

CACFP MONTHLY UPDATE

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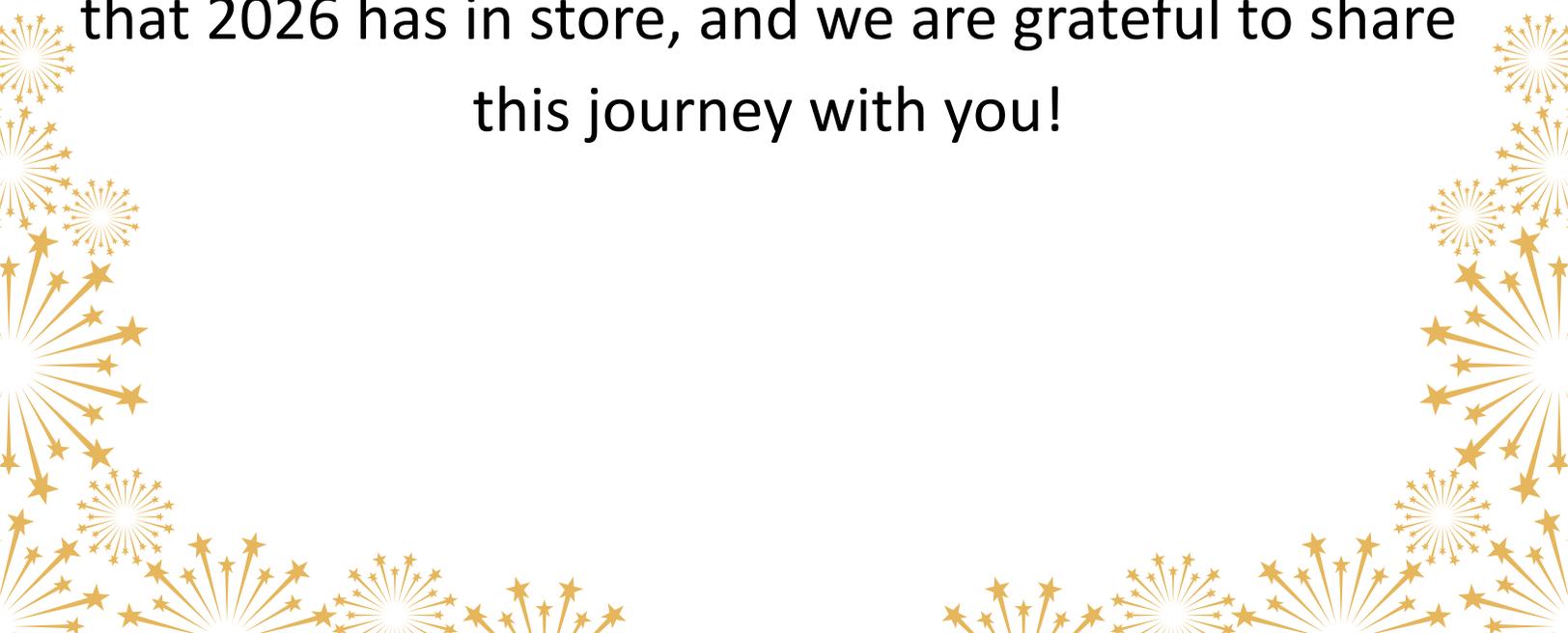
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Happy New Year!

As we welcome the start of 2026, the Maine CACFP Team would like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to all our dedicated Sponsors and Providers. Your commitment to nourishing Maine's children and adults while supporting healthy communities is truly inspiring. Because of your hard work, thousands of Maine CACFP participants begin each day with the nutrition they need to learn, grow, and thrive.

Here's to another year of collaboration, creativity, and continued success. We are excited about everything that 2026 has in store, and we are grateful to share this journey with you!



BREAKING

NEWS

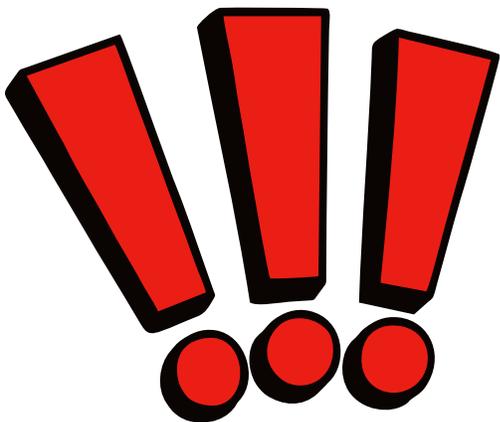
The List Serve is Changing!!

