



## CACFP Best Practice: Cycle Menus



There are numerous benefits to utilizing a cycle menu. While it initially takes time to create, a cycle menu saves future planning time, since the menu is reused. Creating a structured approach to meal planning provides consistency and predictability. Nutritional balance is ensured by serving a variety of foods from each component throughout the cycle. Staff can be trained on specific recipes and processes, simplifying training and operations. Grocery shopping becomes easier, as you can create a list for the entire cycle and purchase the non-perishable items in one trip. Waste is reduced by utilizing ingredients across different meals throughout the cycle, and non-perishable leftovers can be saved for use in the next cycle. Cycle menus allow you to collect participant feedback after each cycle and adjust accordingly, helping to improve the menu over time.

Dated menus must still be maintained for all meals and snacks. Specific milk types, cereal names, and fruits and vegetables need to be listed each day. Any whole grain rich (WGR) items must be clearly labeled on the menu. If substitutions are made, these changes must be recorded on the menu, as well as the production record.

Dated production records must still be completed for each day. However, utilizing a cycle menu allows you to reference the production record from the previous cycle, to assist in planning food quantities. Production record templates can be reused each cycle, saving time as they don't need to be created from scratch each time.

- [CACFP Best Practice: Cycle Menus](#)
- [WI Chili Cook-Off](#)
- [Winter Recipe: Bean Soup](#)
- [Let's Talk: Infant Puffs](#)
- [Changes in Yogurt Sugar Limits](#)
- [Changes in Ownership or Business Closures](#)
- [Key Staffing Changes](#)
- [Training Resources](#)
- [USDA: New Guidance](#)
- [Farm to ECE](#)
- [BCN Personnel Directory](#)
- [About Us](#)

### Food Holidays

- December 2025 –**  
*National Root Vegetable Month*  
**December 8, 2026 –**  
*World Pear Day*
- January 2026–**  
*National Soup Month*  
**January 6, 2026 –**  
*National Bean Day*
- February 2026–**  
*National Hot Breakfast Month*  
**February 20, 2026–**  
*National Muffin Day*  
**February 26, 2026–**  
*Wisconsin Chili Lunch*

# Wisconsin Chili Cook-Off

It's time for the Wisconsin Chili Lunch. Join in the celebration of Wisconsin-grown foods by whipping up your best pot of chili featuring locally sourced ingredients on National Chili Day, February 26, 2026, or any day in February. Add local meats, vegetables, cheese, or spices to your Wisconsin chili.



Register using the survey link on the University of Wisconsin – Madison's [Join the Wisconsin Chili Lunch webpage](#). All who register for the event will receive a copy of the Chili Lunch Guide, more recipes, and information regarding sourcing local foods.

## Winter Recipe: Bean Soup

Not only is January National Soup Month, but January 6 is National Bean Day. Celebrate both and warm up this winter with this delicious bean soup recipe from USDA. Check out the [ICN's Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#) for more standardized recipes with CACFP crediting information.

### Bean Soup

**Recipe makes 25 portions**

#### **Crediting Information:**

Each 8 fluid oz serving provides 1 oz equivalent M/MA (crediting legumes as a meat alternative) and 3/8 cup vegetable

#### **Ingredients:**

- 2 Tbsp Canola Oil
- 10 oz diced Onions
- 5 1/3 oz minced Garlic
- 10 oz diced Red Bell Peppers
- 10 oz canned Green Chilies
- 2 1/2 tsp Sugar
- 1/2 tsp Black Pepper
- 2 1/2 tsp Old Bay Seasoning
- 3 cups Low Sodium Vegetable Broth
- 1 qt, 3 cups Water
- 1 lb, 12 oz Diced, Canned Tomatoes (no salt added), undrained
- 4 lb, 2 oz Great Northern Beans (low sodium), drained and rinsed



#### **Instructions:**

1. Heat oil in a large stock pot.
2. Add onions, garlic, bell peppers, green chilies, sugar, black pepper, oregano, and Old Bay Seasoning. Simmer uncovered over medium-high heat for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Add vegetable broth, water, tomatoes, and 3 lb, 1 oz of the beans. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium. Simmer uncovered for 10-12 minutes.
4. Puree remaining beans for 3-5 minutes until mixture has a smooth consistency.
5. Add pureed beans to soup mixture. Stir well until soup has a thick consistency.
6. Portion with 8 fluid oz ladle (1 cup).

# Let's Talk: Infant Puffs

Infant puffs may be served as a grain to infants who are developmentally ready. They may be served at snack only, they are not part of a reimbursable breakfast, lunch or supper.

To be creditable, infant puffs must meet the [CACFP cereal added sugar limit requirements](#) of less than 6 grams of added sugar per dry ounce and the first ingredient, or second after water, must be whole grain, enriched meal or flour, or the entire product must be fortified.

For example, the ingredient list below lists rice flour as the first ingredient. Rice flour is a non-creditable grain; however, since the entire product is fortified, these puffs are creditable.

**INGREDIENTS:** Rice Flour, Whole Wheat Flour, Wheat Starch, Cane Sugar, Whole Grain Oat Flour, Natural Banana Flavor, Dried Apple Puree, Mixed Tocopherols (To Maintain Freshness), Sunflower Lecithin, Caramel Color, Turmeric Extract Color, Vitamins and Minerals: Choline Bitartrate, Iron (Electrolytic), Vitamin E (Alpha Tocopheryl Acetate), Niamicinide (A B Vitamin), Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine Hydrochloride), Vitamin B1 (Thiamine Hydrochloride).

