

# 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.

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- Preparing Summer Meal Program Site Staff for Monitoring

## Topics June 17, 2026

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## 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



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- 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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June 24, 2026

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## SFSP Monitoring Staff

Having an efficient and capable Summer Food Service (SFSP) monitoring staff is one of the first steps in successful operations. The SFSP monitor serves as a direct link between the SFSP sponsor's administrative office and the actual food service sites. Establishing a proper monitoring system helps prevent problems from occurring and makes it easier to correct any problems that arise during the summer. The size of the monitoring staff will depend on the size of the sponsor's SFSP.

The SFSP sponsor must ensure that the monitor's responsibilities and authority are clear to the monitoring staff, site supervisors, additional site staff, and office personnel. SFSP monitors must:

- participate in annual training, understand Program requirements, including civil rights requirements;
  - ensure that sites operate according to Program guidelines;
  - carry a supply of all necessary forms during site visits and reviews;
  - provide training for site personnel when needed; and
  - spend enough time at each site to ensure proper SFSP operations.
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## Types of Site Visits and Reviews

SFSP monitors are required to perform site visits and site reviews at various times throughout SFSP operations. Refer to the USDA's [Sponsor Monitor's Guide](#) for more detailed information on sponsor monitoring requirements and sample forms. These reviews are an important part of the state agency's responsibility to ensure the integrity of the SFSP.

- **Site visits** require the monitor to ensure that the food service is operating smoothly, and any apparent problems are immediately resolved.
- **Site reviews** require the monitor to determine if the site is meeting all the various SFSP requirements. The monitor must observe a complete meal service from beginning to end, including delivery or preparation of meals, meal service, and clean up after meals.

Sponsors must meet the minimum monitoring requirements below.

**Pre-operational visits [7 CFR 225.15(d)(2)]:** SFSP sponsors must conduct pre-operational visits for new sites, sites that experienced operational problems the previous year, and existing sites that are new to non-congregate meal service, to determine that the sites have the capacity to provide meal service for the anticipated number of children in attendance and the capability to conduct the proposed meal service.

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**Initial Site Visits [7 CFR 225.15(d)(3)]:** SFSP sponsors must visit each of their sites at least once during the first two weeks of program operations and must promptly take such actions as are necessary to correct any deficiencies. In cases where the site operates for seven calendar days or fewer, the visit must be conducted during the period of operation. Sponsors must conduct these visits for:

- all new SFSP sites;
- all existing sites that are new to providing non-congregate meal service;
- all sites that have been determined by the sponsor to need a visit based on criteria established by the State agency pertaining to operational problems noted in the prior year, and
- any other sites that the state agency has determined need a visit.

This visit is not required for returning SFSP sites that operated successfully during the previous summer (or other most recent period of operation) and had no operational challenges. However, early and regular visits to observe site operation is a best practice to ensure regulatory compliance.

**Foodservice Review [7 CFR 225.15(d)(4)]:** SFSP sponsors must conduct a full review of food service operations at each site at least once during the first four weeks of SFSP operations, and thereafter must maintain a reasonable level of site monitoring. Sponsors must complete a monitoring form developed by the CSDE during these reviews. Sponsors may conduct a full review of food service operations at the same time they conduct an Initial Site Visit, as described above. If the Initial SFSP Site Visit and SFSP Foodservice Review are conducted concurrently, both forms must be completed in their entirety.

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## Monitoring Reports

All visits and reviews must be documented. Records of visits and reviews will help SFSP sponsors assess the operation of sites. Records are only useful when they are carefully reviewed by sponsor personnel and when follow-up monitoring is scheduled to ensure that any corrective actions have been taken to improve site operations. Each sponsor must design a tracking system for handling monitor reports. SFSP sponsors should have a system that will ensure that monitors return reports frequently, if possible, every day. The reports should be immediately reviewed by a specific member of the sponsor's staff who is responsible for following up on any problems. The staff member should:

- review any problems found by the monitor;
  - call the site supervisor, if necessary;
  - document corrective action taken at the site;
  - schedule a follow-up review, if necessary, basing the timing of a follow-up review on the severity of the problem; and
  - sign and date the report.
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## Reviewing Monitoring Reports

When reviewing monitor reports, SFSP sponsors or their staff should pay attention to the quality of the reports. There are several indicators that may be apparent in the monitor's reports that may suggest the monitor's lack of program knowledge or the monitor's misunderstanding of their responsibilities. Additional training would be appropriate if the monitor:

- did not answer all questions on the report or the responses are incomplete;
- rarely notes problems and does not include comments in the remarks section of the report;
- observes that the number of meals delivered and/or served and the number of children who are in attendance are always the same but does not follow up on this suspicious pattern to see if meal counts are being taken appropriately;
- recommends a corrective action and fails to note the action taken or fails to initiate correction of the problems;
- fails to recommend adjustments to orders when the number of meals significantly exceeds attendance; and
- arrives at sites late and/or does not stay for the entire meal service for a Foodservice Review.

SFSP sponsors must be sure that monitors schedule visits and reviews so that they can meet the SFSP requirements. A good monitoring schedule and an efficient system for the review and follow-up on the SFSP monitor's reports are necessary for effective SFSP operations.