The Maine Office of Information Technology has made the decision to forego using List Serves. Therefore, we are shifting the way we get messages to you and how you can share information and ask questions of your CACFP colleagues.

Beginning January 22, 2026, our office will started using EnGiNE, Maine DOE's open-source learning portal. Our list serve email list cannot be transferred to EnGiNE, you **MUST** sign up using this [link](#). You will receive an email with login information once your request has been approved.

Once you receive notification that your EnGiNE access is approved, or you already have access to EnGiNE, you can enroll in the Child and Adult Care Food Program Information Portal using this [link](#).

The CACFP Monthly Update will still be accessible on our website.

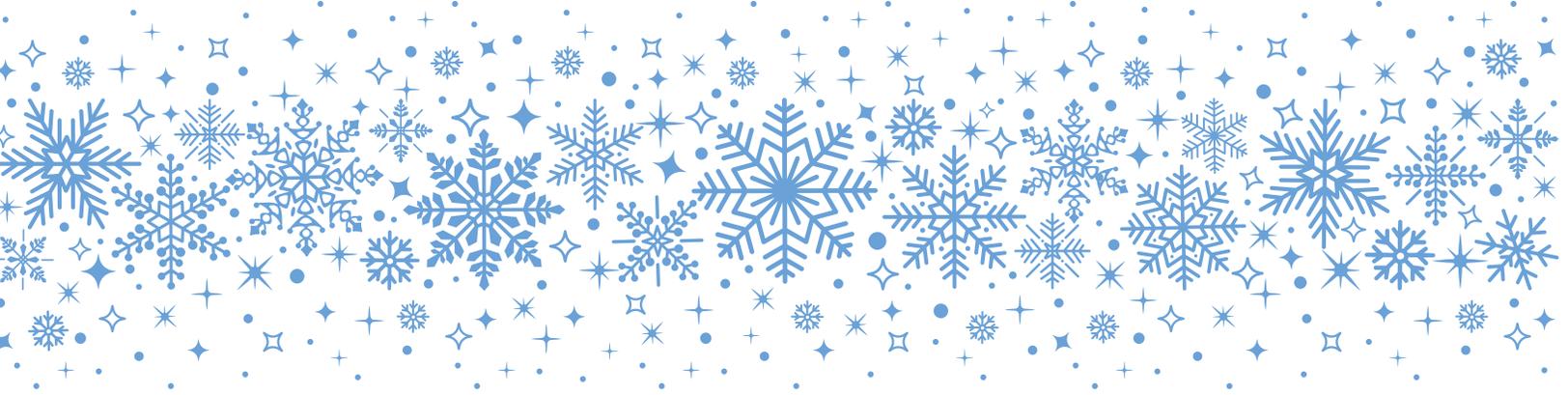


November Claim

Submission

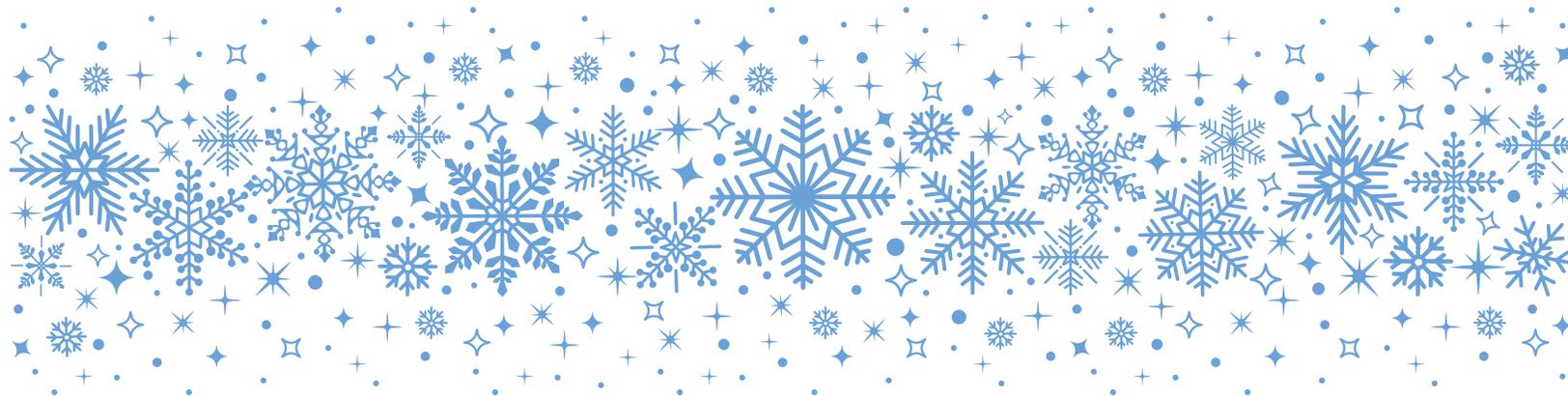
January 29, 2026 is the last day to submit your **November 2025** claim

