any substitutions are made to the planned menu items.
- Indicate if leftovers from a previous day are used.
- Indicate how leftovers from that day’s meal service will be used, e.g., refrigerated for use in future meals, frozen for future use in the cycle menu, or discarded.

SFAs should maintain production records on file with other required documentation (refer to [“Records Retention”](#) in section 1). The CSDE will review menu documentation during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

## Volume versus Weight

The quantities listed in production records must reflect the daily and weekly servings required by the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. The meal patterns indicate the servings of the meal components by weight (ounces) or volume (fluid ounces). The servings for the vegetables component and fruits component are indicated by volume (cups). The servings for most foods in the MMA component are indicated by weight (ounces). Some MMA are indicated by volume, such as peanut butter (tablespoons), and beans, peas, and lentils (cups). Some MMA are indicated by volume or weight, such as cottage cheese, yogurt, and tofu.

When completing production records, it is important to remember that volume and weight measurements are not the same. Volume is the amount of space an ingredient occupies in a measuring container. Volume measures include teaspoon, tablespoon, fluid ounce, cup, pint, quart, and gallon.

Listing incorrect portion sizes on production records is a common compliance issue. An example is listing fruits and vegetables as “4 ounces” instead of “½ cup.” This does not document that the fruit or vegetable serving meets the meal pattern requirements because these two measurements are not the same. A serving of 4 ounces by weight may or may not equal ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.



The weight of a specific volume of food varies depending on the density of the food. For example, ½ cup of lettuce weighs less than ½ cup of cooked butternut squash. One cup of whole-grain flaked cereal weighs less than 1 cup of baked beans.

For many foods, a specific measure of volume does not equal the same measure of weight. There are some exceptions, such as yogurt (½ cup equals 4 ounces by weight) and certain types of canned fruits and vegetables.

Menu planners should use the USDA’s FBG to determine the quantity of a food that meets the required meal pattern serving (refer to “[Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#)” in section 1). The FBG can also be used to determine the weight equivalent of servings measured by volume. Production records must reflect these amounts. For example, the servings of vegetables, fruits, peanut butter, and beans, peas, and lentils must be listed by volume, not weight.

For information on weights and measures, refer to the Institute of Child Nutrition’s (ICN) [Basics at a Glance](#) handout and the “[Weights and Measures](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

### Electronic Production Records

SFAs may choose to use electronic production records but must follow specific requirements. A physical written copy of the production record and all applicable standardized recipes must be available at each site to guide the daily menu production. SFAs must regularly review and update their electronic production records to ensure accuracy and compliance with all federal and state regulations.

### Administrative Review of Production Records

During the Administrative Review, the CSDE will evaluate the SFA's production records to ensure that they.

- include all information necessary to support claims for reimbursable meals, i.e., all menu items are listed, and the minimum daily and weekly servings of all meal components are offered;
- are used for proper planning, such as determining meal consumption and leftovers.
- document that the prepared foods are creditable for the total number of reimbursable meals offered and served;
- document the total number of nonreimbursable meals (such as student purchases of second meals and adult meals), including the number of portions for each food item;
- document that menus meet the requirements for fluid milk, the weekly whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement for lunch and breakfast (at least 80 percent of all grains offered at lunch and breakfast are WGR), the weekly vegetable subgroups at lunch, the weekly juice limits for lunch and breakfast, and the weekly limit for grain-based deserts at lunch (refer to the CSDE's [Guide to the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#));
- document that menus meet the weekly quantity requirements for fluid milk, vegetables, fruits, grains, and MMA; and
- align with standardized recipes, i.e., the ingredients in the SFA's standardized recipes correspond to the menu items listed on the production records.

SFAs must ensure that food service staff include all required elements for each daily production record (refer to "[Required Elements for Production Records](#)" in this section). Food service staff must be trained in the proper procedures for completing production records.

## Resources for Production Records

The websites and resources below provide guidance on developing and using production records.

- Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/>
- Best Practices for Completing Production Records Fact Sheet (Institute of Child Nutrition):  
[https://theicn.org/wpfd\\_file/best-practices-for-completing-production-records-fact-sheet/](https://theicn.org/wpfd_file/best-practices-for-completing-production-records-fact-sheet/)
- Manager’s Corner: Production Records (Institute of Child Nutrition):  
[https://theicn.org/wpfd\\_file/production-records/](https://theicn.org/wpfd_file/production-records/)
- Menu Planner for School Meals: Chapter 4 Meal Preparation Documentation (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/menu-planner>
- Production Records for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/production-records-for-school-nutrition-programs>
- Requirements for Production Records in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/forms/prodrecord/requirements\\_production\\_records\\_nslp\\_sbp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/forms/prodrecord/requirements_production_records_nslp_sbp.pdf)
- STAR Back to School: Completing Production Records the Best Way (Institute of Child Nutrition):  
<https://theicn.org/star-back-to-school-completing-food-production-records-the-best-way-july-2021/>
- Weights and Measures (CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs#WeightsMeasures>

The CSDE’s document, *Requirements for Production Records in School Nutrition Programs*, summarizes the requirements and guidance for using production records in the school nutrition programs.



## 4 — Standardized Recipes

The USDA's regulations ([7 CFR 210.10\(b\)\(5\)](#)) require that SFAs develop and follow standardized recipes for all foods prepared from scratch. The USDA defines a standardized recipe as one that has been tried, adapted, and retried at least three times and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients. Standardized quantity recipes produce 25 or more servings.

Standardized recipes are required for all foods prepared from scratch, such as entrees like lasagna, chicken stir-fry, macaroni and cheese; baked goods like cornbread and muffins; and prepared fruits and vegetables like coleslaw, potato salad, and soups. They are also required for foods that require some additional processing by adding other ingredients after purchasing. Some examples include making rice or pasta with butter, sautéing vegetables in oil, adding dressing to salad, assembling a sandwich, adding eggs and oil to a muffin mix, and reconstituting canned soup with milk.

Standardized recipes are not required for commercial foods when the SFA does not add any ingredients after purchasing. Examples include fresh, canned, and frozen fruits and vegetables; breads, rolls, and baked products; and other commercially prepared products like entrees, soups, and side dishes.

### Benefits of Standardized Recipes

Standardized recipes document the specific meal pattern contribution of one serving. For example, a standardized recipe for lasagna might indicate that one serving credits as 2 oz eq of the MMA component,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the vegetables component, and 2 oz eq of the grains component.

In addition to documenting the meal pattern contribution, standardized recipes provide many other benefits for the school nutrition programs.

- Standardized recipes ensure that the quality and portion size of menu items is consistent, regardless of who prepares the food. This consistency improves student satisfaction because the taste and portion size are always the same.
- Standardized recipes ensure a predictable yield each time. This assists menu planners with controlling food costs and implementing more efficient purchasing procedures.

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- Standardized recipes ensure accurate meal component contributions and document that menus meet the meal pattern requirements, which contributes to successful completion of the CSDE's Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.
- Standardized recipes provide consistent nutrient content. They also indicate the nutrition information per serving, which is essential for addressing special dietary concerns like food allergies.
- Standardized recipes can help improve staff efficiency and reduce labor costs because production techniques are always the same.
- Standardized recipes assist managing inventory by specifying the exact ingredient quantities, helping prevent shortages and overstock.
- Standardized recipes provide guidance on food safety through preparation steps that avoid cross-contamination and ensure appropriate time and temperature.
- reduced recordkeeping; and

For more information, refer to [“Chapter 4: Meal Preparation Documentation”](#) in the USDA's [Menu Planner for School Meals](#).





