

CACFP MONTHLY UPDATE

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Dear Champions of Education,

During the current government shutdown, the Federal Grant Management System (G5) remains operational and available for Maine DOE program and fiscal staff to access Grant Award Notifications (GAN) and request reimbursements.

The U.S. Department of Education's contingency plan states that federal funding for programs such as IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act), and other forward-funded programs will remain available.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has guaranteed funding availability for the Child Nutrition Programs including the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Special Milk Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and Summer EBT until October 31, 2025.

While funding remains available, in many cases, all federal staff members have been furloughed. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates.

Your Maine Department of Education offices remain open and ready to support and assist you. As more information becomes available, we will share that with you.



August Claim Submission

October 30th is the last day to
submit your **August** claim

FARM TO CACFP WEEK

OCTOBER 12TH – 18TH

The Maine Department of Education, Child Nutrition, is proud to announce the celebration of Farm to CACFP Week, taking place October 12-18, 2025. This annual event highlights the importance of connecting participants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), including young children and adults in care settings, with local food, nutrition education, and gardening experiences.

Farm to CACFP Week is an opportunity to recognize and support the efforts of child care centers, Head Start programs, family child care homes, afterschool programs, and adult care centers across Maine that are promoting healthy habits and supporting local agriculture.

Throughout the week, participating programs are encouraged to:

- **Serve local foods** in CACFP meals and snacks
- **Engage participants** in taste tests, cooking demonstrations, food-themed stories, or gardening activities
- **Highlight Maine farms** and producers through guest visits or virtual tours

A special highlight of the week is Apple Crunch Day, on October 15th, an engaging and joyful event where children and adults across Maine are invited to take a big, crunchy bite out of fresh, local apples at noon. This simple activity is a fun way to celebrate Maine's apple harvest and spark curiosity about where our food comes from. It also offers an excellent opportunity to explore how apples grow in our state, the role they play in our agricultural heritage, and the many varieties that thrive in Maine's orchards.

Farm to CACFP Week is a chance to celebrate the role local food plays in supporting healthy eating habits and building stronger connections between Maine's communities, care programs, and farmers.

Free Webinar



Sprouting Success **Celebrate Farm to CACFP Week**

Wednesday, October 15
2:00 pm - 2:30 pm Eastern

cacfp.org

To Register:

<https://info.cacfp.org/calendar/Details/sprouting-success-celebrate-farm-to-cacfp-week-1434324?sourceTypeld=Websitey>



SAVE THE DATE!
2025
Maine



Apple Crunch Day
October 15th, 2025



What is Maine Apple Crunch Day?

October 15, 2025, marks Maine's first **Apple Crunch Day**! This fun event promotes fresh, local food in school cafeterias and teaches students where food comes from---and the immense benefits that coincide with sourcing our food locally.

This event is a great way for schools and communities to kick off their fall by celebrating and supporting Maine producers!

How do I participate in the Apple Crunch?

Participating can be as simple or complex as you want to make it! At noon on Wednesday, October 15th, schools and communities across the state will crunch into a local apple at the same time, creating a resounding collective CRUNCH!

[To Register](#)

[To view our Apple Crunch Toolkit](#)

Email Katie Knowles with any questions:

Katie.Knowles@maine.gov

Sugar Limits

CACFP added sugars limits implemented Oct. 1, 2025:

- **Breakfast cereals** may have no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.
- **Yogurt** may have no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

Webinar Resources

- Resources for Added Sugars in Breakfast Cereals
 - [Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars](#)
 - Available in English and Spanish
 - [Identifying Added Sugar Limits in Breakfast Cereals](#)
 - Free to download. Also available to order in print. [Order Now](#)
 - [Meal Pattern Minute: Updated Sugar Limits in Breakfast Cereals](#)
 - Easy to share on social media
- Resources for Added Sugars in Yogurt
 - [Choose Yogurt That is Lower in Added Sugars](#)
 - Available in English and Spanish
 - [Is Your Yogurt CACFP Creditable 2025](#)
 - Free to download. Also available to order in print. [Order Now](#)
 - [Meal Pattern Minute: Updated Sugar Limits in Yogurt](#)
 - Easy to share on social media
- Additional Webinars
 - [Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars](#)
 - [Choose Yogurts That Are Lower in Added Sugars](#)
- Explore more resources in our [Resource Directory](#)
- [Access all Meal Pattern Minutes](#)
 - Easy to share on social media

CACFP Policy Memos

Did you know that USDA Policy Memo's are posted on the Child Nutrition website?