We strongly encourage you to submit claims as early as possible and not wait until the last minute. Planning ahead allows time to address any questions or issues that may arise, especially considering the two-step claim approval process.



Review CNPweb Users

As people come and go from your organization, please make sure those with access to CNPweb are current.

- Log into CNPweb and look under the “Users” tab on your Sponsor Summary page.
 - If there are users listed that no longer should have access to your organization in CNPweb, please email child.nutrition@maine.gov and request a User Access form.
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CACFP Open Office Hours

Need Help with CACFP? We're Here for You!

Have questions about your CACFP budget, sponsor or provider agreements, provider sheets, or other program requirements? Join our monthly CACFP Office Hours from 2:00–3:00 p.m. on Microsoft Teams.

During this open session, CACFP staff will be available to answer your questions, provide technical assistance, and offer guidance to support your program's success.!

January 12, 2026

February 9, 2026

March 9, 2026

April 13, 2026

May 11, 2026

June 8, 2026

[Use this link to join the CACFP Open Office Hours](#)

Key Strategies for Organization & Recordkeeping in the CACFP

Staying organized in CACFP involves creating consistent systems for daily tasks (attendance, meal counts, menus) using binders, clipboards, and digital tools, filing everything immediately in clearly labeled, color-coded folders (monthly/category), and conducting regular check-ins to ensure compliance, automating what you can (receipts, reminders), and always backing up digital records to be audit-ready year-round.

- **Implement a "Rolling System":** Don't wait for reviews; file documents (receipts, menus, forms) as soon as they're completed into dedicated binders or digital folders.
- **Use Dedicated Files:** Set up clear folders for categories like Monthly Claims, Civil Rights, Financial Records, Menus, Attendance, and Training.
- **Go Digital & Automate:** Use software for receipts and accounting and set up automated reminders for expiring forms.
- **Color-Code & Label:** Use colored folders for categories and label everything clearly for quick identification.
- **Maintain Consistency:** Develop and follow consistent procedures for daily tasks (e.g., point-of-service meal counts, menu documentation, attendance).

Daily/Weekly Tasks:

- **Attendance/Sign-in Sheets:** Complete daily and file monthly.
- **Meal Counts & Menus:** Document actual meals served, including substitutions and whole-grain-rich items, on clipboards and file monthly.
- **Receipts:** Keep track of food, supply, and labor costs with itemized receipts, scanning paper ones for backups.
- **Training:** Schedule and document annual staff training.

Monthly Tasks:

- **Review & Consolidate:** Check for missing signatures, expired forms, and accuracy in your records.
- **Financials:** Compile itemized food receipts, CN labels, and non-food supply costs.

Audit Readiness:

- **Keep Records:** Maintain records for at least three years plus the current year.
- **Back Up Digital Files:** Ensure all digital records are securely backed up.
- **Prepare for Reviews:** Stay audit-ready by conducting mid-year compliance checks.

Juice

When serving juice in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, it must be 100% full-strength, pasteurized juice. This full-strength juice, whether it is fruit, vegetable, or a combination of both, can only be used to satisfy the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal or snack per day. Additionally, juice cannot be served to infants. You can serve juice at meal or snack times, but when juice is included as a snack, it must be accompanied by a non-beverage component (for example, you cannot serve milk and apple juice together as a snack).

Grain-Based Desserts

It can sometimes be confusing to know what a grain-based dessert is and what it is not! Here is a resource from the National CACFP Association about Sweet Toppings:

<https://www.cacfp.org/2025/08/15/meal-pattern-minute-sweet-toppings/>

Child Nutrition (CN) Labels and Product Formulation Statements (PFS)

CACFP sponsors are responsible to ensure that meals and snacks served meet meal pattern requirements; therefore, they must maintain documentation that demonstrates how food items meet the requirements in 7 CFR 226.