## Information to Include on Standardized Recipes

SFAs may standardize their own local recipes or use existing standardized recipes such as the USDA's recipes. Standardized recipes should include the following elements:

- recipe name that describes the recipe;
- recipe number that is unique to each recipe;
- recipe category classification, e.g., main dish (entree), grains, and vegetables;
- ingredients used, including the form of the food (e.g., fresh, frozen, canned, or dried) and the preparation techniques used (e.g., peeled, grated, minced, and diced) with the required size if applicable (e.g., ½-inch slices or ¼-inch diced);
- quantity (weight and volume) of each ingredient for each recipe yield (e.g., 50 servings or 100 servings);
- units of measure for each ingredient using standard abbreviations (e.g., lb = pound, oz = ounces, gal = gallon, qt = quart, Tbsp = tablespoon, and tsp = teaspoon) and a fraction format;
- preparation directions including the specific steps;
- cooking time and temperature, as required;
- food safety Critical Control Points (CCPs), i.e., time and temperature critical limits for each step of preparing, holding, serving, and storing (visit the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage);
- serving size (the weight and/or volume of a single portion);
- recipe yield (weight and/or volume and number of servings), i.e., the amount produced when production is complete;
- equipment (such as pans, steamers and mixers) and serving utensils (such as scoops, ladles, and spoodles);
- crediting information for each meal component per serving (fruits, vegetables, grains, and MMA); and
- nutrient analysis, i.e., nutrition information per serving.

For more information, refer to “[Chapter 4: Meal Preparation Documentation](#)” in the USDA's [Menu Planner for School Meals](#).

### Developing Standardized Recipes

The process for developing standardized recipes includes recipe verification, product evaluation, and quantity adjustment. SFAs can learn more about this process in the Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition's [USDA Recipe Standardization Guide for School Nutrition Programs](#). This "how-to" guide describes recipe standardization techniques in detail and includes examples, practice exercises, and reference materials.

The CSDE's [Standardized Recipe Form for School Nutrition Programs](#) provides a template that SFAs may use to develop standardized recipes. For more information, refer to "[Determining Food Yields and Crediting](#)" in section 1 and "[Resources for standardized recipes](#)" in this section.

### Vendor-prepared Foods

Vendors that prepare foods for SFAs must have standardized recipes that document the meal pattern contribution per serving. SFAs are responsible for reviewing this crediting information to ensure its accuracy.

### Verifying Meal Pattern Compliance of Recipes from Other Sources

SFAs must ensure that local menus comply with the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. When using standardized recipes and menus from sources other than the USDA (such as websites, organizations, and other schools), menu planners should check crediting information for accuracy, and adapt if needed.



## Resources for Standardized Recipes

The websites and resources below assist SFAs with developing and using standardized recipes.

- Basic Culinary Math for School Nutrition Professionals (Institute of Child Nutrition):  
<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basic-culinary-math-for-school-nutrition-professiona>
- Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/>
- Child Nutrition Recipe Box (ICN):  
<https://theicn.org/cnrb/>
- Crediting Foods Made from Scratch (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs#ScratchFoods>
- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>
- On the Road to Professional Food Preparation eLearning: Recipe Adjustments (Institute of Child Nutrition):  
<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basic-culinary-math-for-school-nutrition-professionals/>
- Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW) of the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/>
- Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning#recipes>
- Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_menu\\_planning.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_menu_planning.pdf)
- Standardized Recipe Form for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/standardized\\_recipe\\_form\\_schools.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/standardized_recipe_form_schools.docx)
- Standardized Recipes (Chapter 4: Meal Preparation Documentation of the USDA's Menu Planner for School Meals):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/menu-planner>

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- Standardized Recipes (CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage): <https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs#StandardizedRecipes>
- STAR Strategies for Utilizing Standardized Recipes (Institute of Child Nutrition): <https://theicn.org/s-t-a-r-strategies-for-utilizing-standardized-recipes-may-2019/>
- USDA Recipe Standardization Guide for School Nutrition Programs (ICN): <https://theicn.org/cicn/usda-recipe-standardization-guide-for-school-nutrition-programs/>
- Weights and Measures (CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage) <https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs#WeightsMeasures>
- Why Use Standardized Recipes? Fact Sheet (ICN): <https://theicn.org/resources/527/food-service-management-skills/107291/why-use-standardized-recipes.pdf>

For more information, visit the “[Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs](#)” section of the CSDE’s Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.



## 5 — Introduction to Crediting Commercial Products

SFAs must be able to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial processed products offered in school meals. For example, to credit a breaded chicken patty product as 2 oz eq of the MMA component and 1 oz eq of the grains component, the manufacturer's documentation must indicate that the product's serving contains 2 ounces of cooked chicken and 0.8 ounce (22 grams) of WGR or enriched breading.

The acceptable types of documentation for commercial processed foods include:

- the original CN label from the product carton or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or
- a PFS signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of each meal component contained in one serving of the product.

The CSDE will review this product documentation during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

Commercial processed products without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in school meals.

It is important to note that only CN labels provide a guarantee of the product's contribution to the meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs. SFAs must check the crediting information on PFS forms for accuracy prior to using commercial products in reimbursable meals.

Table 5-1 compares the criteria for CN labels and PFS forms.

**Table 5-1. Comparison of CN labels and PFS forms**

Criteria	CN label	PFS
Standard information required	X	
Reviewed, approved, and monitored by the USDA	X	
Includes USDA guarantee of meal component contribution for Child Nutrition Programs	X	
Distinct six-digit product identification number	X	
SFAs must check crediting information for accuracy prior to use		X

For additional guidance on accepting product documentation, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and visit the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



## 6 — Child Nutrition (CN) Labels

The USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) CN Labeling Program is a voluntary federal labeling program for the Child Nutrition Programs. Food manufacturers have the option to include a standardized food crediting statement on their product labels, which the USDA approves prior to use. Manufacturers participating in the CN Labeling Program must have quality control procedures and inspection oversight that meet USDA's requirements.

The USDA does not require that manufacturers make CN-labeled products or that schools and institutions participating in the Child Nutrition Programs purchase foods with CN labels. Purchasing decisions are at the discretion of the local school or institution. If a CN-labeled product is required, the school or institution must clearly state this information in their purchasing specifications.

### Eligible Products

CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that provide at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz eq of the MMA component in the USDA's meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs. Examples include beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions.

CN labels also typically indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products. For example, CN-labeled pizza may list contributions to the MMA, grains, and vegetables component. CN-labeled breaded chicken nuggets may list contributions to the MMA and grains components.

### Benefits of Using CN-labeled Products

A CN label statement clearly identifies the contribution of a commercial product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product's formulation. CN labeling provides a warranty that the product contributes to the meal pattern requirements, as printed on the label.

### Considerations for CN-labeled Products

CN labels do not indicate that the product is healthier, more nutritious, or of a higher quality than a similar non-CN labeled product. The CN crediting statement declares the quantities of the creditable food items in a processed food that can be used to meet the meal pattern requirements. While a CN-labeled product is guaranteed to contain a certain quantity of food, it does not indicate that the quality of the food is any different than a non-CN labeled food.

Additionally, CN labels do not indicate that the product is safer to eat, or free of pathogens or allergens.

## Identifying CN Labels

The CN label is found on the product packaging and will contain the required elements below.

- The CN logo, which is a distinct border with “CN” on each side surrounding the meal pattern contribution statement.
- The meal pattern contribution statement, which provides specific crediting information for the serving.
- A six-digit product identification number, which is assigned by the USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the USDA.
- The USDA FNS authorization statement: “Use of this logo and statement authorized by the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.”
- The month and year of AMS approval (listed after the FNS authorization statement).
- Other required label elements, including the product name, ingredients statement, inspection legend, company signature/address line, and net weight.

Figure 6-1 shows an example of a CN label and the required elements. For training on CN labels, refer to Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation of the CSDE’s training program, [What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).





Figure 6-1. Sample CN label



- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Product name                            | 6. FNS authorization statement    |
| 2. Ingredients statement                   | 7. Month and year of AMS approval |
| 3. CN logo                                 | 8. Net weight                     |
| 4. Meal pattern contribution statement     | 9. Company signature/address line |
| 5. Six-digit product identification number | 10. Inspection legend             |



## Meal Pattern Contribution of CN Labels

CN labels indicate the meal pattern contribution of MMA and other components (such as grains, vegetables, and fruits) in one serving of the product. CN labels do not include crediting information for the milk component.