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/laws/policymemos>

The State Agency AND your sponsoring agency are required to keep USDA Memos for three years plus current. How are you keeping track of these memos?

It's important to know that some memos will apply to multiple Child Nutrition Programs like this one:

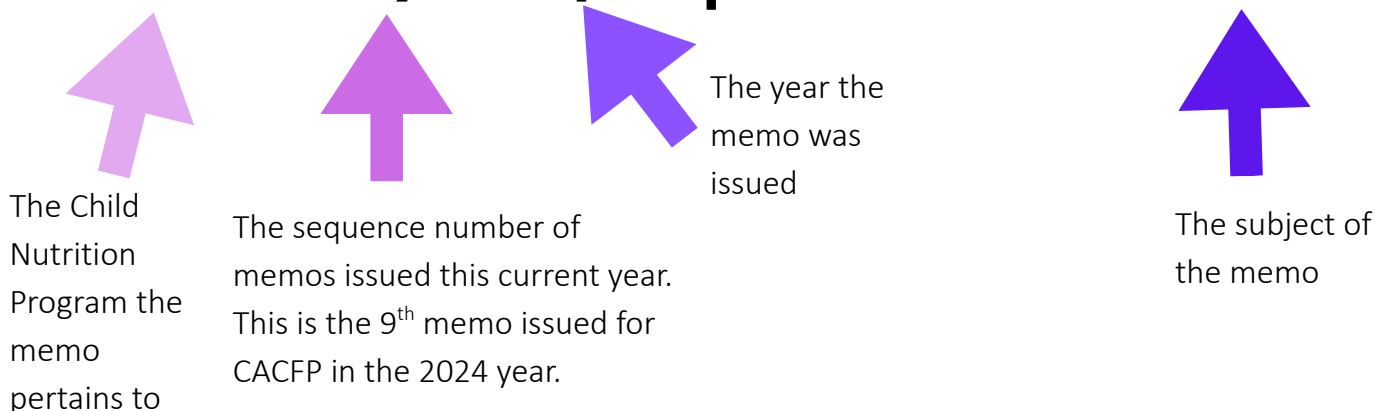
SP 22-2024, CACFP 08-2024, SFSP 13-2024- Geographic Preference Expansion Related to the Final Rule titled, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

You can see the memo regarding "Geographic Preference..." is the 8th memo issued for CACFP in the 2024 year, but it also contains information that applies to School Nutrition Programs (SP) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

Please make sure you have a folder (virtual or physical) where you can keep copies of all USDA Memos and correspondence from the State Agency by year.

CACFP Policy Memos issued by USDA are specifically labeled so that you can easily tell if you have all memos for any given year.

CACFP 09-2024- Implementation Guidance



Make Our Children Healthy Again

White House Releases Make Our Children Healthy Again Strategy

On September 9, 2025, the White House released the [Make Our Children Healthy Again Strategy Report](#) which outlines actions of the executive branch to address the childhood chronic disease crisis.

The Strategy highlights CACFP as an important tool for accessing healthy, nutritious meals in child care.

Child Nutrition Programs are continuously updated to adhere to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs). In the most recent [Study of Nutrition and Activity in Child Care Settings](#) (SNACS-II), it was found that CACFP operators serve meals that highly align with the DGAs. At breakfast, CACFP meals scored 98% for total fruits, 100% for whole fruits, 100% for dairy and 92% for whole grains and at lunch, they scored 94% for total fruits, 98% for whole fruits, 90% for total vegetables, 100% for dairy, and 92% for total protein foods. CACFP operators also scored 96% at breakfast and 100% at lunch for moderating added sugars in their meals. These scores show near perfect alignment with the DGAs and emphasize how CACFP operators are already serving whole, healthy foods and limiting added sugars.

To read the full Strategy, visit <https://www.whitehouse.gov/maha/>.

Milk Transition for Infants and Preschoolers

Iron-fortified formula may be served to children between the ages of 12 months and 13 months to help with the transition to whole milk.

Breastmilk may be used to meet the fluid milk component in the CACFP meal pattern.

Unflavored whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk may be served to children between the ages of 24 and 25 months to help with the transition to fat-free milk or low-fat (1%) milk.

[Crediting Fluid Milk in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet](#)

Incorporating Plant-Based Foods in Meals & Snacks

Plant-based meals, such as those featuring tofu, legumes, or tempeh, add variety and these types of meat alternatives are creditable under the CACFP. Despite the common misconception, you don't need to rely on meat, dairy, eggs, or other animal products to reach daily protein goals. Beans, lentils, tofu, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and meat alternatives all contain protein, and these ingredients can often be used in place of chicken, beef, pork, or fish in recipes. Eating a combination of these plant-based ingredients ensures a balanced intake of protein, fiber, and other essential vitamins, minerals, and nutrients. The National CACFP Association has more information about plant-based proteins and adding plant-based products to your menus on their website: [Quick Guide to Plant-Based Proteins](#) and [Adding Plant-Based Products to Your Menu](#).