If a sponsor serves commercially processed food items that are not found in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs, then documentation of meal pattern contributions must be obtained from the manufacturer prior to serving/claiming the food item(s). CN labels and manufacturer's PFSs are documents that provide a way for a manufacturer to demonstrate how a processed food product contributes to the meal pattern requirements.

When sponsors collect CN labels/PFSs, they must ensure that they are for the same product(s) they are purchasing and serving. For example, Gorton's makes a variety of fish stick products; however, only 1 or 2 of these products are manufactured for use in Child Nutrition Programs. Similar is true for other commercially prepared products, such as chicken nuggets and macaroni and cheese. Also, keep in mind that CN labels are only valid for 5 years. For example, if a CN label was originally authorized on February 15, 2025, it is valid until February 15, 2030. See USDA memo CACFP 04-2025 Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements for additional information.

CACFP ABC's

Let's celebrate the ABC's of good nutrition! Children in the CACFP grow, learn, and thrive when they receive the nutrients their bodies need each day, and vitamins play a big role in helping them stay strong and healthy.

The featured posters this month highlight five important vitamins—A, B, C, D, and E—and the everyday foods that provide them. Each vitamin helps the body in a different way:

- **Vitamin A** supports healthy vision. Foods like carrots, squash, peaches, spinach, and eggs give eyes the power to see clearly.
- **Vitamin B** helps kids stay energized and ready for active play. Cheese, beans, chicken, bananas, and whole grains are great sources.
- **Vitamin C** keeps the immune system strong. Oranges, strawberries, peppers, tomatoes, and kiwi help children stay healthy and ready to learn.
- **Vitamin D** builds strong bones and teeth. Milk, cheese, cereal, salmon, and tuna are key foods for calcium absorption and bone strength.
- **Vitamin E** supports a healthy brain. Nuts, seeds, broccoli, avocados, and colorful produce help fuel thinking and learning.

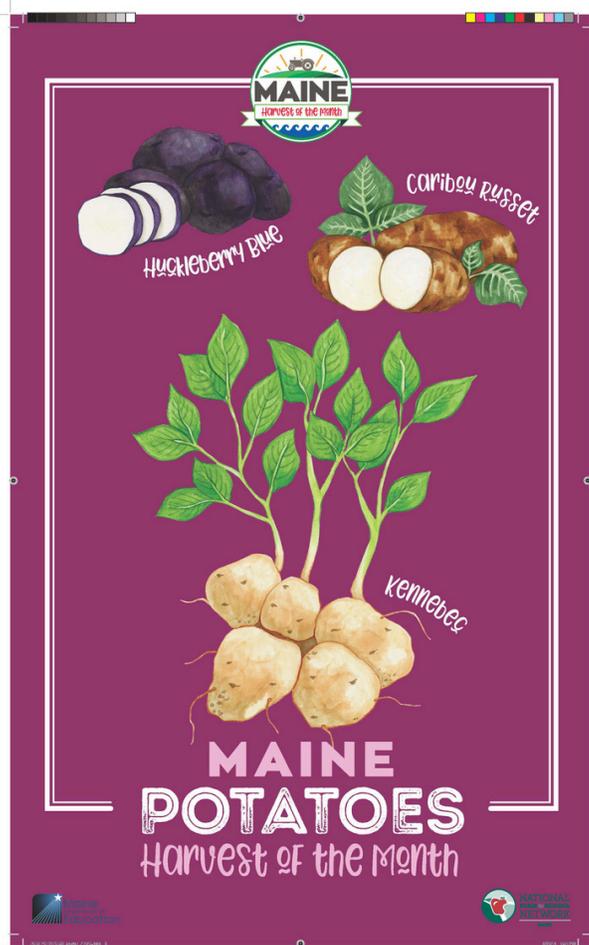
The second poster includes a fun weekly checklist that children can use to track the vitamin-rich foods they eat. It's a great way to encourage kids to explore new foods, learn about nutrition, and take pride in making healthy choices.

By offering a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and dairy each day, CACFP providers help children get the vitamins they need to grow, play, and shine. Thank you for all the creative and nutritious meals you serve every day!



<https://www.cacfp.org/assets/pdf/Vitamin+ABCs+EN-SP+cacfp.org/>





January Harvest of the Month: Maine Potatoes

This month, we're celebrating Maine Potatoes, a local favorite grown across the state and especially in Aroostook County. Potatoes are a nutritious, versatile food that fits perfectly into CACFP meals—providing vitamin C, potassium, fiber, and energy to help children grow and stay active.