Guidance for each component on a CN label is summarized below.

### MMA contribution

A CN-labeled product lists the serving's MMA contribution in oz eq.

### Grains contribution

A CN-labeled product that contains a grain portion includes one of two crediting terms to indicate if the product credits as whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched.

- The term “oz eq grains” on the CN label indicates that the product meets the WGR criteria.
- The term “oz eq grains (enriched)” means the grain portion of the product is primarily made from enriched grains and credits toward the grains component but does not meet the WGR criteria.

### Vegetables contribution

A CN-labeled product that contains vegetables lists the serving's contribution to the five vegetable subgroups in cups (dark green, red/orange, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy, and other). For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's [Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program](#).

### Fruits contribution

A CN-labeled product that contains fruit lists the serving's contribution to the fruits component in cups.

## Acceptable Documentation

Acceptable and valid documentation for a CN label includes 1) the original CN label from the product carton; or 2) a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton. CN labels that are photocopied or photographed must be visible and legible. SFAs must maintain this documentation on file with all other menu records (refer to “[Records Retention](#)” in section 1).

The CSDE recommends maintaining original CN labels in a designated binder or folder for easy reference and storing digital photos and scans of CN labels in an easily accessible electronic folder. For additional guidance on accepting product documentation, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

### CN labels with a watermark

Manufacturers may use a CN label with a watermark (refer to figure 6-2) when the CN logo and contribution statement are on product information other than the actual product carton. Manufacturers may provide a watermarked CN label during the bidding process. Original CN labels on product cartons will not have a watermark.

If the original CN label or a photocopy or photograph of the original CN label is not available, a watermarked CN label is acceptable documentation for the Administrative Review of the Child Nutrition Programs. The watermarked CN label must be attached to a bill of lading (invoice) that contains the product name and CN number (refer to figure 6-3).


For more information, refer to the USDA’s policy memos, [SP 11-2015 \(v2\)](#), [CACFP 10-2015](#), and [SFSP 13-2015: CN Labels Copied with a Watermark Acceptable Documentation](#), and [SP 27-2015](#), [CACFP 09-2015](#), and [SFSP 12-2015: Administrative Review Process Regarding the Child Nutrition \(CN\) Label, Watermarked CN Label and Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement](#).

Additional guidance on CN labels is available in the “[CN Labels](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Figure 6-2. Sample CN Label with a watermark



Figure 6-3. Sample bill of lading (invoice) for a CN-labeled product



Chicken Wok Company  
 1234 Kluck Street  
 Poultry, PA, 12345  
 123-456-7890

**Bill of Lading (Invoice)**

**Invoice Number:** 1234  
**Date:** December 22, 2022

<p><b>Bill to:</b>                  ABC School District                  1234 Anystreet                  Anytown, CT 01234</p>	<p><b>Ship to:</b>                  ABC School District                  1234 Anystreet                  Anytown, CT 01234</p>
--	--

Item description and code number	Unit	Quantity	Unit price	Amount
Chicken Stir-fry Bowl, CN #000000	each	200	\$1.50	\$300.00
<b>Total:</b>				<b>\$300.00</b>

## Authorized CN Labels and Manufacturers

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) publishes a list of manufacturers approved for CN labels and a list of products with CN labels. These lists are updated monthly in the USDA's [Authorized Labels and Manufacturers](#) webpage.

## Resources for CN labels

The resources below provide additional information on CN labels.

- Authorized Manufacturers and Labels (USDA webpage):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/usdausdc-authorized-labels-and-manufacturers>
- Child Nutrition (CN) Labels (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs#CNlabels>
- Crediting Commercial Processed Products in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs#CommercialProducts>
- CN Labels and Product Formulation Statements (USDA Presentation):  
<https://theicn.org/resources/930/march-2016/109876/manufacturers-product-formulation-statement-pfs03-31-16.pdf>
- Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Manual (USDA):  
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/child-nutrition-labeling-manual.pdf>
- CN Labeling Program (USDA website):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling-program>
- USDA Memo SP 11-2015 (v2), CACFP 10-2015, and SFSP 13-2015: CN Labels Copied with a Watermark Acceptable Documentation:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn-labels-copied-watermark-acceptable-documentation>
- USDA Memo SP 27-2015, CACFP 09-2015, and SFSP 12-2015: Administrative Review Process Regarding the Child Nutrition (CN) Label, Watermarked CN Label and Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/administrative-review-process-regarding-child-nutrition-cn-label-watermarked-cn-label-and>
- Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs (CDSE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/cn\\_labels\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/cn_labels_snp.pdf)

- What's in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

Additional crediting documentation resources are available in the “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#)” section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.



## 7 — Product Formulation Statements

A product formulation statement (PFS) is a document developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs. A PFS generally includes a detailed explanation of what the product contains and indicates the amount of each ingredient in the product by weight. Unlike CN labels, the information on a PFS can vary among manufacturers because these forms are not reviewed, approved, or monitored by the USDA.

### Required Information for PFS forms

A PFS is an official certified document of the company. It must be on company letterhead and signed by a person of authority in the company, such as the quality control manager or the appropriate staff in nutrition or research and development. Figure 7-1 shows a sample PFS for a commercial meat/meat alternate product.

To be acceptable as crediting documentation for the school nutrition programs, a PFS must include the information below.

1. Product name, which must match or have a similar description to the name on the product label.
2. Product code, which is unique identifier assigned by the manufacturer and may include numbers, letters, or a combination of both.
3. Serving or portion size, which must represent the amount of the product as purchased or ready for serving.
4. Creditable ingredients, which must match or have a similar description to the ingredients listed on the product's label and a food item in the FBG.
5. Information to demonstrate how the creditable ingredients contribute toward the meal pattern based on the FBG (refer to [“Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs”](#) in section 1).

If the PFS does not meet these requirements, the SFA cannot accept it and the product cannot credit in school meals.

Figure 7-1. Sample PFS for a commercial MMA product



**Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Meats/Meat Alternates (M/MA) in Child Nutrition Programs**

Program operators should include a copy of the label from the purchased product package in addition to the following information on letterhead signed by an official company representative.

Product Name: Grilled Chicken Nuggets Code No.: 123456

Manufacturer: ABC Chicken Company Serving Size: 4 nuggets (2.6 ounces)

**I. Meats**

Fill out the chart below to determine the creditable amount of Meats.

DESCRIPTION OF CREDITABLE MEAT INGREDIENT PER FOOD BUYING GUIDE (FBG)	OUNCES PER RAW PORTION OF CREDITABLE MEAT INGREDIENT A	MULTIPLY	FBG YIELD <sup>1</sup> B	CREDITABLE AMOUNT A x B
Boneless chicken	2.88 ounces	x	.7	2.016
		x		
		x		
<b>C. Total Creditable Meats Amount<sup>5</sup></b>				<b>2.016</b>

<sup>1</sup> FBG yield = Additional Information column.

Total weight (per portion) of product as purchased 2.6 ounces

Total creditable amount of product (per portion). (Reminder: total creditable amount (per portion) cannot exceed the total weight (per portion).) 2 ounce equivalents

I certify that the above information is true and correct and that a 2.6 ounce serving of the above product (ready for serving) contains 2 ounces of equivalent meat/meat alternate when prepared according to directions.

I further certify that any APP used in the product conforms to the Food and Nutrition Service Regulations (7 CFR Parts 210, 220, 225, 226, Appendix A) as demonstrated by the attached supplier documentation.

John Smith  
Signature

President  
Title

John Smith  
Printed Name

12/09/2022  
Date

(800) 123-4567  
Phone Number



## Verifying PFS Forms for Accuracy

SFAs must verify the PFS for accuracy before including the commercial product in reimbursable meals. If the PFS does not clearly document the meal pattern crediting information, SFAs must request supporting documentation from the manufacturer.

For guidance on how to review a PFS, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs](#). For guidance on how to review a grain PFS, refer to the CSDE's [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Training on PFS forms is provided in “Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation” of the CSDE's training program, [What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

SFAs must maintain PFS forms and crediting documentation on file (refer to “[Records Retention](#)” in section 1). The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.



