

RFP 2024P040 - Attachment B
USDA Meal Requirements

From CFR Title 7, Subtitle B, Chapter II, Subchapter A, Part 226, Subpart E, 226.20 (see <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-226> for additional information)

FOOD COMPONENTS

Except as otherwise provided in this section, each meal served in the Program must contain, at a minimum, the indicated food components:

- (1) **Fluid milk.** Fluid milk must be served as a beverage or on cereal, or a combination of both. Lactose-free and reduced-lactose milk that meet the fat content and flavor specifications for each age group may also be offered.
 - (iv) **Adults.** Low fat (1 percent or less) or fat-free (skim) milk must be served. Milk may be unflavored or flavored. Six ounces (weight) or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (volume) of yogurt may be used to fulfill the equivalent of 8 ounces of fluid milk once per day. Yogurt may be counted as either a fluid milk substitute or as a meat alternate, but not as both in the same meal.

- (2) **Vegetables.** A serving may contain fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables, dry beans and peas (legumes), or vegetable juice. All vegetables are credited based on their volume as served, except that 1 cup of leafy greens counts as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables.
 - (i) Pasteurized, full-strength vegetable juice may be used to fulfill the entire requirement. Vegetable juice or fruit juice may only be served at one meal, including snack, per day.
 - (ii) Cooked dry beans or dry peas may be counted as either a vegetable or as a meat alternate, but not as both in the same meal.

- (3) **Fruits.** A serving may contain fresh, frozen, canned, dried fruits, or fruit juice. All fruits are based on their volume as served, except that $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dried fruit counts as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit.
 - (i) Pasteurized, full-strength fruit juice may be used to fulfill the entire requirement. Fruit juice or vegetable juice may only be served at one meal, including snack, per day.
 - (ii) A vegetable may be used to meet the entire fruit requirement at lunch and supper. When two vegetables are served at lunch or supper, two different kinds of vegetables must be served.

- (4) **Grains –**
 - (i) **Enriched and whole grains.** All grains must be made with enriched or whole grain meal or flour.
 - (A) At least one serving per day, across all eating occasions of bread, cereals, and grains, must be whole grain-rich. Whole grain-rich foods contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grains in the food are enriched, and must meet the whole grain-rich criteria specified in FNS guidance.
 - (B) A serving may contain whole grain-rich or enriched bread, cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, and other bread products; or whole grain-rich, or

fortified cereal grain, cooked pasta or noodle products, or breakfast cereal; or any combination of these foods.

- (ii) **Breakfast cereals.** Breakfast cereals are those as defined by the Food and Drug Administration in 21 CFR 170.3(n)(4) for ready-to-eat and instant and regular hot cereals. Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal).
- (iii) **Desserts.** Grain-based desserts do not count towards meeting the grains requirement.

(5) Meat and meat alternates.

- (i) Meat and meal alternates must be served in a main dish, or in a main dish and one other menu item. The creditable quantity of meat and meat alternates must be the edible portion as served of:
 - (A) Lean meat, poultry, or fish;
 - (B) Alternate protein products;
 - (C) Cheese, or an egg;
 - (D) Cooked dry beans or peas;
 - (E) Peanut butter; or
 - (F) Any combination of these foods.
- (ii) **Nuts and seeds.** Nuts and seeds and their butters are allowed as meat alternates in accordance with FNS guidance. For lunch and supper meals, nuts or seeds may be used to meet one-half of the meat and meat alternate component. They must be combined with other meat and meat alternates to meet the full requirement for a reimbursable lunch or supper.
 - (A) Nut and seed meals or flours may be used only if they meet the requirements for alternate protein products established in appendix A of this part.
 - (B) Acorns, chestnuts and coconuts cannot be used as meat alternates because of their low protein and iron content.
- (iii) **Yogurt.** Four ounces (weight) or ½ cup (volume) of yogurt equals one ounce of the meat and meat alternate component. Yogurt may be used to meet all or part of the meat and meat alternate component as follows:
 - (A) Yogurt may be plain or flavored, unsweetened, or sweetened;
 - (B) Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces;
 - (C) Noncommercial or commercial standardized yogurt products, such as frozen yogurt, drinkable yogurt products, homemade yogurt, yogurt flavored products, yogurt bars, yogurt covered fruits or nuts, or similar products are not creditable; and
 - (D) For adults, yogurt may only be used as a meat alternate when it is not also being used as a fluid milk substitute in the same meal.
- (iv) **Tofu and soy products.** Commercial tofu and soy products may be used to meet all or part of the meat and meat alternate component in accordance with FNS guidance and Appendix A of this part. Non-commercial and non-standardized tofu and soy products cannot be used.
- (v) **Beans and peas (legumes).** Cooked dry beans and peas may be used to meet all or part of the meat and meal alternate component. Beans and peas include black beans, garbanzo beans, lentils, kidney beans, mature lima beans, navy

beans, pinto beans, and split peas. Beans and peas may be counted as either a meat alternate or as a vegetable, but not as both in the same meal.

- (vi) **Other meat alternates.** Other meat alternates, such as cheese, eggs, and nut butters may be used to meet all or part of the meat and meat alternate component.

**APPENDIX A TO PART 226
ALTERNATE FOODS FOR MEALS**

Alternate Protein Products

A. What are the criteria for alternate protein products used in the Child and Adult Care Food Program?

1. An alternate protein product used in meals planned under the provisions in [§ 226.20](#) must meet all of the criteria in this section.
2. An alternate protein product whether used alone or in combination with meat or meat alternate must meet the following criteria:
 - a. The alternate protein product must be processed so that some portion of the non-protein constituents of the food is removed. These alternate protein products must be safe and suitable edible products produced from plant or animal sources.
 - b. The biological quality of the protein in the alternate protein product must be at least 80 percent that of casein, determined by performing a Protein Digestibility Corrected Amino Acid Score (PDCAAS).
 - c. The alternate protein product must contain at least 18 percent protein by weight when fully hydrated or formulated. (“When hydrated or formulated” refers to a dry alternate protein product and the amount of water, fat, oil, colors, flavors or any other substances which have been added).
 - d. Manufacturers supplying an alternate protein product to participating schools or institutions must provide documentation that the product meets the criteria in paragraphs A.2. through c of this appendix.
 - e. Manufacturers should provide information on the percent protein contained in the dry alternate protein product and on an as prepared basis.
 - f. For an alternate protein product mix, manufacturers should provide information on:
 - (1) The amount by weight of dry alternate protein product in the package;
 - (2) Hydration instructions; and
 - (3) Instructions on how to combine the mix with meat or other meat alternates.

B. How are alternate protein products used in the Child and Adult Care Food Program?

1. Schools, institutions, and service institutions may use alternate protein products to fulfill all or part of the meat/meat alternate component discussed in [§ 226.20](#).

2. The following terms and conditions apply:

a. The alternate protein product may be used alone or in combination with other food ingredients. Examples of combination items are beef patties, beef crumbles, pizza topping, meat loaf, meat sauce, taco filling, burritos, and tuna salad.

b. Alternate protein products may be used in the dry form (nonhydrated), partially hydrated or fully hydrated form. The moisture content of the fully hydrated alternate protein product (if prepared from a dry concentrated form) must be such that the mixture will have a minimum of 18 percent protein by weight or equivalent amount for the dry or partially hydrated form (based on the level that would be provided if the product were fully hydrated).

C. How are commercially prepared products used in the Child and Adult Care Food Program?

Schools, institutions, and service institutions may use a commercially prepared meat or meat alternate product combined with alternate protein products or use a commercially prepared product that contains only alternate protein products.