

July 2026

CACFP MONTHLY UPDATE

In this Month's Update

You can scroll through or click on a title below and you will be taken to that page.

!!NOW OPEN 2027 Agreement!!

2027 Agreement Open Office Hours

May Claim Submission

CACFP Record Retention - Paper vs Electronic

When a Parent Chooses Not to Participate in CACFP

Fluid Milk - Substitute & Meal Service

Child Nutrition Programs Food Industry Toolkit

Converting Liquid Measurements for CACFP

Nourishing Bodies & Minds This Summer

Mobile Document Scanning

IEF Binder Process

July Harvest of the Month

Training Opportunities



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Maine

CACFP SPONSORS

THE **2027**
AGREEMENT
is Open!



DEADLINE FOR
SUBMISSION:

**AUGUST 31,
2026**



Don't wait until the last minute!

Submit your **2027 Agreement** early
to ensure a smooth process.



Thank you for your continued
commitment to the children
and families in Maine!

2027 Agreement Open Office Hours

Need assistance completing your 2027 CACFP Agreement?
Have questions about required documentation, CNPweb, or
the renewal process?

To support sponsors during the agreement renewal period,
the CACFP Team will be hosting a series of Open Office Hours
throughout July and August. These sessions are informal
opportunities to receive technical assistance, ask questions,
and get help navigating the agreement process.

No registration is required—simply join the session that best
fits your schedule:

[July 8, 2026 - 1:00pm-2:00pm](#)

[July 16, 2026 - 5:00pm-6:00pm](#)

[July 21, 2026 - 9:00am-10:00am](#)

[July 29, 2026 - 2:00pm-3:00pm](#)

[August 3, 2026 - 12:00pm-1:00pm](#)

[August 13, 2026 - 7:00am-8:00am](#)

[August 18, 2026 - 2:00pm-3:00pm](#)

[August 25, 2026 - 4:30pm-5:30pm](#)

[August 27, 2026 - 9:00am-10:00am](#)

[August 31, 2026 - 10:00am-11:00am](#)



May Claim Submission

July 30, 2026 is the last day to
submit your **May 2026** 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.

Record Retention: Paper vs. Electronic CACFP Records

As more Sponsors transition to electronic recordkeeping systems, questions often arise about whether original paper documents must still be retained after being scanned and stored digitally.

CACFP records must be retained for three years plus the current program year (October 1–September 30). Records must be kept longer if required for specific documentation or until any open audit findings have been fully resolved and the audit is officially closed, whichever is longer. This retention requirement applies to all CACFP supporting documentation, including—but not limited to—meal count records, enrollment and attendance records, receipts, invoices, and any other records used to support CACFP claims and program operations.

For recordkeeping and monitoring purposes, Sponsors must ensure the following:

- The current and previous Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) records must be maintained on-site, accessible during normal business hours, and available for review by the State Agency and USDA officials upon arrival, whether announced or unannounced.
- The two years prior to the current and previous FFY may be stored off-site; however, they must still be accessible during normal business hours and available for review by the State Agency and USDA officials and readily available upon request.

Sponsors may maintain records electronically rather than in paper form. However, electronic records must be clear, complete, and legible, and must include all required information. For example, receipts and invoices must clearly show purchase dates, vendor information, and other required details. Electronic systems must also be securely backed up to ensure records are protected and remain available throughout the required retention period.

In addition, Sponsors must be able to retrieve and print electronic records upon request for review, monitoring, or audit purposes by the State Agency and USDA officials.

When electronic records meet these requirements and are properly maintained, Sponsors are generally not required to retain original paper copies. The electronic version becomes the official record and must be maintained in accordance with CACFP retention and accessibility requirements.

When a Parent Chooses Not to Participate in CACFP

Occasionally, a parent or guardian may decide not to have their child participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). When this situation arises, it is important for centers to follow the appropriate procedures to ensure accurate program records and meal claiming practices.

What Should Sponsors and Centers Do?

If a parent or guardian declines CACFP participation for their child, they should complete a CACFP Participation Parent Decline Form. This form serves as documentation that the family has chosen not to participate in the program.

