

Summer Meals Updates 2026

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) e-newsletter for sponsors of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Previous editions of Summer Meals Updates are available in the "[Summer Meals Updates](#)" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.

Topics June 10, 2026

- Updated CSDE Resource: Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Sponsor Preparation for Administrative Review
- Updated CSDE Resource: Requirements for Corrective Action Plans for the Summer Food Service Program
- Records Retention Requirements for the Summer Food Service Food Program
- Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program
- Food Safety Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program

Topics June 3, 2026

- New CSDE Required Annual Sponsor Training Module: SFSP Meal Patterns
- Coming Soon: New CSDE Required Annual Sponsor Training Modules: Crediting Foods in the SFSP Meal Patterns
- Updated SFSP Meal Patterns and Menu Planning Resources
- Updated SFSP Meal Service Resources
- New CSDE Webpage: Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program
- New CSDE Webpage: Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs
- Updated CSDE Resources for Crediting Foods in the SFSP
- Updated CSDE Resource List: Resources for the SFSP Meal Patterns
- Crediting Commercial Products in the SFSP
- Crediting Foods Made from Scratch in the SFSP



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Updated CSDE Resource: Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Sponsor Preparation for Administrative Review

The CSDE's document, [Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\) Sponsor Preparation for Administrative Review](#), summarizes the preparation requirements for sponsors scheduled for the CSDE's Administrative Review of the SFSP. For more information, visit the "[Administrative Review](#)" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.

Updated CSDE Resource: Requirements for Corrective Action Plans for the Summer Food Service Program

Findings and recommendations that are identified by the CSDE as part of the administrative review process or through caused-based audits for the SFSP must be addressed through written corrective action plans submitted to the CSDE by the specified deadline. The sponsoring organization must detail the step-by-step corrective action implemented to ensure that all findings are fully and permanently corrected. The CSDE's document, [Requirements for Corrective Action Plans for the Summer Food Service Program](#), provides guidance and resources for the required elements of a correction action plan. A [Corrective Action Plan Template for the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#) is also available.

Records Retention Requirements for the Summer Food Service Food Program

All SFSP sponsors must comply with the USDA's records retention requirements below.

- Maintain all necessary records for a period of three years after submission of the final claim for reimbursement for the fiscal year.
- If audit findings have not been resolved, retain records beyond the three-year period, for as long as required to resolve the issues raised by the audit. SFSP sponsors should check with their governing authority to determine if local records retention requirements are more stringent.

These requirements apply to SFSP sponsors that self-operate their food service program and SFSP sponsors that vend their food service program through a food service management company (FSMC). For detailed guidance and resources, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Records Retention Requirements for the Summer Food Service Food Program](#).

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Updated Version of CSDE's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Food Service Review Form

An updated version (June 2026) of the CSDE's [Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\) Food Service Review Form](#) is available. Please discard any previous versions.

SFSP sponsors must complete this form for each site during the first four weeks of SFSP operation. Monitors are required to be at the site before operation begins until the end of service. Maintain this form on file for the administrative review of the SFSP, according to the USDA records retention requirements for the SFSP. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Records Retention Requirements for the Summer Food Service Food Program](#).

Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program

Effective October 1, 2022, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [Final Rule: Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#) redesignated Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR) [Section 225.6\(i\)\(7\)\(v\)](#). This section allows Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors to claim reimbursement only for meals specified in the state-sponsored agreement at an approved site, unless the requirements in [7 CFR 225.16\(g\)](#) are met. SFSP sponsors that provide advance notice to the CSDE are allowed to receive reimbursement for meals served away from an approved site, such as meals served during field trips. The requirements for field trip meals are summarized in the CSDE's resource, [Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

Food Safety Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program

As specified in 7 CFR 225.16(g)(1)(ii), field trip meals must meet all applicable state and local health, safety, and sanitation standards. The greatest food safety concern for field trip meals is ensuring that foods defined by the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Food Code as "Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food" (TCS) – formerly known as potential hazardous foods (PHFs) – stay at proper temperatures during transport and service. TCS require time/temperature control for safety to limit pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation that can lead to foodborne illness. The food safety requirements for field trip meals are summarized in the CSDE's resource, [Food Safety Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

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Welcome to the First Edition of Summer Meals Updates for 2026

This edition focuses on the SFSP meal patterns, resources for menu planning and crediting foods and beverages, and the crediting documentation requirements.

Updated CSDE Recorded Summer Meals Annual Training Modules for Summer 2026

The CSDE's Recorded Summer Meals Annual Training Modules are updated for summer 2026. These modules include:

- SFSP Meal Patterns
- Crediting Foods in the SFSP Meal Patterns
 - Part 1: Introduction to Crediting Foods
 - Part 2: Milk Component
 - Part 3: Meats/Meat Alternates Component
 - Part 4: Grains/Breads Component
 - Part 5: Vegetables/Fruits Component
- Crediting Documentation for Summer Meals
- Meal Service Requirements
- Offer versus Serve (OVS) for the SFSP

These training modules are available in the "[Annual Training](#)" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage. Sponsors will complete a knowledge check after completing the video and should print their knowledge check score to document participation.