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## Preparing Summer Meal Program Site Staff for Monitoring

Each year, the CSDE's Summer Meal Program annual training emphasizes that site staff must be aware of the duties and responsibilities of sponsor monitors. It is also critical for site staff to understand that they may have a site visit or site review conducted on any day of service with little or no advance notice. Please ensure all site staff are aware of the potential for site visits and reviews by:

- sponsor monitors;
- sponsor administrative staff;
- Connecticut Department of Public Health Food Protection Program staff;
- CSDE Summer Meal Program staff; and
- USDA staff;

The CSDE is aware that SFSP monitors of any type can cause anxiety for site staff. SFSP sponsors can help alleviate any concerns or anxiety about the review process by providing clear guidance of the expectations for site staff during the monitoring process. Site staff should be instructed to maintain "business as usual" during the monitoring process.

For questions related to sponsor monitoring, food preparation facility and meal site health inspections, or the administrative review process, sponsors should contact their CSDE [Summer Meals Staff](#) support team member.

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## Food Safety Requirements for SFSP Sponsors

All SFSP sponsors are required to enter into an agreement with the CSDE that their sites will maintain proper sanitation and health standards in conformance with all applicable state and local laws and regulations [[7 CFR 225.6\(i\)\(9\)](#)]. The CSDE Summer Meal Program staff work closely with the [Connecticut Department of Public Health \(DPH\) Food Protection Program \(FPP\)](#) to ensure Connecticut's children have access to safe, healthy meals during the summer months when school is out of session. The overall mission of the DPH FPP is to reduce the risk of foodborne disease by ensuring reasonable protection from contaminated food and improving the sanitary condition of food establishments. This is accomplished by enforcement of regulations, training and education, technical consultation, special investigations, and food safety promotion.

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## USDA Requires the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code

The USDA requires that all entities participating in the [Child Nutrition Programs](#) must comply with the [current FDA Food Code](#). The DPH FPP monitors food service establishments for compliance with the Food Code requirements. For more information, food service operations should contact their [local health department](#) or visit the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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## Required Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) and Food Safety Training

Most food establishments in Connecticut, including all Summer Meal Program food preparation facilities, are required to have a [Certified Food Protection Manager \(CFPM\)](#) overseeing all food preparation. Since a CFPM must oversee all food preparation, each sponsor's Summer Meal Program staffing must be prepared to accommodate staff turnover, as well as vacation and sick days. Food safety training is separate from the federally required SFSP training that administrative, foodservice, and meal site staff must undergo prior to beginning Summer Meal Program responsibilities. Food safety training must be supported by documentation maintained on-site at the food preparation facility and be readily available during unannounced health inspections.

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## USDA Webpage: Safe Meals, Healthy Kids: Food Safety for Summer Meals

The USDA's [Safe Meals, Healthy Kids: Food Safety for Summer Meals](#) webpage provides resources for food safety training or technical assistance for Summer Meals, including community feeding sites and school feeding sites.

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## FDA Food Safety Videos

The CSDE strongly urges sponsors to have all local Summer Meal Program staff view the FDA's food safety videos below.

- [Foodborne Illness Video Testimonials: Bernadette/Kate Jacobs](#)
- [Preventing Foodborne Illness: Talking to Patients About Food Safety](#)

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## DPH FPP III Food Worker Educational Campaign

The objective of the DPH FPP's [III Food Worker Educational Campaign](#) is to decrease the occurrence of restaurant-associated norovirus outbreaks potentially caused by food workers working while ill with vomiting or diarrhea, by educating food workers and managers. The materials were developed to inform workers of the need to report illness and to not work when they are ill; assist management in promoting open communication with food workers; provide a resource for additional information on employee health policies; increase reporting of illness by food workers to management; and increase the required reporting of ill food workers by management to the local health department.

The resources include the sample forms below to help employees and management develop employee health policies and procedures.

- [Form 1-A](#): An optional interview form that a site manager or person in charge can use when a food worker reports illness (gastrointestinal symptoms), diagnosed with one of the big six pathogens, or exposure to someone that is diagnosed with one of the big six pathogens.
- [Form 1-B](#): A required signed acknowledgement that staff are aware they must report to the person in charge any specific symptoms, diagnosis of six specific pathogens, or exposure to those six pathogens.
- [Form 1-C](#): An **optional** medical referral form that may be given to the employee so that they can seek medical care/clearance to return to work.

If a person in charge is unsure whether a person may return to work, they should reach out to their local health department. The local health department can assist with that determination or will reach out to the DPH FPP. Individuals that call out due to vomiting or diarrhea must be kept out of the location until a) symptoms have stopped and 24 hours have passed since the stop of symptoms; or b) they provide written medical documentation to the person in charge that the symptoms are from a noninfectious condition such as pregnancy or Crohn's disease.

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June 10, 2026

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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.

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## 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.

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## 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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# Summer Meals Updates 2026

## 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](#).

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## 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](#).

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## 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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# Summer Meals Updates 2026

**June 3, 2026**

## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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](#)

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## 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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# Summer Meals Updates 2026

## 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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# Summer Meals Updates 2026

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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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# Summer Meals Updates 2026

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](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/summermealsupdates/summer_meals_updates_2026.pdf).



# Summer Meals Updates 2026

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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