## USDA's PFS forms for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns

The USDA's [Food Manufacturers/Industry](#) website provides sample PFS templates for the meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains components. The PFS forms that apply to the NSLP and SBP meal patterns are listed below.

- **Grains:** Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Grains\\_Oz\\_Eq\\_Fillable\\_508.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Grains_Oz_Eq_Fillable_508.pdf)
- **Grains (completed sample):** Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Example\\_Grains\\_Oz\\_Eq.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Example_Grains_Oz_Eq.pdf)
- **Meats/Meat Alternates:** Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Meats/Meat Alternates (M/MA) in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):  
[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Meats-Meat\\_Alternates\\_Fillable\\_508.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Meats-Meat_Alternates_Fillable_508.pdf)
- **Vegetables and Fruits:** Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in School Meal Programs (USDA):  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Veg\\_Subgroups\\_Fruits\\_Fillable\\_508.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Veg_Subgroups_Fruits_Fillable_508.pdf)
- **Vegetables and Fruits (completed sample for vegetables):** Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in School Meal Programs: Completed Sample for Vegetables (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFSsamplevegetables.pdf>
- **Vegetables and Fruits (completed sample for fruits):** Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in School Meal Programs: Completed Sample for Fruits (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFSsamplefruits.pdf>

Manufacturers are not required to use the USDA forms. However, alternate PFS forms must include all required information from the USDA forms.

## Resources for PFS forms

The resources below provide guidance on using PFS forms in the school nutrition programs.

- FBG Module 3: Product Formulation Statements (Institute of Child Nutrition):  
<https://theicn.docebos.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/139/fbg-module-3-product-formulation-statements-pfs>
- Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement: Is it Acceptable? (ICN and USDA):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtUo70IP9cc>
- Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement: Is it Acceptable? Presentation Slides (ICN and USDA):  
<https://theicn.org/resources/930/march-2016/109876/manufacturers-product-formulation-statement-pfs03-31-16.pdf>
- Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation (CSDE’s training program, What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials>
- Product Formulation Statements (CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs#PFS>
- 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](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf)
- Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf>
- Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/product\\_formulation\\_statements.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/product_formulation_statements.pdf)
- When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when\\_commercial\\_grain\\_products\\_require\\_pfs\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when_commercial_grain_products_require_pfs_snp.pdf)

Additional crediting documentation resources are available in the “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.



## 8 — Buy American Requirement

All foods sold in the USDA’s school nutrition programs must comply with the Buy American requirement under the federal regulations for the NSLP ([7 CFR 210.21 \(d\)](#)) and SBP ([7 CFR 220.16 \(d\)](#)), and the requirements of the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The Buy American requirement specifies that schools and institutions must purchase domestic commodities or products to the maximum extent practicable.

- A “domestic commodity or product” is an agricultural commodity that is produced in the United States (U.S.), and a food product that is processed in the U.S. substantially using agricultural commodities that are produced in the U.S.
- “Substantially” means that over 51 percent of the final processed product consists of agricultural commodities that were grown domestically.

All procurement procedures, solicitations, and contracts must include the Buy American requirement.



## Annual Limit for Non-domestic Food Purchases

The final rule requires SFAs to gradually reach an annual 5 percent cap for non-domestic food purchases by school year 2031-32. The table below summarizes the required annual cap by school year.

**Table 8-1. Annual cap on non-domestic food purchases by school year**

School year	Annual cap
2025-2026 (beginning July 1, 2025)	10 percent
2028-2029 (beginning July 1, 2028)	8 percent
2031-2032 (beginning July 1, 2031)	5 percent

SFAs must ensure that all foods purchased using funds from the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA) comply with the Buy American provision. This includes foods that are part of reimbursable meals and competitive foods sold a la carte, i.e., foods and beverages sold separately from reimbursable meals.

## Limited Exceptions

The USDA allows only two limited exceptions to the requirement that SFAs must purchase domestic foods.

1. The product is listed on the [Federal Acquisitions Regulations \(FAR\) Non-available Articles List \(FAR 25.104\)](#) and/or is not produced or manufactured in the U.S. in sufficient and reasonably available quantities of a satisfactory quality. The Nonavailable Articles List is a list of items that have been deemed not available in the U.S. and excepted from the Buy American statute.
2. Competitive bids reveal the costs of a U.S. product are significantly higher than the non-domestic product. The definition of “significantly higher” is not defined by the USDA and is at the SFA’s discretion. The SFA is responsible for determining the dollar amount or percentage that constitutes a significantly higher cost for a domestic product, thus permitting the use of an exception.

Nondomestic foods are permitted only when one of these exceptions applies.

## Required Documentation for Nondomestic Foods

SFAs must maintain documentation on file to indicate that any purchases of nondomestic foods meet one of the exceptions indicated above. Two types of documentation are permitted.

1. The product is listed on the FAR Non-available Articles List. Additional documentation is not required when SFAs purchase food items found on this list.
2. The CSDE's *Buy American Justification Form* must be used to document any other nondomestic foods that are not on the FAR Non-available Articles List. SFAs must maintain this form on file with other required records in accordance with the NSLP and SBP regulations.

The CSDE will evaluate the SFA's documentation and compliance with the Buy American requirement during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

## Buy American Resources

The resources below provide guidance on the Buy American provision.

- Buy American Factsheet (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/buy-american-fact-sheet>
- Buy American Justification Form (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/procure/buy\\_american\\_form.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/procure/buy_american_form.pdf)
- Buy American Requirements ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Procurement for School Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/procurement-for-school-nutrition-programs/documents#BuyAmerican>
- Buy American Requirements for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/procure/buy\\_american\\_requirements\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/procure/buy_american_requirements_snp.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-americans>
- USDA Memo SP 32-2019: Buy American and the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/buy-american-and-agriculture-improvement-act-2018>

## 8 | Buy American Requirement

- USDA Memo SP 38-2017: Compliance with and Enforcement of the Buy American Provision in the NSLP:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/compliance-enforcement-buy-american>

For additional guidance, visit the “[Buy American Provision](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Procurement for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.





## 9 — Nutrition Information

SFAs must obtain nutrition information for all commercially prepared foods served in school meals. If a processed product does not have a Nutrition Facts label, SFAs are responsible for obtaining the necessary information from the manufacturer. Nutrition information must be readily available for use by the CSDE when a nutrient analysis of school menus is required as part of the CSDE's Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

In addition to CN labels and PFS forms, nutrition information helps menu planners determine if certain commercial products credit toward the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. Nutrition information is also required to meet the USDA's requirement for providing reasonable meal modifications for children whose disability restricts their diet.

### Determining Crediting Information

For many commercial products, SFAs will need to review the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients to determine crediting information. Some examples of when nutrition information is required are indicated below.