SFSP Meal Patterns and Menu Planning Resources for Summer 2026

The SFSP meal patterns and menu planning resources for summer 2026 are available in the "[Meal Patterns](#)" section of SFSP webpage.

SFSP Meal Patterns

- [SFSP Meal Patterns](#)
- [Crediting Summary Charts for the SFSP Meal Patterns](#)
- [Noncreditable Foods in the Meal Patterns for the SFSP](#)
- [Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the SFSP Meal Patterns](#)

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Meal Modifications

- [Guidance for Meal Modifications in the SFSP](#)
- Medical Statement: [Request Form for Meal Modifications in the SFSP](#)

Menu Planning Forms

- [Breakfast Menu Form for the SFSP](#)
- [Lunch and Supper Menu Form for the SFSP](#)
- [Snack Menu Form for the SFSP](#)

Production Records

- Overview: [Using Production Records in the SFSP](#)
- [SFSP Production Record](#)

Menu Planning Resources

- [Guide to Offer versus Serve \(OVS\) in the SFSP](#): OVS is allowed only for school food authority (SFA) sponsors of the SFSP.
 - [Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the SFSP](#)
 - [Food Safety Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the SFSP](#)
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Updated CSDE Resources for Crediting Foods in the SFSP for Summer 2026

Foods and beverages served in reimbursable meals and snacks must meet specific requirements to credit toward the SFSP meal patterns. Updated versions (June 2026) of the SFSP crediting resources below assist SFSP sponsors with meeting these requirements and are available on the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program](#) webpage.. Please discard any previous versions and replace them with these updated versions.

Crediting Documentation

- [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the SFSP](#)
- [Standardized Recipe Form for the SFSP](#)
- [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the SFSP](#)
- [Using Product Formulation Statements in the SFSP](#)

Meats/Meat Alternates Component

- Overview: [Requirements for the Meats/Meat Alternates Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns](#)
- [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Deli Meats in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the SFSP](#)

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- [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Yogurt in the SFSP](#)
- [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the SFSP](#)

Vegetables/Fruits Component

- Overview: [Requirements for the Vegetables/Fruits Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns](#)
- [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Juices in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Smoothies in the SFSP](#)

Grains/Breads Component

- Overview: [Requirements for the Grains/Breads Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns](#)
- [Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Enriched Grains in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Whole Grains in the SFSP](#)
- [How to Use the Grains/Breads Servings Chart](#)
- [Serving for Grains/Breads in the SFSP](#)
- [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the SFSP](#)

Milk Component

- Overview: [Requirements for the Milk Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns](#)

Updated CSDE Resource List: Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the SFSP Meal Patterns

An updated version (May 2026) of the CSDE's [Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the SFSP Meal Patterns](#) is available. This document includes resources and websites to assist sponsors with meeting the USDA meal pattern requirements for the SFSP.

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Reminder About Requirements for Crediting Commercial Products in the SFSP

SFSP sponsors must be able to document the crediting information for commercially prepared foods that are processed or contain added ingredients. Some examples include as deli meats, pizza, chicken nuggets, hummus, coleslaw, and smoothies. The acceptable types of crediting documentation for processed foods include any of the documents below.

- **Child Nutrition (CN) label:** A CN label is a USDA-approved statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a commercial product toward the meal pattern requirements. CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute at least ½ oz eq of the MMA component, but they often include crediting information for other meal components that are part of the product, such as vegetables, fruits, and grains. Allowable CN label documentation includes 1) the original CN label from the product carton; 2) a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or 3) a CN label copied with a watermark displaying the product name and CN number provided by the vendor, attached to the bill of lading (invoice). For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, CSDE’s resource, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the Summer Food Service Program](#) and visit the “[CN Labels for SFSP](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.
- **Product formulation statement (PFS):** A 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. The PFS must be signed by an official of the manufacturer and state the amount of each meal component contained in one serving of the product. For more information on PFS forms, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the Summer Food Service Program](#) and visit the “[PFS for SFSP](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage. For guidance on how to review a PFS, refer to the USDA’s webpage, [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement](#). Commercial processed products without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in SFSP meals and snacks unless they are listed in the USDA’s [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#).

For more information, visit the CSDE’s webpage, [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#).

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Reminder About Requirements for Crediting Foods Made from Scratch in the SFSP

Foods made from scratch require a recipe that documents the SFSP meal pattern crediting information per serving. For example, to credit macaroni and cheese as 2 ounces of the meats/meat alternates component and 2 servings of the grains/breads component, the SFSP sponsor's recipe must indicate that each serving contains 2 ounces of cheese and 1 cup of whole grain or enriched pasta.

For sponsors with on-site cooking facilities, the USDA recommends using standardized recipes when available to ensure accurate crediting information. A standardized recipe is a recipe that has been carefully adapted and tested to ensure that it will produce a consistent product every time it is used. For more information, refer to the "[Standardized Recipes](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Summer Meals Updates](#) section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage, or contact the [SFSP 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/sfsp/summermealsupdates/summer_meals_updates_2026.pdf.



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