

Crediting Soups in the Summer Food Service Program

This guidance applies to the meals and snacks served in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). For information on the SFSP meal patterns and the vegetables/fruits component, visit the [“Meal Patterns”](#) section of the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) SFSP webpage and refer to the CSDE’s [Requirements for the Vegetables/Fruits Component of the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns](#). For information on the crediting requirements, visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program](#) webpage and [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



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Crediting Soups in the Summer Food Service Program

Crediting Commercial Soups

Commercial vegetable soups credit based on the yields in the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG). The FBG indicate that 1 cup of an allowable commercial vegetable soup credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component ("additional" vegetables) and 1 cup of a commercial bean, pea, or lentil soup credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component (beans, peas, and lentils subgroup). The 1-cup serving refers to the amount of the ready-to-eat cooked soup, e.g., heated canned or frozen ready-to-serve soup, reconstituted dried soup, and reconstituted condensed soup.

To credit an allowable commercial vegetable soup differently from the FBG yields, SFSP sponsors must obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer that states the specific contribution of each vegetable subgroup in the serving. For more information, refer to "[Crediting commercial soups not listed in FBG](#)" in this document)

Allowable commercial vegetable soups

1 cup = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vegetables

- Minestrone soup
- Tomato soup
- Tomato soup with other basic components such as rice
- Vegetable soup (contains only vegetables)
- Vegetable soup with other basic components such as meat or poultry

Allowable commercial bean, pea, and lentil soups

1 cup = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables

- Bean soup, e.g., black bean, navy bean, and mixed bean
- Pea soup, e.g., split pea
- Lentil soup

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Serving Size Considerations for Commercial Vegetable Soups

The served portion of a commercial vegetable soup must be sufficient to provide the vegetable subgroups being credited. Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of the serving size and the size of the container used to serve the soup.

Meal pattern contribution

The large serving needed for a commercial vegetable soup to provide the full serving of vegetables might be unreasonable, especially for younger children. For example, the SFSP lunch and supper meal pattern requires $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component. This equals 3 cups of a commercial vegetable soup or $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of a commercial bean, pea, or lentil soup.

When the serving of commercial soup needed to provide the full vegetables/fruits component is too large, the CSDE recommends offering a smaller serving of soup and supplementing it with another food from the vegetables/fruits component. For example, a lunch menu could offer $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component from 1 cup of a commercial tomato soup (credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broccoli (credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup).

The table below indicates the vegetables/fruits component contribution of different serving sizes of commercial soups.

Table 1. Crediting commercial vegetable soups

Vegetable soup	Bean/pea/lentil soup	Vegetables/fruits component crediting
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup
1 cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
2 cups	1 cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
3 cups	$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
4 cups	2 cups	1 cup

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Container size

A 1-cup container (8 fluid ounces) does not provide 1 cup of soup unless it is filled to the top, which is impractical. To prevent spills and ensure the served portion meets the meal pattern requirements, the container should be larger than the planned serving of soup. For example, SFSP sponsors could use a 10-fluid ounce bowl to hold 8 fluid ounces (1 cup) of soup and a 6-fluid ounce bowl to hold 4 fluid ounces ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) of soup.

Crediting Soups Made from Scratch

Soups made from scratch credit based on the quantity of each meal component in one serving of the recipe. SFSP sponsors must determine the crediting information for each creditable soup ingredient based on the yields listed in the FBG (refer to "[Documentation for soups made from scratch](#)" in this document).

To credit toward the meal patterns, one serving of the standardized recipe must contain at least the minimum creditable amount of a meal component ($\frac{1}{8}$ cup for vegetables and fruits and $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq for grains and MMA). If the meal component in the soup is less than the full meal pattern serving, the menu must include additional foods from that meal component to provide the full serving for each grade group.



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Required Crediting Documentation for Soups

SFSP sponsors must maintain appropriate documentation that states the specific contribution of each meal component in the serving, such as vegetables, grains, and meats/meat alternates (MMA). For example, to credit minestrone soup as ½ cup of the vegetables/fruits component, the SFSP sponsor's documentation must indicate that the serving contains ½ cup of vegetables. Documentation must be based on the food yields and crediting information in the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG).

Documentation for commercial soups not in the FBG

Commercial soups not listed in the FBG require a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) that indicates the amount of each meal component per serving. For information on CN labels and PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the Summer Food Service Program](#) and [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the Summer Food Service Program](#). For guidance on how to review a PFS, visit the USDA's [Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#) webpage.

SFSP sponsors must obtain a PFS for all commercial processed products without a CN label that are not listed in the FBG. The USDA requires that SFSP sponsors verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the food product in reimbursable meals and snacks. Commercial soups without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in the SFSP.

For more information on crediting documentation, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Summer Food Service Program](#), and the USDA's resources, [USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, SFSP 02-2025: Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements](#). Additional guidance is available on the CSDE's [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Training on the documentation requirements is available in the CSDE's Summer Meals annual training module, [Crediting Documentation for Summer Meals](#). Training on the requirements for CN labels and PFS forms is available in [Module 8: Meal Pattern Documentation for Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#) of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

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Documentation for soups made from scratch

SFSP sponsors must have recipes on file for all soups prepared from scratch that document the serving's meal pattern contribution based on the yields listed in the FBG. The USDA recommends using standardized recipes because they ensure accurate meal component contributions and document that menus meet the meal pattern requirements.

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.

For information on standardized recipes, visit the "[Standardized Recipes](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Storing crediting documentation

SFSP sponsors must maintain all crediting documentation on file in accordance with the records retention requirements for the SFSP (refer to the CSDE's resource, [Records Retention Requirements for the Summer Food Service Program](#)). This documentation must be current and will be reviewed by the CSDE during the Administrative Review of the SFSP.

Resources

[Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Summer Food Service Program](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingfspaccepting_processed_product_documentation_sfsp.pdf

[Accepting Product Documentation](#) (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Program webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/accepting-product-documentation>

[Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#) (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling/tips-evaluating-pfs>

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[Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the Summer Food Service Program](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_beans_peas_lentils_snp.pdf

[Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs>

[Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program](#) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-the-summer-food-service-program>

[Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (USDA):

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

[Product Formulation Statements](#) (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/product-formulation-statements>

[Standardized Recipes](#) (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Program webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/standardized-recipes>

[Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the Summer Food Service Program](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingfsfp/cn_labels_sfsp.pdf

[Using Product Formulation Statements in the Summer Food Service Program](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingfsfp/product_formulation_statements_sfsp.pdf

For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program](#) webpage or contact the [Summer Meals staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_soups_sfsp.pdf.



Crediting Soups in the Summer Food Service Program

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

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