Once the completed form is received:

- Keep the signed Parent Decline Form on file at the center.
- Do not include the child in CACFP meal counts or claims for reimbursement.
- Exclude the child from the center's free, reduced-price, and paid percentage calculations.
- Ensure that all enrollment and meal count records accurately reflect the child's non-participation status.

Why Is Documentation Important?

Maintaining a completed Parent Decline Form helps demonstrate compliance during reviews and audits. It provides clear documentation that the child's exclusion from meal counts is based on a parent or guardian's voluntary decision rather than an administrative oversight.

Best Practices

- Discuss the program with parents to ensure they understand the benefits of CACFP participation before making their decision.
- Provide the Parent Decline Form promptly when requested.
- Review enrollment records periodically to ensure participation status is accurately documented.
- Retain all completed forms according to CACFP record retention requirements.

Fluid Milk: Substitutes & Meal Service

Non-Disability Reasons:

For Participants who do not consume fluid milk due to non-disability reasons (including cultural, ethical, Tribal and religious preferences). Fluid milk substitutes may be served in place of fluid milk to better meet dietary preferences. CACFP operators are encouraged to meet these dietary preferences, if possible.

- Fluid milk substitutes requested must meet meal pattern requirements:
- Must be nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk
- Must meet nutrition standards for cow's milk (calcium, protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, etc.)
- Must meet nutrition standards for meals/snacks to be reimbursable!
- Must be documented in the form of a written request from the parent/guardian or adult participant. A medical statement is NOT required.

For Participants who do not consume fluid cow's milk due to disability reasons:

Programs are required to provide fluid milk substitutions requested for disabilities. If the fluid milk substitute requested for a disability results in you not meeting meal pattern requirements, you must:

- Obtain a written medical statement signed by a healthcare professional or registered dietitian. The medical statement should identify the food(s) to be avoided and the recommended alternatives.

Meal Service:

When serving pre-plated meals/snacks, participants must be served the minimum serving size of milk required for their age group

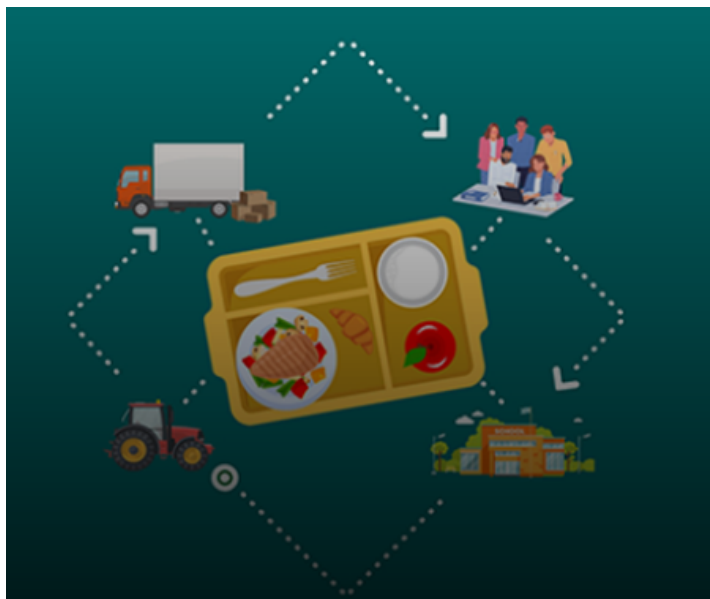
- Milk cups must be large enough to hold the full required minimum serving size of milk

When serving Family Style meal service, enough milk must be placed on the table to provide the minimum serving size for each participant seated at the table

- Participants should be encouraged to take the full required minimum serving size of milk
- It's best practice to provide milk cups that are large enough to hold the full minimum serving size- but it's not required

