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This Guidance Memorandum provides information on CACFP meal pattern requirements, required meal documentation, meal production and meal service. All programs must ensure that requirements outlined in this Guidance Memorandum are met. This includes programs that purchase meals from a vendor or Food Service Management Company (FSMC).

Programs that purchase meals from a vendor or Food Service Management Company (FSMC) must refer to Guidance Memorandum 4 for information on meal records that must be completed and provided by the vendor and kept on file.

ABBREVIATION KEY					
The abbreviation key below identifies each type of CACFP program					
CC: Child Care	HS: Head Start	OS: Outside of School Hours	AR: At Risk	ES: Emergency Shelter	ADC: Adult Day Care

E-LEARNING

For more information and training on the requirements in this Guidance Memorandum go to the applicable CACFP E-Learning Course for your program:

- [Child Care Centers, Outside of School Hours, Emergency Shelters, and Head Starts](#)
- [Adult Day Centers](#)
- [At-Risk Afterschool Centers](#)

CACFP MEAL PATTERN REQUIREMENTS

Meals and snacks must meet CACFP meal pattern requirements with creditable foods in at least the minimum serving sizes per the CACFP meal pattern.

CACFP Meal Pattern

The *CACFP Meal Pattern* charts below provide the required food components and minimum serving sizes for meals and snacks.

- [CACFP Meal Pattern \(Ages 1-18\)](#) (CC, HS, OS, ES, AR)
- [CACFP Meal Pattern](#) (ADC)

ADC Only: The [USDA Serving Adult Participants in the CACFP](#) provides the CACFP requirements for meals and snacks in the Adult Care Component.

Creditable and Non-Creditable Foods

Foods served for meals and snacks must be creditable.

- The [Creditable and Non-creditable Foods Guide](#) provides detailed information about each food component and lists of creditable and non-creditable foods.
- Use the [CACFP Reference Guide](#) to determine if cereal and yogurt are creditable and if grains are whole grain-rich. The guide includes sugar limit charts for cereal and yogurt, a WI WIC approved cereal list, flowcharts for identifying whole grain-rich foods and lists of whole grains/flours, enriched grains/flours, brans, germs, grain derivatives, and non-creditable grains/flours.

Product Labels for Breakfast Cereal, Yogurt, Whole Grain-Rich Foods and Tofu

Product labels must be on file for breakfast cereals, yogurt, whole grain rich foods and tofu to show they meet specific CACFP requirements. The following must be kept on file:

- Breakfast cereals: name and brand of item, nutrition facts label and ingredient list
- Yogurt: name and brand of item, nutrition facts label
- Whole grain-rich foods (one of the following):
 - Label with name and brand of item, and front of the package or ingredient list (depending on method used to determine item as whole grain rich)
 - Child Nutrition label or Product Formulation Statement crediting item as whole-grain rich
- Tofu: name and brand of item, nutrition facts label

Keep the original product label or a picture/copy of the label on file. If a copy is made, make sure all parts are readable (not blurry, cut off or too dark to read). Keep all labels in a binder or file folder, and only keep labels currently being used in the binder. File old labels in another file.

CN labels or PFS for Store-bought Combination Foods

To credit store-bought combination foods (e.g., chicken nuggets, fish sticks, pizza) and processed meats (e.g., hotdogs, summer sausage), a Child Nutrition (CN) label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS) must be on file. If a CN label or PFS cannot be obtained, the item cannot be served as part of a reimbursable meal. The CN label or PFS provides information on how the food item contributes to the meal pattern, most commonly the meat/meat alternate and grain components. Obtain the CN label or PFS prior to preparing the item. Use the CN label or PFS to determine how much to prepare and serve. Refer to the [Crediting Store-Bought Combination Foods](#) handout for information on how to use this documentation.

MENUS

Menus must be maintained for all meals and snacks served to participants 1 year and older. They must be dated, and all food items served to meet the meal pattern must be documented. Meal substitutions must be recorded on the menu kept on file with monthly claim documentation. DPI has *Menu Templates* that may be used and can be found under GM 12 in the Menu section.

Menu Checklist

Use the [Menu Checklist](#) to ensure menus comply with the CACFP meal pattern and menu requirements.