USDA FY 2026 Farm to School Grants - Now Open!

The USDA has announced the **FY 2026 Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program**, offering up to **\$18 million** to support projects that connect child nutrition programs—like CACFP—with local food producers.

Grants range from **\$100,000 to \$500,000** and can fund activities like:

- Local food purchasing
- School and child care gardens
- Taste tests and cooking lessons
- Farm field trips and agricultural education

Who can apply?

- State agencies, Indian Tribal Organizations
- Local agencies, agricultural producers
- Nonprofits and CACFP operators (must apply in partnership)

Application Deadline: December 5, 2025

The Family Child Care Mentorship Program

The Family Child Care Mentorship Program is a specialized resource designed to support family child care providers in strengthening their Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) operators. Built on the ICN Applied Research Division's Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills for Child Care Providers in CACFP Operations, the program delivers tailored technical assistance and guidance across key functional areas from a peer mentor. Through a series of interactive trainings, mentoring opportunities, panel discussions, and breakout sessions, providers gain practical strategies for implementing CACFP practices effectively.

<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/the-family-child-care-mentorship-program/>

Fall Sensory Taste-and-Tell

This simple, hands-on activity promotes sensory exploration and supports all ages and abilities through taste, smell, touch, and storytelling.

How it Works:

- Choose 3–5 fall-themed foods that align with CACFP meal patterns (e.g., apple slices, roasted pumpkin, cooked sweet potato, warm whole grain bread, cinnamon sticks).
- Invite participants to smell, touch, and (as appropriate) taste each item.
- Encourage sharing reactions:
 - What does it smell like?
 - How does it feel?
 - What memories or feelings does it bring up?

Adaptations for Inclusivity:

- Use verbal prompts, texture cards, or visual aids for non-verbal participants.
- Offer hand-over-hand support if needed.
- Incorporate gentle background music or fall visuals for a calming atmosphere.

As the leaves change and cooler days roll in, fall is the perfect time to cozy up with nutritious foods and fun learning activities. This month, we're celebrating the season with a CACFP-friendly recipe and playful ways to promote healthy habits with the children and adults in your care.

Pumpkin Apple Breakfast Bowl

(CACFP Credit per 6–12-year-old serving: ½ cup Fruit, 1 oz. eq. Grain)

This warm and hearty breakfast brings together two fall favorites—pumpkin and apple—for a nutritious start to the day.

Ingredients (Serves 6):

- 3 cups cooked oatmeal
- 1 cup canned pumpkin (not pie filling)
- 2 cups of apples, finely chopped
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tbsp maple syrup (optional)
- ½ cup low-fat milk or milk alternative (see note below)

Instructions:

1. In a saucepan, combine cooked oatmeal, pumpkin, and chopped apple.
2. Stir in cinnamon and milk. Heat over medium until warm.
3. Add a drizzle of maple syrup if desired (optional for flavor only).
4. Serve warm in bowls.

Pro Tip: Invite children to help mix ingredients or sprinkle cinnamon—it's a great way to engage them in healthy food prep!

CACFP Reminder: Milk used in recipes does not count toward the CACFP milk component.

Serve 8 oz of unflavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk on the side for children ages 6–12 to meet the full breakfast meal pattern requirement.



MUFFIN TIN RECIPES

for the CACFP: Ages 3-5

Using **large muffin tins** while preparing meals helps ensure that every child is receiving the correct serving size for each meal component. These recipes are per child served. Baking without a paper liner or silicone cup? **Brush tin with vegetable oil or use cooking oil spray before adding ingredients.**

BREAKFAST

Potato and Egg Cup

- ½ cup grated potato
- 1 egg
- melted butter
- salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 400° F. Press potatoes tightly into the tin around the edges and the bottom to resemble a nest. Brush lightly with butter. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes. Allow the nests to cool and then crack the egg into each nest. Add salt and pepper to taste. Bake for about 15 more minutes until egg whites are set. Serve while warm and have the children sprinkle their favorite cheese on top.