Child Nutrition Programs

Food Industry Toolkit



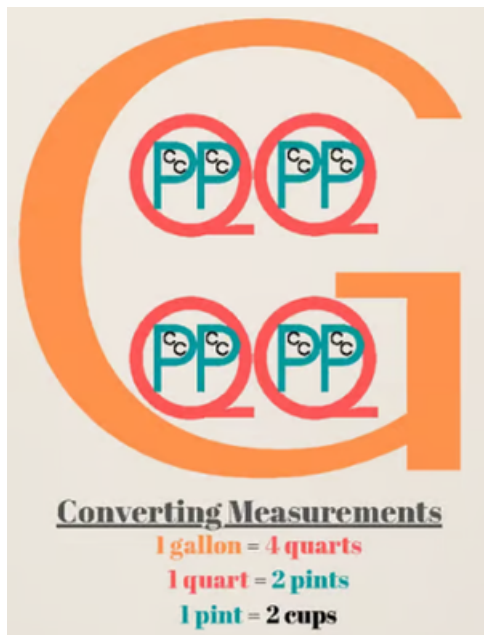
A Resource Hub for Food Industry Partners, this toolkit contains resources for use by food industry to understand meal pattern requirements for USDA child nutrition programs (CNP), how food products may contribute toward the meal pattern requirements, and food product documentation used in the CNP.

The new USDA child nutrition programs [Food Industry Toolkit](#) provides a consolidated page of Team Nutrition resources dedicated to our food industry partners. These resources support food products available to organizations operating school meal programs, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Summer Food Service Program. Resources are grouped by topic, including child nutrition (CN) labels, Product Formulation Statements, crediting, and more. Ideal for orienting new food industry staff and refreshing existing partners, this toolkit aims to provide all relevant resources in one place and reduce the time needed to access information that supports USDA's child nutrition programs.

Link here: [Child Nutrition Programs Food Industry Toolkit | Food and Nutrition Administration](#)

Converting Liquid Measurements for CACFP

A Simple Guide to Cups, Pints, Quarts and Gallons



Accurate meal planning and food preparation are essential components of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Whether you're preparing milk for breakfast, soup for lunch, or beverages for snacks, understanding liquid measurement conversions helps ensure recipes are prepared correctly and that meal pattern requirements are met.

Understanding the “G” Conversion Method

The large G in the graphic serves as a visual reminder of how liquid measurements connect:

- Inside the gallon (G) are 4 quarts (Q).
- Each quart contains 2 pints (P).
- Each pint contains 2 cups (C).

Using this method, you can quickly determine larger or smaller measurements without memorizing multiple conversion charts.

Takeaway

Knowing these conversions makes it easier to:

- Scale recipes for the number of participants served.
- Purchase the correct amount of milk and other beverages.
- Ensure accurate serving sizes.
- Minimize food waste.

Keep this graphic handy as a quick reference when planning and preparing CACFP meals and snacks.

Nourishing Bodies and Minds this Summer

Summer is an important time to support children's growth—both physically and academically. Just as nutritious meals and snacks fuel healthy bodies, reading strengthens language, literacy, and critical thinking skills that prepare children for success in school.

The 2026 Summer Reading Challenge encourages children to keep reading throughout the summer to help prevent the "summer slide" and build confidence before returning to the classroom. Children entering Kindergarten through 8th grade can participate by reading any 12 books between June 1 and September 4, 2026, and submitting a short reflection on their reading. Participants who complete the challenge are eligible for prizes, including a chance to visit Washington, D.C.

Child care programs can help foster a love of reading by:

- Reading aloud each day.
- Creating a cozy reading corner filled with age-appropriate books.
- Choosing stories that explore healthy foods, gardening, cooking, or trying new foods.
- Encouraging families to read together at home and visit their local library.
- Pairing books with CACFP meals or snacks to make nutrition education fun and engaging.

By promoting both healthy eating and early literacy, CACFP providers play a vital role in helping children return to school healthy, confident, and ready to learn.

Learn more about the 2026 Summer Reading Challenge:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/read/>

Download the official Summer Reading Challenge reading log and reflection form:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/2026-SLOTUS-SRC-Form.pdf>

Helpful Resource for Administrative Reviews: Mobile Document Scanning

Preparing documents for an Administrative Review can sometimes be challenging, especially for Sponsors and providers who do not have access to a scanner. If you have a smartphone, free mobile scanning applications may be a helpful option for creating electronic copies of required documents.

One example is **Adobe Scan**, a free mobile app that allows users to take photos of documents and convert them into PDF files for sharing electronically. This app is available for free download via the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. Similar document-scanning apps are also available from other providers.