Menus must document the following:

- Milk types (fat content specified by age group and if flavored)
- Whole Grain-Rich items (e.g., WW Bread, WGR Bagels)
- Cereal names (if served)
- Specific fruits and vegetables

MEAL PRODUCTION

Meeting Meal Pattern Serving Size Requirements

Enough food must be prepared so each participant is served at least the minimum serving size of each required food component. To help determine how much food to prepare, use the following tools.

1. *Meal Requirements Calculator*: Determine the minimum amounts required to be prepared for each component based on the number of participants and CACFP Meal Pattern serving sizes.
 - [Meal Requirements Calculator](#) (CC, HS, OS, ES, AR)
 - [Meal Requirements Calculator](#) (ADC)
2. *Food Buying Guide Calculator*: Determine the correct amount of food to purchase and prepare so the minimum required amounts for each component are available to serve to participants.

Production Records

All programs, except emergency shelters, must complete *Production Records* to document the amount of food prepared. Production records may be completed prior to the meal service to help with planning, purchasing and preparing the correct amount of food, or may be completed when the meal is prepared or immediately after to document actual amounts of food prepared. Refer to the *Production Record Instructions* for how to complete these records.

CC, HS, OS, AR

Production Records	Production Records (Breakfast, Lunch/Supper, Snack) (Weekly) Production Records (All Meals) (Daily)
Production Record Instructions	Production Record Instructions

ADC

Production Records	Production Records (Breakfast, Lunch/Supper, Snack) (Weekly) Production Records (All Meals) (Daily)
Production Record Instructions	Production Record Instructions

Recipes for Combination Foods Made from Scratch

A standardized recipe provides exact amounts of ingredients and meal pattern contribution information for a specified portion size. This information enables you to determine the amount that must be served to each participant. For these recipes go to: [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#).

Cooking Methods

Foods cannot be deep-fat fried onsite. These items cannot credit as a food component in the CACFP. Deep-fat frying means cooking by fully covering (submerging) food in hot oil or other fat. "Onsite" means at the program's on-site kitchen or program's central or satellite kitchen. Packaged par-fried or flash-fried foods (such as par-fried frozen potatoes) purchased from a grocery store or from a distributor are creditable if heated or reheated onsite by baking, microwaving or another method that is not deep-fat frying.

Leftover Food

Meals should be planned or ordered from a vendor or Food Service Management Company so the amount of food prepared or delivered is enough to provide one meal/snack per participant. When there is food leftover after meals, you may do the following with leftovers:

- Leftover food that has not been served must be labeled, dated, refrigerated promptly or frozen immediately for later use. When serving leftovers for a meal, document the amount of leftover food served on the production record.
- Donate to eligible food banks or charitable organizations that are tax exempt.
- **Leftover food CANNOT be sent home with staff or participants' families.**

If programs find they have leftovers frequently:

- Review Production Records, Meal Requirements Calculator and Food Buying Guide Calculator to ensure too much food is not being prepared.
- Train staff on how much food must be provided to each participant to meet the minimum CACFP Meal Pattern serving size requirements.

Meals Prepared for Staff and Non-Program Adults

When staff or other adults are served meals, the number of adults must be included on the production record when planning the amounts of food to prepare, or included in the number of meals ordered from a vendor or Food Service Management Company. This is to assure enough food is prepared and/or ordered so the minimum serving sizes are provided to all participants and adults.

- **CC, OS, HS, AR:** Record the number of adults on the *Production Record* in the Projected Participants column in the space titled “Adult.”
- **ADC:** Record the number of ineligible adults and other adult meals (i.e., staff) on the *Production Record* in the Projected Participants column in the space titled “Ineligible Adults.”

Meals served to staff, ineligible adults and other adults **cannot be claimed (do not count within the meal counts submitted on the claim)**. The cost of the food served to adults may or may not be paid for with CACFP reimbursement, depending on if the adult is a program or non-program adult.

- **Program Adults:** an adult employee or volunteer who **performs CACFP labor** on the day the meal is eaten. This includes meal preparation, serving meals, assisting during meal service, cleaning before and after meals, and performing administrative tasks related to the CACFP operation. **The cost of meals served to program adults is an allowable CACFP expense**, i.e., the food consumed by the adult can be paid for with CACFP funds.
- **Non-program Adults:** an adult who **does not perform CACFP labor** on the day the meal is eaten. This includes van drivers, maintenance employees, volunteers or parents not involved with meal preparation or meal service, administrative staff not performing CACFP labor and people in the community and visitors such as DPI or USDA officials. **The cost of meals served to non-program adults is an unallowable CACFP expense**, i.e., the food consumed by the adult cannot be paid with CACFP funds. Financial records must show other funds used to cover these costs (e.g., tuition or charging a fee).