- **Crediting fluid milk substitutes:** The USDA allows SFAs to offer allowable fluid milk substitutes (plant-based beverages like soy milk) for children whose special dietary needs do not constitute a disability. These fluid milk substitutes must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes (refer to the CSDE's resource, [Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs](#)). Some fluid milk substitutes include this information on their Nutrition Facts label, while others require additional documentation from the manufacturer to determine compliance.
- **Crediting deli meats, hotdogs, sausages, and similar foods:** Deli meats, hotdogs, sausages, and similar foods that contain binders and extenders and are not CN label require a PFS to determine crediting information. These foods credit based on the percentage of meat in the product formula, not the serving weight. For example, one brand of deli meat might require 1.6 ounces to credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, while another brand might require 2.3 ounces. The ingredients statement indicates if the product contains added liquids, binders, and extenders. This alerts the menu planner that a PFS is required to determine the crediting information for the product. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Deli Meats in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

- Crediting tempeh:** To credit 1 ounce of tempeh as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, its 11 ingredients must be limited to soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs (refer to [USDA Memo SP 25-2019](#), [CACFP 12-2019](#), and [SFSP 11-2019: Crediting Tempeh in the Child Nutrition Programs](#)). If a tempeh product contains other ingredients, SFAs must obtain a CN label or PFS to document crediting information. Menu planners must read the ingredients statement to determine if tempeh products contain additional ingredients.
- Crediting commercial tofu products:** To credit as 1 oz eq of the MMA component, commercial tofu products and tofu and other soy products must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). Menu planners must review the Nutrition Facts label to determine if a tofu product meets this requirement. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#).
- Oz eq contribution for commercial grain products:** To credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component, commercial grain products must meet the specific weight for the appropriate grain group in the USDA Exhibit A chart (refer to the CSDE's resources, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#) and [How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#)). Menu planners must review the Nutrition Facts label to determine the manufacturer's serving weight, which is required to determine the oz eq contribution.
- Crediting enriched grain products:** To credit as the grains component, enriched grain products must meet the limit for noncreditable grains, i.e., no more than 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-G (baked goods) or 6.99 grams per portion for groups H (cereal grains). Menu planners must review the ingredients statement to determine if the product contains any noncreditable grains. This alerts the menu planner if a PFS is required to determine the crediting information for the product. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#).
- Crediting WGR commercial grain products:** To credit as a WGR food, commercial grain products must meet three criteria: 1) the first ingredient (excluding water) is a whole grain; 2) any other creditable grains are enriched; and 3) the combined weight of noncreditable grains does not exceed the specified grains, i.e., no more than 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-G (baked goods) or 6.99 grams per portion for groups H (cereal



grains). Menu planners must read the ingredients statement to determine if a whole grain is the first ingredient and if the product contains any noncreditable grains. This alerts the menu planner if a PFS is required to determine if the product meets the WGR criteria. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

- **Crediting commercial smoothies:** 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 NSLP and SBP meal patterns. Menu planners must read the ingredients statement to determine if commercial smoothies contain these ingredients. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Smoothies in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

For guidance on how to read food labels, refer to section 6 of the CSDE's [Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

## Making Meal Modifications

Federal nondiscrimination laws and regulations contain provisions that require schools and institutions to make reasonable meal modifications on a case-by-case basis for children whose disability restricts their diet. SFAs will need to review the nutrition information for commercial products when planning meal modifications for children with special dietary concerns, such as food allergies, lactose intolerance, and celiac disease. This information is required to modify meals so they are safe for the child to eat.

The USDA considers providing nutrition information for foods served in school meals to be part of reasonable meal modifications for children whose disability restricts their diet. SFAs are responsible for making nutrition information for school meals available to students, families, school nurses and other medical professionals, and appropriate school staff, as needed. For information on the requirements for meal modifications, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit the CSDE's [Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

## **Nutrition Information for USDA Foods**

The USDA's [USDA Foods in Schools Product Information Sheets](#) webpage provides product information sheets for USDA Foods. These sheets include the product's description, crediting and yield information, culinary tips and recipes, food safety information, and a general Nutrition Facts label. However, they do not include a product-specific Nutrition Facts label or ingredients statement.

For further processed USDA Foods, the nutrition information and ingredients for USDA direct delivery food items (brown box) may vary based on the vendor who received the bid. If SFAs require product information for students with food allergies or other dietary needs, they must obtain product-specific information from the manufacturer.

To find the nutrition information for USDA direct delivery food items, check the outside of the case or the inside packaging. If nutrition information is not available, check with the product's manufacturer. The processor's agreement with the Connecticut Food Distribution Program (FDP) requires that the processor must provide product nutrition information to SFAs upon request and make this information available on their website. For additional assistance, contact the [Connecticut FDP staff](#).

## **Nutrition Disclosure for Alternate Protein Products**

The NSLP regulations ([7 CFR 210.10 \(n\)](#)) require that schools must accurately represent foods on lunch and breakfast menus. Menus cannot claim that a food item is beef, pork, poultry (such as chicken or turkey), or seafood (such as fish or tuna) if the food item contains more than 30 percent alternate protein products (APPs). The names used for these menu items must reflect that they are not 100 percent meat, poultry, or fish. For more information on APPs, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

## Nutrient Analysis

During the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs, the CSDE must assess whether meals offered to students in grades K-12 are consistent with the USDA's weekly dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. If a nutrient analysis is required as part of the CSDE's Administrative Review of the SFA's school nutrition programs, it will include all foods (including condiments) and beverages offered as part of reimbursable meals during the one-week review period. Nutrition information must be available for all menu items.

The USDA requires SFAs to follow the meal patterns to meet nutrient targets. SFAs are not required to conduct a nutrient analysis of their own menus. However, SFAs may choose to conduct a nutrient analysis to assist with ensuring that school menus meet the weekly dietary specifications. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [\*Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12\*](#).



## Resources for Nutrition Information

The resources below provide guidance on nutrition information.

- Food Data Central (USDA):  
<https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/>
- Food Labeling & Nutrition (FDA):  
<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling-nutrition>
- Food Labels (CSDE's Nutrition Education webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/nutrition-education#FoodLabels>
- Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide\\_dietary\\_specifications\\_nslp\\_sbp\\_k12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_dietary_specifications_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf)
- Nutrient Analysis of Menus (CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning#NutrientAnalysis>
- Nutrient and Meal Pattern Analysis Resources for School Meals (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/program-operator/nutrient-meal-pattern-analysis>
- Product Specifications & Requirements for USDA Foods (USDA Agricultural Marketing Service):  
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food/product-specs>
- Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/app\\_requirements\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/app_requirements_snp.pdf)
- USDA Approved Nutrient Analysis Software (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/usda-approved-nutrient-analysis-software>
- USDA Foods in Schools Product Information Sheets (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/usda-fis/product-information-sheets>

For additional guidance, visit the “[Nutrient Analysis of Menus](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

## 8 — Resources

This section includes additional resources and websites to assist SFAs with meeting the NSLP and SBP meal patterns and the crediting, documentation, and meal service requirements for the school nutrition programs. More links to information on the federal and state requirements and guidance for school meals are available on the CSDE's [Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages. For a list of resources on the NSLP and SBP meal patterns and crediting requirements for grades K-12, refer to the CSDE's [Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

### CSDE Guides

Afterschool Snack Program Handbook (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/asp\\_handbook.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/asp_handbook.pdf)

Crediting Guide for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide\\_crediting\\_nslp\\_sbp\\_k12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_crediting_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf)

Guide to Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/guide\\_meal\\_modifications\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/guide_meal_modifications_snp.pdf)

Guide to the Meal Service Requirements for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide\\_meal\\_service\\_nslp\\_sbp\\_k12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_meal_service_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf)

Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/wgr\\_requirement\\_snp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/wgr_requirement_snp_grades_k-12.pdf)

Guide to Menu Documentation for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide\\_menu\\_documentation\\_nslp\\_sbp\\_k12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_menu_documentation_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf)

Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide\\_dietary\\_specifications\\_nslp\\_sbp\\_k12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_dietary_specifications_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf)

Guide to the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide\\_meal\\_patterns\\_nslp\\_sbp\\_k12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_meal_patterns_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf)

Menu Planning Guidance for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning-guidance-for-school-meals>

Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/menu\\_planning\\_guide\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/menu_planning_guide_preschool.pdf)

Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/ovs/ovs\\_guide\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/ovs/ovs_guide_snp.pdf)

### CSDE Resource Lists

Resource List for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_child\\_nutrition\\_programs.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_child_nutrition_programs.pdf)

Resource List for Competitive Foods (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_competitive\\_foods.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_competitive_foods.pdf)

Resource List for Dietary Guidance and Nutrition Information (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_dietary\\_guidance.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_dietary_guidance.pdf)

Resource List for Food Safety in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_food\\_safety.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_food_safety.pdf)

Resource List for Health and Achievement (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_achievement.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_achievement.pdf)

Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_menu\\_planning.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_menu_planning.pdf)

Resource List for Nutrition Education (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_nutrition\\_education.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_nutrition_education.pdf)

Resource List for Obesity Data and Preventions (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_obesity.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_obesity.pdf)