For those who may be unfamiliar with mobile scanning technology, the following YouTube video provides a brief demonstration of how Adobe Scan can be used:

<https://youtu.be/47Nu5vdGnw4?si=x9etqLf5q|kfLflg&t=107>

Please note that this information is provided as a resource only. The State agency does not endorse or recommend any specific product, service, or company. Sponsors and providers may choose any scanning method or application that meets their needs and allows them to submit clear, legible documentation for review.

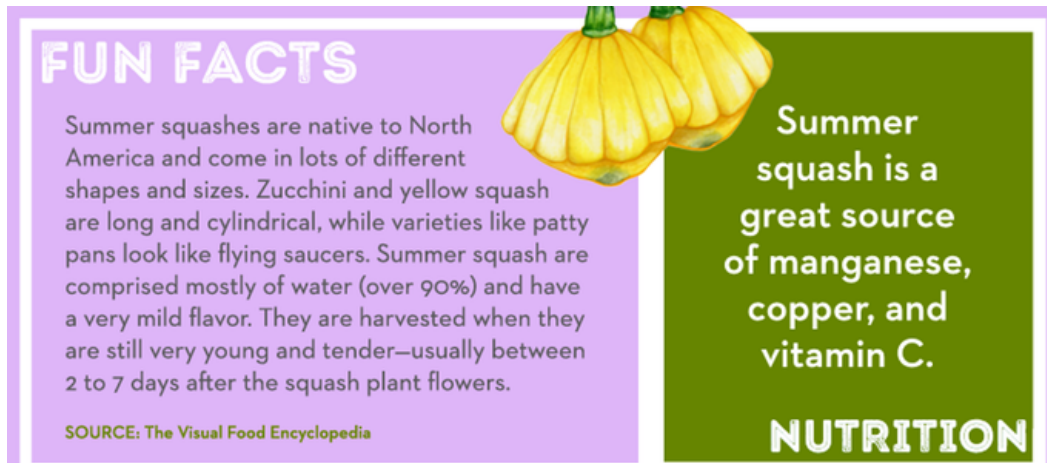


Coming Next Month: A Closer Look at the IEF Binder Process

This month's infographic provides a quick visual overview of the Income Eligibility Form (IEF) Binder process. In next month's newsletter, we'll take a deeper dive into each step, including binder organization, roster requirements, confidentiality considerations, and claim documentation best practices to help keep your program audit-ready.

July Harvest of the Month

Summer Squash



[Child Nutrition- Harvest of the Month Summer Squash Fact Sheet- 12.17.2024.pdf](#)

[Child Nutrition- Harvest of the Month Summer Squash Recipes for Schools- 12.17.2024.pdf](#)

For Harvest of the Month Resources, please visit the
[Harvest of the Month](#) page on our website.

Join the Maine Harvest of the Month (HOM) Program! Take the pledge and join dozens of schools and childcare sites in bringing more healthy, local food to Maine children while supporting Maine farmers and producers!

By participating in the Maine Harvest of the Month program, CACFP Sponsors are pledging for the school year to:

- Serve the local HOM product at least 2x per month (local = Maine grown or caught)
- Display HOM materials provided by the Department of Education's Child Nutrition team

In return, the DOE Maine Harvest of the Month team pledges to provide participating Sponsors with:

- Printed marketing materials (IE: posters, recipe cards, stickers)
- Program training and ongoing technical support, as needed
- A monthly newsletter
- Recognition in participating in HOM

Training Opportunities



The Maine Farm and Sea to School Network is excited to host the 7th Maine Farm and Sea to School Conference, the first state-wide convening since 2019.

This event is open to everyone and is dedicated to Farm and Sea to School in Maine. Join schools, early childhood education (ECE) sites, farmers, fishermen, advocates, and partners from across the state for a full day of networking, hands-on workshops, and learning.

Together we'll explore increasing local food in cafeterias, growing school gardens, and integrating agriculture and food systems into the curriculum all while building the connections that make farm and sea to school thrive in Maine.

Together, we can nourish our students, support our farmers and fishermen, strengthen our local economy, and ensure every child in Maine grows up with the food and agricultural literacy to build a more resilient, just local food system for all.