2 oz eq meat/meat alternate,
½ cup vegetable

French Toast Berry Cup

- 1 slice WGR bread, crust removed
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp milk
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ cup berries
- 1 tsp maple syrup

Preheat oven to 375° F. In a large bowl, whisk eggs, milk, and cinnamon. Dunk bread into egg mixture making sure both sides are covered. Press into muffin tin. Bake for 10-12 minutes. Pour berries into the center and drizzle with the maple syrup.



½ oz eq grains, ½ cup fruit

Omelet Cup

- 1 egg
- 1 slice ham
- ½ cup diced onion, green pepper, and tomato mixture
- 1 tbsp parmesan cheese
- 1 tbsp cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 425° F. Line each muffin tin with ham. Whisk egg, cheeses and vegetable mix together. Pour into the cup and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake for 15 minutes.



2 oz eq meat/meat alternate,
½ cup vegetable

LUNCH/SUPPER

Taco Pie

- 3" pie crust or tortilla circle (14 grams)
- ¾ ounce refried beans
- ¾ ounce cooked ground beef (prepared with taco seasoning)
- shredded cheese
- ½ cup equivalent shredded lettuce, diced tomatoes, & onion, and chopped avocado mixture

Preheat oven to 350° F. Press pastry until it fits neatly into the cup. Spoon the beef and refried beans into the cups. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake until cheese melts and edges of crust is brown. Top with lettuce mix.



1 ½ oz eq MMA, ½ oz eq grains, ¼ cup fruit

Spaghetti Meatball Nest

- ¼ cup cooked spaghetti noodles
- 1 tbsp parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp olive oil
- (3) ½ oz eq* prepared meatballs (1.5 oz eq total)
- pasta sauce

Preheat oven to 375° F. Toss noodles with parmesan cheese and olive oil. Arrange them in the shape of a nest into each muffin tin. In the center arrange the three meatballs and drizzle with pasta sauce. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes.

*Check the CN Label or PFS to determine the amount needed to get ½ oz eq meatball



1 ½ oz eq meat/meat alternate,
½ oz eq grains

Stuffed Biscuit Cup

- ¾ oz eq* sliced ham or turkey
- ¾ ounce shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 canned biscuit weighing at least 14 grams or ½ ounce

Preheat the oven to 400° F. Roll the biscuit out flat and add meat and cheese to center. Pinch edges together to seal tight. Place the stuffed biscuit in muffin tin. Bake for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown.

*Check the CN Label or PFS to determine the amount needed to get ¾ oz eq deli meat



1 ½ oz eq meat/meat alternate,
½ oz eq grains

SNACKS

Greek Freeze Smoothie

- 2 ounces greek yogurt
- ½ cup fruit

Add the two ingredients together with a dash of vanilla into a blender. Blend until smooth. Spoon into silicone muffin cups and place in freezer for 5 hours or medium freeze.



½ oz eq meat/meat alternate,
½ cup fruit

Pizza Spiral

- 1½ (14 oz) pizza dough, each strip must be 14g minimum for ½ oz eq
- 1-2 tbsp marinara sauce
- 2 tbsp shredded mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 375° F. Roll dough into 18"x6" rectangle. Cut into 12 long strips, 1 ½" each. Cover strip with sauce and cheese, roll and place in tin. Brush oil on top. Bake 20-26 minutes.



½ oz eq meat/meat alternate,
1 oz eq grains

Veggie Bundle

- ½ cup mixed vegetables sliced into sticks (carrots, cucumbers, celery, asparagus)
- 2 tbsp hummus

Spoon hummus inside each silicone muffin cup or paper liner. Place vegetable sticks upright into the hummus to encourage dipping.



½ oz eq meat/meat alternate,
½ cup vegetable

Found another muffin tin recipe you want to save? Write it down.

Recipe

Ingredients

Directions



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Pro Tips:

- Using muffin tin paper liners makes serving and clean up easier. During the holidays look for fun, themed paper liners. Serving in a fun liner will encourage the children to try the recipe.
- Be careful when preparing meals in muffin tins, required amounts are different for snack verses lunch or supper. Check meal pattern for correct requirements for meal component if using any above recipes for a different mealtime.
- Muffin tin recipes are an easy way to get children involved with meal preparation.
- Silicone muffin cups are reusable which saves money and children love them.



ServSafe Exam

2:00pm

October 20, 2025

Child Nutrition Office

Deering Building

Room 101

Augusta

Arrive early, testing begins promptly at 2:00. Bring photo ID (you will not be able to take the exam if you do not have your ID), pens or pencils, erasers.

Once test has begun no late arrivals will be allowed to take the exam.

**Per Maine DOE policy, payment is due by
credit card at the time of registration.**

Registration Deadline - October 3, 2025