Try featuring potatoes in simple, kid-friendly ways, such as roasted wedges, mashed potatoes, baked potatoes, or hearty soups. With so many varieties to choose from, there's always a new way to enjoy Maine's most iconic crop. Thank you for supporting local foods and helping children connect with where their food comes from!

For more information about the Harvest of the Month please visit:

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/programs/harvestofthemoth/resources>



Rainbow Potatoes

Lunch/Supper Crediting for Ages 3-5



Total Time

65 minutes



Serving Size

1/4 cup



Servings

12



Components

Vegetable

Ingredients

- 1 lb potatoes, diced
- 1 cup red bell peppers, sliced
- 1 cup yellow bell peppers, sliced
- 1 cup mushroom pieces
- 1/4 cup garlic, minced
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper
- 1/4 cup olive oil

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400° F.
2. Place diced potatoes in a single layer on a perforated sheet pan. top with peppers and mushrooms.
3. Drizzle olive oil, salt, pepper and minced garlic over the rainbow potatoes.
4. Roast for 30 minutes. Flip the rainbow potatoes and roast for another 30 minutes.

One serving provides 1/4 cup vegetable.



This recipe is courtesy of
Mushroom Council.

<https://www.cacfp.org/2022/10/20/rainbow-potatoes/>

Looking for more recipes? Don't forget to check out the Child Nutrition Recipe Box!

<https://theicn.org/cnr/recipes-cacfp-centers/>



Local Foods Training The Good Crust

January 21, 2026
10:00am-12:00pm

Child Nutrition Culinary Classroom
90 Blossom Lane
Augusta

Join Katie, our Farm & Sea to School Coordinator for a local foods training with The Good Crust! This training will highlight some of The Good Crust's BRAND-NEW products, including a new handheld breakfast item, Sicilian style pizza crust, and more! During this training, we will demonstrate different ways to prepare and utilize these new products. This training is eligible for districts operating NSLP to receive an extra \$1000 in state Local Foods Fund reimbursements (which can be used to purchase The Good Crust dough!)

Please reach out to Katie with any questions at katie.knowles@maine.gov

Upcoming CACFP Trainings

Supporting Emotional Well-Being with Sesame Street in Communities



A new year brings new beginnings and an excellent chance to refocus on the emotional well-being of those in our care. Join Sesame Street in Communities to explore free resources that help children name big feelings, build healthy coping skills, and strengthen bonds with the caring adults around them. Through videos, storybooks, and hands-on activities with your favorite Sesame Street friends, you'll discover joyful ways to nurture emotional health and bring more calm, confidence, and connection into your daily routines.

1. Identify key Sesame Street in Communities resources that promote emotional well-being for young children and caregivers.
2. Apply strategies and activities to help children recognize emotions, build coping skills, and strengthen resilience.

Earn a certificate for 0.5 CEU, Specialty 3, for attending this Zoom webinar.

<https://info.cacfp.org/ap/Events/Register/R1FWKOIFRCoCX>



Stirring Up Goodness: Your Resources for CACFP Week

Tuesday, February 10, 2026 | 2:00 pm - 2:30 pm Eastern

You stir up goodness every day in the CACFP, now let's make sure your program shines during CACFP Week! Discover all the free CACFP Week resources available to help you celebrate with confidence. You'll see exactly how to use these tools to highlight your program, engage the community you serve and share the impact you make.

Whether this is your first CACFP Week or you've been celebrating for years, you'll leave feeling inspired, prepared and proud of the goodness you bring to the table.

Presented By: Lisa Mack, President & CEO, National CACFP Association

<https://info.cacfp.org/ap/Events/Register/12Fyx83fgCVCB>

MASTERING FOOD SAFETY

Time and Temperature Control in the CACFP

 CACFP101
WEBINAR

Tuesday
January 20,
2026

3:00 PM ET



Keeping food at the right temperature is one of the most important ways to keep food safe and children healthy. In this webinar, you'll learn simple, practical steps for managing food temperatures from the time food is purchased until it's served. We'll cover best practices for cooling, thawing, and reheating foods safely, as well as how to accurately check, record, and maintain food temperatures during preparation, storage, and serving in the CACFP.

<https://ilearn.theicn.org/learn/courses/752/cacfp-mastering-food-safety-time-and-temperature-controls-in-the-cacfp-january-20th-2026-3pm-est>