Resource List for Physical Activity and Physical Education (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_physical\\_activity.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_physical_activity.pdf)

Resource List for Special Diets in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_special\\_diets.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_special_diets.pdf)

Resource List for Wellness Policies for Schools and Child Care (CSDE):  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources\\_wellness\\_policy.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/resources/resources_wellness_policy.pdf)

Resources for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/resources-for-child-nutrition-programs>



Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/resources\\_school\\_meal\\_patterns\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/resources_school_meal_patterns_grades_k-12.pdf)

## Meal Components and Crediting

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling-program>

Crediting Commercial Processed Products (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs#CommercialProducts>

Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs>

Crediting Foods Made from Scratch (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs#ScratchFoods>

Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/crediting\\_summary\\_charts\\_snp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_snp_grades_k-12.pdf)

Fruits Component for Grades K-12 ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/documents#Fruits>

Grains Component for Grades K-12 ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/documents#grains>

Meats/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12 ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/documents#MMA>

Milk Component for Grades K-12 ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/documents#Milk>

Vegetables Component for Grades K-12 (“Documents/Forms” section of CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/documents#Vegetables>

What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE’s Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

## **Meal Patterns and Menu Planning**

Breakfast Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/Sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs/documents#BreakfastMealPatterns>

Dietary Specifications (Nutrition Standards for School Meals) (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs/documents#DietarySpecifications>

Lunch Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs/documents#LunchMealPatterns>

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs/documents>

Menu Planner for School Meals (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/menu-planner>

Menu Planning Checklists for Lunch for Grades K-12 (CSDE’s Forms for School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/forms-for-school-nutrition-programs#MenuPlanningChecklistsLunchGradesK-12>

Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning>

Menu Planning for School Meals (“Related Resources” section of CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#MenuPlanningSchoolMeals>

Nutrition Standards for School Meals (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nutrition-standards-school-meals>

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/overview\\_menu\\_planning\\_nslp\\_gradesk-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/overview_menu_planning_nslp_gradesk-12.pdf)

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sbp/overview\\_menu\\_planning\\_sbp\\_gradesk-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sbp/overview_menu_planning_sbp_gradesk-12.pdf)

Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/resources\\_school\\_meal\\_patterns\\_gradesk-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/resources_school_meal_patterns_gradesk-12.pdf)

Sodium Limits for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/sodium\\_limits\\_nslp\\_sbp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/sodium_limits_nslp_sbp.pdf)

What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

## Regulations and Policy

Child Nutrition Programs Legislation and Regulations (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/legislation-regulations>

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the National School Lunch Program (7 CFR 210) (USDA):

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-210>

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the School Breakfast Program (7 CFR 220) (USDA):

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-220>

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/laws-and-regulations-for-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Final Rule (77 FR 4087): Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/fr-012612>

USDA Final Rule (87 FR 6984): Child Nutrition Programs: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/02/07/2022-02327/child-nutrition-programs-transitional-standards-for-milk-whole-grains-and-sodium>

USDA Final Rule Correction (87 FR 52329): Child Nutrition Programs: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/08/25/2022-18220/child-nutrition-programs-transitional-standards-for-milk-whole-grains-and-sodium-correction>

USDA Final Rule (89 FR 31962): Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (“Laws/Regulations” section of CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs):

[https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs/regulations#Final\\_Rule\\_Meal\\_Patterns\\_DGA](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs/regulations#Final_Rule_Meal_Patterns_DGA)

USDA Memo SP 05-2022: Meal Requirements Under the NSLP & SBP: Q&A for Program Operators Updated to Support the Transitional Standards Effective July 1, 2022:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/sp052022-questions-answers-program-operators>

USDA Memo SP 17-2012: Procurement Questions and Answers to Assist in the Implementation of the final rule titled Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/procurement-qas-assist-implementation-final-rule>

### Websites

Beverage Requirements (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/beverage-requirements>

Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/child-nutrition-programs>

Child Nutrition Sharing Site (ICN):

<https://theicn.org/cnss/>

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Documents & Resources (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources>

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Instructions (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/fns-instructions-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/laws-and-regulations-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/manuals-and-guides-for-child-nutrition-programs>

National School Lunch Program (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/national-school-lunch-program>

Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/lists/operational-memoranda-for-school-nutrition-programs>

Procurement for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/procurement-for-school-nutrition-programs>

Production Records for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/production-records-for-school-nutrition-programs>

Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/program-guidance-school-nutrition-programs>

Resources for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/resources-for-child-nutrition-programs>

School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/school-breakfast-program>

School Lunch Tray and Table Talk (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/school-lunch-tray-and-table-talk>

Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/seamless-summer-option-sso-of-the-nslp>

Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-school-nutrition-programs>

Training for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/training-for-child-nutrition-programs>



## Glossary

**Administrative Review (AR):** The state agency’s comprehensive offsite and onsite evaluation of all SFAs participating in the NSLP and SBP. The review cycle is every three years for each SFA and includes a review of critical and general areas. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Administrative Review for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**Afterschool Snack Program (ASP):** The USDA’s federally assisted snack program implemented through the NSLP. The ASP provides cash reimbursement to help schools serve snacks to children in afterschool activities aimed at promoting the health and well-being of children and youth. Schools must provide children with regularly scheduled activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment that includes educational or enrichment activities, e.g., mentoring/tutoring programs. Programs must meet state or local licensing requirements and health and safety standards. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Afterschool Snack Program](#) webpage.

**afterschool snacks:** Reimbursable snacks offered in the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP). For more information, refer to “Afterschool Snack Program” in this section.

**age/grade groups:** The three grade groupings (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12) of the USDA’s meal breakfast and lunch patterns for grades K-12. The classification of grade groups is based on children’s nutritional needs and the ages that typically correspond with these grade levels (ages 5-10 for grades K-5, ages 11-13 for grades 6-8, and ages 14-18 for grades 9-12).

**alternate protein products (APPs):** Food ingredients processed from soy or other vegetable protein sources (e.g., dehydrated granules, particles, or flakes) that may be used alone or in combination with meat, poultry, or seafood. Some examples include soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. The USDA has specific requirements for the crediting of APPs in Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, refer to “[Seventh-day Adventist Sponsors](#)” in section 4, and the CSDE’s resource, [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**calories:** The measurement of energy provided by foods and beverages.

**Child Nutrition (CN) label:** A statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product's formulation. Products eligible for CN labels include main dish entrees that provide at least ½ oz eq of the MMA component, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. CN labels usually indicate the contribution of other meal components (such as vegetables, grains, and fruits) that are part of these products. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and visit the "Child Nutrition (CN) Labels" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**Child Nutrition Programs:** The USDA's federally funded programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks to children, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP also provides nutritious meals and snacks to the frail elderly in adult day care centers. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**creditable food:** A food or beverage that counts toward meeting the meal pattern requirements for reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks in the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Guide for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#) and visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**creditable grains:** The ingredients in a commercial grain product or standardized recipe that credit toward the grains component. Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ. For more information, refer the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**cycle menu:** A series of menus planned for a specific period, with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help schools comply with the meal pattern requirements, control food cost, control inventory, improve staff efficiency, and save time and labor costs. For more information, refer to "Using cycle menus" in section 2.

**Dietary Guidelines for Americans:** A federal document that provides science-based advice for Americans ages 2 and older to promote health and reduce risk for chronic diseases through diet and physical activity. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the USDA jointly publish the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* every five years. This document forms the basis of federal food, nutrition education, and information programs. For more information, visit the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) webpage.



**dietary specifications:** The USDA's nutrition standards for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12, that include weekly calorie ranges and weekly limits for saturated fat and sodium. For information on the specific dietary specifications for each grade group, visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For guidance on meeting the dietary specifications, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

Effective with school year 2026-27 (beginning July 1, 2027), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), requires a new weekly dietary specification for added sugars (less than 10 percent of calories). For more information, visit the "Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes" section of the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**edible portion:** The portion of a food that can be eaten after the nonedible parts are removed. Examples include cooked, lean meat without bone, and fruits without seeds or pits.