MEAL SERVICE

Meals and snacks eaten by participants while under the program’s supervision, either on-site or during outings, can be claimed. Meals and snacks eaten by participants when not under the program’s care, including when food is sent home with the participant, cannot be claimed.

Meal Service Times

Meals must be served at regularly scheduled times as indicated in the CACFP contract.

Serving All Meal Components Together

All required meal components must be served together at the same time during a meal or snack. A food or beverage cannot be withheld until the end of the meal or until a participant eats a specific food item. Participants should be encouraged to try different foods but cannot be forced to try all foods or to finish one food prior to receiving additional servings of other foods.

Meal Service Methods

Refer to the *Meal Service Styles* handout for the definition, requirements, and best practices of each meal service style below.

- **Pre-plated:** The minimum serving size of each component, as listed on the CACFP meal pattern for the participant’s age, is served to participants on their plate and in their cup.
- **Cafeteria-Style (from a line, table or cart):** All required meal components in the minimum serving sizes are taken by each participant when going through a serving line or selected from a cart, counter or table.
- **Family Style Dining:** Participants serve themselves from common dishes of food and small pitchers with the assistance of supervising adults as needed. Refer to the [Family Style Dining](#) handout for more information.
 - Foods and beverages should be provided in age-appropriate serving dishes and small pitchers and placed on each table. The amounts of food in the serving dishes must be enough to provide the minimum required CACFP serving sizes for each participant seated at the table, including the supervising adults if they eat.
 - Participants determine how much food and beverage they want to take, if any.
 - As participants serve themselves, they should be encouraged to take the minimum serving size.
 - Any component served solely by an adult must be provided in the minimum serving size.



When a complete family style meal service is not practical, programs may offer one or more components using the family style method, and staff may serve the other components. For foods being served family style, quantities in common serving dishes must provide the minimum serving size for each participant seated at the table. For foods served by staff, the minimum serving sizes of each food must be placed on the participant’s plate or in their cup.

CC, HS, OS, AR	Meal Service Styles
ADC	Meal Service Styles

At-Risk Afterschool Programs Only

Refer to the At-Risk Afterschool Programs handout for requirements on meal service options including:

- Serving meals using Offer Versus Serve
- Sharing tables
- Taking one component off site

School Food Authorities administering at-risk afterschool programs may choose to use the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) meal patterns or the CACFP meal pattern.

Adult Day Care Centers Only - OVS

Adult Day Care Centers may use a type of meal service called Offer Versus Serve (OVS) which allows adult participants to decline some of the food offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch or supper. Programs must indicate when a site will use OVS in the CACFP online contract on the Site Application page. Refer to the [USDA Offer Versus Serve for ADC](#) handout for OVS requirements.

Field Trips

To claim a meal or snack served on a field trip, the following must occur:

- All required meal components must be served to all participants (this includes milk for breakfast, lunch and supper meals).
- Procedures are in place for the food to be transported and maintained at proper temperatures (perishable food at 41°F or lower) (e.g., coolers with ice packs).
- The number of meals served are recorded on a Meal Count Form at the time of service, i.e. when the meals are distributed to participants. The meal count cannot be recorded before the meal is served, or based off the number of meals sent, number of meals leftover or from the number of participants signed in on the attendance sheet.

Drinking Water

Drinking water must be available and offered to participants throughout the day, including at meal times. However, water is not part of a reimbursable meal and may not be served in place of milk. Serve water with snacks when two creditable food components are served with no other beverage. Younger children must be asked frequently, throughout the day, if they want water. Water can be made available in a variety of ways: cups next to a sink, assigned water bottles, pitchers of water with cups set out and/or scheduled water breaks. For more information, visit this [website](#).

Food Safety

Follow state and local health and sanitation requirements applicable to your program. Licensed group child care centers must follow the Department of Children and Families food safety and sanitation requirements. The following handouts provide more information about general Food Safety: [Food Safety & Sanitation](#), [Safe Food Storage](#), and [CACFP Food Storage Chart](#).