When: July 17, 2026

Where: The Ecology School, Saco, Maine

Learn more and register today at mainefarmtoschool.org/mefarmtoschoolconference



Thursday, July 30, 2026 | 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm Eastern

Did you know that the CACFP provides nutritious meals and snacks to over 4.5 million children and adults every day? This program is more than a meal—it's a powerful way to strengthen your program while making a meaningful difference in your community. By participating in the CACFP, you can empower your program to serve healthy and nutritious meals, receive valuable reimbursement, and access a nationwide network of caregivers and resources. This not only helps enhance nutrition security but also makes your program more competitive by showing families your commitment to their well-being.

Join us to explore how the CACFP can transform your program and help you create a lasting impact on the children and families you serve!

To Register: <https://info.cacfp.org/ap/Events/Register/nvFOjn4iECNCZ>

Serving Vegetables in the CACFP

USDA has a free, on-demand webinar available titled [CACFP Halftime: Serving Vegetables in CACFP | Food and Nutrition Service](#). This webinar presents creative and appealing ways to offer vegetables in CACFP meals and snacks. It highlights menu planning flexibilities and features a frequently asked questions section that addresses common concerns about serving vegetables as part of reimbursable breakfasts, lunches, suppers, and snacks in the CACFP. USDA has additional resources regarding serving vegetables in the CACFP here- [Serving Vegetables in the CACFP | Food and Nutrition Service](#)

Maine Office of Child and Family Services
Early Care and Education Division's Listening Tour

VIRTUAL TOWN HALLS 2026

Join Maine's Office of Child and Family Services virtually by stake holder group for a focused conversation based on needs and opportunities.

OCFS warmly invites you to share your experiences and insights. We want to hear from those who are closest to and most impacted by the early care and education sector, including parents and families of children from birth to age 12, employers, and community partners. Join us for a series of virtual town halls where your voice can help shape the future of early care and education in Maine. This series is part of a wider effort of in-person events.

Two virtual town halls will be offered monthly organized by group.

May: Higher Education, Training, Career Technical Professionals

May 18th 1PM-2:30PM OR May 21st 9AM-10:30AM

June: Business / Employers

June 8th 2:00PM-3:30PM OR June 18th 9:00AM-10:30AM

July: Out of School Time Professionals / Representatives of Municipalities

July 20th 12:00PM-1:30PM OR July 30th 3:00PM-4:30PM

August: Early Childhood Community Partners / Non-Profits / SAUs

August 6th 2:00PM-3:30PM OR August 10th 9:00AM-10:30AM

September: Families

September 16th 5:30PM-7:00PM OR September 21st 5:30PM-7:00PM

October: Early Childhood Provider staff, leadership, owners and operators

October 15th 5:30PM-7:00PM OR October 20th 2:00PM-3:30PM

REGISTRATION REQUIRED



Questions? Contact megan.swanson@maine.gov



All Maine Children & Families

**SAFE, STABLE,
HAPPY, HEALTHY**

Maine Office of Child and Family Services invites you to join leadership and key program staff for an in-person event to share how early care and education affects your employment, your family, and your community.

COMMUNITY CIRCLES

5:30-7PM

family friendly - child care provided!

New Locations Added!

PORTLAND: June 2nd The Opportunity Alliance - 50 Lydia Lane, Portland

BELFAST: June 10th Waldo County YMCA - 157 Lincolnville Avenue, Belfast

BATH: June 16th Mid Coast Community Action Program - 34 Wing Farm Parkway, Bath

FARMINGTON June 30th Judith Frost Hope Center (WMCA) 20 Church Street, East Wilton

CARIBOU: July 8th Caribou Parks & Recreation Center – 55 Bennett Drive, Caribou

CALAIS: July 28th Washington County Community College – College Drive, Calais

ELLSWORTH: July 29th ACAP Service Center – 27 Avery Lane, Ellsworth

LEWISTON: August 19th Connors Elementary – 400 Bartlett Street, Lewiston

DOVER-FOXCROFT: August 26th Central Hall Commons 152 East Main Street

RSVP HERE



All Maine Children & Families

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HAPPY, HEALTHY**