**enriched grains:** Refined grains (such as wheat, rice, and corn) and grain products (such as cereal, pasta, and bread) that have some vitamins and minerals added to replace the nutrients lost during processing. The five enrichment nutrients are added within limits specified by the FDA, and include thiamin (B<sub>1</sub>), riboflavin (B<sub>2</sub>), niacin (B<sub>3</sub>), folic acid, and iron. For more information, refer the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**enrichment:** Adding back nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) originally present in a food that were lost during processing. Enrichment nutrients are added back in approximately the same levels as were originally present in the food. For more information, refer to "enriched grains" in this section.

**Exhibit A chart:** The USDA's [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#) chart that indicates the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for different types of grain foods to provide 1 oz eq of the grains component (applies to the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 and the NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns) or 1 serving of the grains/breads component (applies to the SFSP meal pattern and ASP meal pattern for grades K-12). The required amounts in Exhibit A chart are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs because these programs have different meal patterns. The CSDE's resource, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#), indicates the Exhibit A grain oz eq that apply to grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern for children. The grains/breads component changes to the grains component and the required quantities change from grains/breads servings to grains oz eq. For more information, visit the "Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes" section of the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**flour:** Finely ground and sifted wheat or other grains such as rye, corn, rice, or buckwheat.

**fluid milk substitutes:** Plant-based beverages designed to replace cow's milk, such as soy milk, almond milk, rice milk, and oat milk. Fluid milk substitutes may replace regular cow's milk in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks for children who do not consume milk due to non-disability reasons, if they meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Only certain brands of fluid milk substitutes meet these standards. For more information, refer to "nutrition standards for milk substitutes" in this section and the CSDE's resources, [Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Determining if Nondairy Milk Substitutes Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in School Nutrition Programs](#).

**food item:** A specific food offered within the required meal components for reimbursable meals in the USDA's school nutrition programs. A food item may contain one or more meal components or more than one serving of a single component. For example, an entree could provide 1 oz eq of the grains component and 1 oz eq of the MMA component. A 2-ounce whole grain or enriched bagel could provide 2 oz eq of the grains component.

**food-based menu planning:** A type of menu planning for the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs that uses a meal pattern with specific meal components in certain amounts based on specific age/grade groups. For more information, refer to "meal components" in this section.

**fruits component:** The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that includes fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice. Fruit juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruit offerings at lunch or breakfast. For more information, visit the "[Fruits Component](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

**full meal component:** The daily quantity designated by the menu planner (no less than the established minimum) to meet the required weekly ranges.

**full serving:** Refer to "full meal component" in this section.

**full-strength fruit or vegetable juice:** An undiluted product obtained by extraction from sound fruit. Full-strength juice may be fresh, canned, frozen or reconstituted from concentrate and may be served in either liquid or frozen state or as an ingredient in a recipe. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the following terms: "full-strength juice," "single-strength juice," "100 percent juice," "reconstituted juice," or "juice from concentrate." For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Juice in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

**grade groups:** Refer to "age/grade groups" in this section.

**grain-based desserts:** Desserts made of grains, such as brownies, cookies, sweet crackers (e.g., graham crackers and animal crackers), cakes, cupcakes, coffee cakes, cinnamon streusel quick breads, piecrusts in sweet pies (e.g., apple, coconut, blueberry, and pecan), cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, sweet scones (e.g., blueberry, orange cranberry, and chocolate chip), sweet croissants (e.g., chocolate or almond filled), sweet rice puddings (e.g., cinnamon and vanilla), sweet bread puddings (e.g., made with cinnamon, fruits, chocolate, or icing), and sweet pita chips (e.g., cinnamon sugar). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Grain-based Desserts in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**grains:** Plants in the grass family that produce a dry, edible fruit commonly called a kernel, grain, or berry.

**grains component:** The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that includes cereal grains and products made from their flours. Creditable grain foods include products and recipes that are WGR or enriched. Creditable cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals include products that are WGR, enriched, or fortified. For more information, visit the "[Grains Component](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

**juice drink:** A product resembling juice that contains full-strength juice along with added water and possibly other ingredients, such as sweeteners, spices, or flavorings. Juice drinks do not credit toward the meal pattern requirements.

**legumes:** A type of plant that includes pods, e.g., soybeans, peanuts, fresh peas, fresh beans, and pulses (beans, peas, and lentils). For more information, refer to “beans, peas, and lentils (pulses)” and “pulses” in this section.

**local educational agency (LEA):** A public board of education or other public or private nonprofit authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public or private nonprofit elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public or private nonprofit elementary schools or secondary schools. The term also includes any other public or private nonprofit institution or agency having administrative control and direction of a public or private nonprofit elementary school or secondary school, including residential child care institutions, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, and educational service agencies and consortia of those agencies, as well as the state educational agency in a state or territory in which the state educational agency is the sole educational agency for all public or private nonprofit schools.

**main dish:** The main food item in the menu, which is complemented by the other food items. Examples of main dish items include pizza, chicken stir-fry, and chef’s salad with ham, hard-boiled egg, and cheese.

**meal components:** The five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals in the NSLP (milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and MMA) and the three food groups that comprise reimbursable breakfasts in the SBP (grains/MMA, fruits with optional vegetable substitutions, and milk). For information on the crediting requirements for each meal component, refer to the CSDE’s [Crediting Guide for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#) and visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**meal pattern:** The required meal components and minimum servings that schools and institutions participating in the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and afterschool snacks served to children. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s [Guide to the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#) and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**meals:** Refer to “reimbursable meals” in this section.

**meat alternates:** Foods that provide a similar protein content to meat. Meat alternates include alternate protein products, cheese, eggs, cooked dry beans and peas, nuts and seeds and their butters (except for acorn, chestnut, and coconut), yogurt, soy yogurt, commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein in a ¼-cup (2.2 ounces) serving, and tempeh. For more information, visit the [“Meats/Meat Alternates Component”](#) section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

**meats/meat alternates (MMA) component:** The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that includes meats (e.g., beef, poultry, and fish) and meat alternates, such as eggs, cheese, yogurt, beans, peas, and lentils, nuts, and seeds. For more information, visit the [“Meats/Meat Alternates Component”](#) section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

**menu item:** Any planned main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, grain, or milk that is part of the reimbursable meal. Menu items consist of food items. For more information, refer to “food item” in this section.

**milk component:** The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that includes pasteurized fluid milk that meets federal and state regulations. The milk component also includes fluid milk substitutes that meet the USDA’s nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. For more information, refer to “fluid milk substitutes” and “nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes” in this section, and visit the [“Milk Component”](#) section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

**National School Lunch Program (NSLP):** The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free lunches to children each school day. The NSLP was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [National School Lunch Program](#) webpage.

**noncreditable foods:** Foods and beverages that do not contribute toward the meal patterns for the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs. Noncreditable foods and beverages are either in amounts too small to credit (i.e., foods and beverages that do not provide the minimum creditable amount of a meal component) or they do not belong to the meal components. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Noncreditable Foods in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

**noncreditable grains:** Grain ingredients that do not contribute to the grains component. Examples include oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). For more information, refer to the CSDE’s [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

**nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA):** The restricted account in which all the revenue from all food service operations conducted by the SFA, principally for the benefit of school children, is retained and used only for the operation or improvement of the nonprofit school food service. For more information, visit the “[Nonprofit School Food Service Account \(NSFSA\)](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Financial Management for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**nutrient assessment:** A review of school menu records to determine whether they meet the USDA’s weekly dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For more information, refer to “dietary specifications” in this section.

**nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes:** The nutrition requirements for plant-based beverages (such as soy milk) used as fluid milk substitutes in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA requires that any fluid milk substitutes are nutritionally equivalent to cow’s milk and meet the following nutrients per cup (8 fluid ounces): 276 milligrams (mg) of calcium; 8 grams (g) of protein; 150 micrograms (mcg) retinol activity equivalents (RAE) of vitamin A; 2.5 mcg of vitamin D; 24 mg of magnesium; 222 mg of phosphorus; 349 mg of potassium; 0.44 mg of riboflavin; and 1.1 micrograms (mcg) of vitamin B-12. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**offer versus serve (OVS):** A provision that applies to menu planning and the determination of reimbursable meals for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP. OVS allows students to decline a certain number of meal components or food items in the meal. SFAs must offer the required meal components to each student. For the NSLP, students must select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components. For the SBP, students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitutions, if offered). OVS must be implemented in senior high schools for lunch but is optional for breakfast. OVS is optional for breakfast and lunch in junior high, middle, and elementary schools. OVS does not apply to the SMP or ASP, or to preschool meals in the NSLP and SBP. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s [Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals](#) and visit the CSDE’s [OVS](#) webpage.

**ounce equivalent (oz eq):** A weight-based unit of measure for the grains component and MMA component of the NSLP and the SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. Oz eq account for dry versus cooked grains and variations in MMA. One oz eq of the MMA component is sometimes more than a measured ounce, depending on the food’s density and nutritional content. One oz eq of the grains component is less than a measured ounce for some grain foods (e.g., pretzels, breadsticks, and crackers), equal to a measured ounce for some grain foods (e.g., bagels, biscuits, bread, rolls, cereal grains, and RTE breakfast cereals), and more than a measured ounce for some grain foods (e.g., muffins and pancakes). For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

**product formulation statement (PFS):** An information statement developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA’s meal patterns, and documents how this information is obtained citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. All creditable ingredients in this statement must match a description in the USDA’s [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#). The PFS must be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. A PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims. SFAs must check the manufacturer’s crediting information for accuracy prior to including the product in reimbursable meals. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**production record:** A working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods used to prepare school meals. Production records must demonstrate how meals contribute to the required meal components, food items or menu items for each day of operation. They must also provide sufficient documentation to determine how school meals contribute to meeting the weekly dietary specifications. The USDA’s regulations require that all schools in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP must complete daily menu production records for all meals. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Production Records for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**pulses:** The edible dry seeds from legumes, such as beans, peas, and lentils. For more information, refer to “beans, peas, and lentils (pulses)” and “legumes” in this section.

**reimbursable meals:** Meals that offer the required meal components and minimum servings for each grade group, as defined by the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

**residential child care institution (RCCI):** RCCIs include but are not limited to homes for the mentally, emotionally or physically impaired, and unmarried mothers and their infants; group homes; halfway houses; orphanages; temporary shelters for abused children and for runaway children; long-term care facilities for chronically ill children; and juvenile detention centers. A long-term care facility is a hospital, skilled nursing facility, intermediate care facility, or distinct part thereof, which is intended for the care of children confined for 30 days or more.

**saturated fat:** A type of fat that raises blood cholesterol, which is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Major sources of saturated fat include coconut oil, palm oil, palm kernel oil, butter, and beef fat. Saturated fat is also found in other animal fats, such as pork and chicken fats, and in other plant fats, such as nuts. For more information, refer to “solid fats” in this section.

**School Breakfast Program (SBP):** The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The SBP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free breakfasts to children each school day. The SBP was established under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to ensure that all children have access to a healthy breakfast at school to promote learning readiness and healthy eating behaviors. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [School Breakfast Program](#) webpage.

**school food authority (SFA):** The governing body that is responsible for the administration of one or more schools and has the legal authority to operate the USDA’s school nutrition programs.

**school nutrition programs:** The USDA’s school nutrition programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Special Milk Program (SMP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-risk Supper Program implemented in schools. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP:** The USDA’s federally assisted summer feeding program that combines features of the NSLP, SBP, and SFSP, and serves meals free of charge to children ages 18 and younger from low-income areas. School districts participating in the NSLP or SBP are eligible to apply to the CSDE to participate in the SSO. SSO meals follow the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. For more information, visit the [Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP](#) webpage.

**serving size or portion:** The weight, measure, number of pieces, or slices of a food or beverage. SFAs must provide the minimum serving sizes specified in the USDA meal patterns for meals and afterschool snacks to be reimbursable.



**simple carbohydrates (sugars):** Carbohydrates consisting of one sugar (e.g., fructose and galactose) or two sugars (e.g., lactose, maltose, and sucrose). Sugars can be naturally present in foods (such as fructose in fruit or lactose in milk) or added to foods (such as sucrose or table sugar). Foods that naturally contain simple carbohydrates (such as fruits, milk, and milk products, and some vegetables) also contain vitamins and minerals. Foods that contain large amounts of added sugars (such as cookies, candy, pastries, sweetened baked goods, regular soft drinks, and other sweetened drinks) provide calories with few, if any, nutrients. For more information, refer to “added sugars” in this section.

**sodium:** A mineral that helps maintain the body’s fluid balance and blood pressure. Diets that are high in sodium can increase the risk of high blood pressure in individuals who are sodium sensitive.

**standardized recipe:** A recipe that been tried, adapted, and retried at least three times and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients. Standardized recipes include specific information such as ingredients, weights and measures, preparation directions, serving directions, yield, and portion size. For more information, refer to the Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition’s [USDA Recipe Standardization Guide for School Nutrition Programs](#), the CSDE’s [Guide to Menu Documentation for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#), and visit the “Standardized Recipes” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**sucrose:** Another name for table sugar. Sucrose contains glucose and fructose. For more information, refer to “simple carbohydrates (sugars)” in this section.

**sugars:** Refer to “added sugars” and “simple carbohydrates” in this section.

**Summer Food Service Program (SFSP):** The USDA’s federally assisted summer feeding program for children ages 18 and younger that provides nutritious meals when schools end for the summer. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Summer Food Service Program](#) webpage.

**tempeh:** A highly nutritious fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. A 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. This method of crediting applies only to tempeh products whose ingredients are limited to soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. SFA must obtain a PFS for tempeh products that contain different ingredients.

**USDA Foods:** Foods available to the USDA Child Nutrition Programs through the CSDE's Food Distribution Program. USDA Foods are available to schools in several ways, including Direct Delivery USDA Foods, Further Processed USDA Foods, the USDA Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Pilot, and the SFSP USDA DoD Pilot. For more information, visit the USDA's [USDA Foods Programs](#) webpage and the CSDE's [Food Distribution Program](#) webpage.

**vegetable subgroups:** The five categories of vegetables within the vegetables component that are required over the week in the NSLP meal patterns for grades K-12. The subgroups include dark green, red/orange, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy, and other vegetables. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program](#), and visit the "[Vegetables Component](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

**vegetables component:** The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that includes vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice; and includes five subgroups. Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetable offerings at lunch or breakfast. For more information, visit the "[Vegetables Component](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

**whole grain-rich:** For the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12, a food is WGR if meets two criteria: 1) the food is 100 percent whole grain or contains a blend of whole and enriched grains that is at least 50 percent whole grain; and 2) any noncreditable grains are less than 2 percent of the product formula (or less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz eq per portion), i.e., no more than 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-G (baked goods) or 6.99 grams per portion for groups H (cereal grains). Ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals meet the WGR criteria if: 1) the first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified, or the cereal is 100 percent whole grain; and 2) noncreditable grains do not exceed 6.99 grams per portion. Fortification is not required for 100 whole grain cereals. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

**whole grains:** Grains that consist of the entire kernel, including the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the nutrient-rich germ. All grains start out as whole grains, but many are processed to remove the bran and germ, which also removes many of the nutrients. Whole grains are nutrient rich, containing vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and health-enhancing phytonutrients such as lignans and flavonoids. Examples of whole grains include whole wheat, whole oats, oatmeal, whole-grain cornmeal, brown rice, whole rye, whole barley, wild rice, buckwheat, and bulgur (cracked wheat). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

**whole-grain flour:** Flour made by grinding the entire whole-grain kernel, including the fiber-rich bran, nutrient-rich germ, and starchy endosperm. Flour or meal that does not contain all parts of the grain is not whole grain, e.g., degermed corn, milled rice, and wheat flour. For more information, refer the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#).







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