There are many infant puffs that are not made with grains but rather are made with bean flours or fruits and vegetables. These products are not creditable and can not be served as the grain component during snack. The infant puff below is an example of a non-creditable infant puff.

**INGREDIENTS:** Chickpea Flour, Navy Bean Flour, Tapioca Starch, Olive Oil, Carrot Powder, Sweet Potato Powder, Beet Powder, Dicalcium Phosphate, Rosemary Extract, Ginger

For additional guidance and clarification on specific products, reach out to your [assigned consultant](#). You can also reference the [Foods For Infants Guide](#) for a list of creditable foods.



## Changes in Yogurt Sugar Limits

Effective October 1, 2025, yogurt served in the CACFP must contain **no more than 12 grams of added sugar per 6 ounces**. Many yogurts that were creditable under the previous guidelines are no longer creditable. Please check any yogurts that you are serving to ensure that they meet the updated guidelines. Use the [Yogurt Added Sugar Limits Handout](#) to determine if your yogurt is creditable.

If you need assistance determining if your product is creditable, do not hesitate to reach out to your [assigned consultant](#).



# Changes in Ownership or Business Closures

Changes in ownership or business entities must be reported to DPI. We will work with you to ensure a smooth transition in CACFP participation. If a change in ownership results in a new FEIN for the business, then the new owner must complete the new agency process to participate in the CACFP.



Business closures must also be reported to DPI. Your consultant will guide you through the voluntary closure process to ensure that your contract is closed out in good standing. The annual financial report will need to be submitted for the months operated during the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY).

---

## Key Staffing Changes

Changes in key staff members during the Federal Fiscal Year must be reported to DPI. This includes the Authorized Representative, Executive Director, and Board President. Please email your consultant if your agency has changes in any of these positions.



All staffing changes need to be updated in your contract. This includes any staff responsible for required CACFP tasks. New staff must complete CACFP training to ensure they understand program requirements. The CACFP E-Learning Courses can be accessed on the [CACFP Training webpage](#).

---

## Training Resources Coming Soon

On September 25, 2025, Community Nutrition held an in-person training at the Central Wisconsin Convention & Expo Center in Rothschild. Thank you to all agencies who were able to make it!



The training presentations will be available soon. Access them from the [CACFP Training webpage](#).

# USDA: New Guidance

## Government Shutdown Ends

The federal government shutdown ended as of November 12, 2025. The government has resumed all operations and full funding for the CACFP has been appropriated for FFY 2026.



## Increased Procurement Thresholds

As of October 1, 2025, the federal thresholds for micro-purchases and simplified acquisitions (small purchases) have been increased to adjust for inflation. The threshold for micro-purchases has increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000 and the threshold for simplified acquisitions has increased from \$250,000 to \$350,000. State resources will be updated soon to reflect these changes. More information can be found on the [Federal Register](#) and at [Acquisition.gov](#).

## Farm to ECE

Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) is serving local or regionally produced foods in early child care settings. This increases children's access to local healthy foods and provides children with hands-on learning activities such as gardening, farm visits, and culinary activities. Farm to ECE can also include integrating food-related education into the curriculum to teach children about where food comes from.

Farm to ECE benefits for children:

- Healthier eating habits through hands-on food experiences
- Helps children learn where food comes from
- Physical activity & sensory exploration
- Supports cognitive & motor skill development

Farm to ECE benefits for child care programs:

- Enriches learning with real-world connections
  - Gardening and cooking activities
  - Science, math, literacy, art
- Can support early learning standards
- Builds strong family and community relationships
- May reduce food costs through gardens or farm partnerships



Are you interested in incorporating Farm to ECE in your program? Check out the [DPI Farm to Early Care and Education webpage](#) for resources and tips for getting started!

# BCN Staffing Updates

The BCN is excited to welcome Nicole Howard to our team as a Nutrition Program Consultant!

A little about Nicole:

Nicole has been in the food service industry for over 10 years. Most recently, she spent six years working in child nutrition as an Assistant Food Service Director. Nicole and her husband have been married for eight years and have two daughters, a dog and two cats. She and her family enjoy spending time outdoors, whether going for walks, spending time at the lake, or camping.



## BCN Personnel Directory

DPI Toll-Free Helpline.....1-800-441-4563

**Amanda Cullen, RDN, CD, Director.....(608) 267-9123**

Natalie Hanson, Operations Program Associate.....(608) 266-5469

Jennifer Heidenreich,

Public Instruction Supervisor.....(608) 266-5183

Amy Kolano, RD, CD, Coordinator,

Summer Food Service Program.....(608) 266-7124

Cari Ann Muggenburg, Auditor-Senior.....(608) 264-9551

### **Nutrition Program Consultants**

Tami Biordi.....(608) 267-2373

Lisa Calderone.....(608) 266-5763

Jessica Hansen, MS, RDN, CD.....(608) 224-5383

Lisa Kellner.....(608) 224-5341

Moryah Kemper, RD.....(608) 266-9982

Kim Musiedlak.....(608) 264-9542

Dana Reedy, MS, RD, CD.....(608) 266-3874

Nicole Howard.....(608) 266-9614

Mika Vuckovich, MS, DTR .....(608) 266-3584

Justin Young.....(608) 266-2947

**Federal Aids and Audit Fiscal Unit.....(608) 266-3509 ext.4**

Jacque Darrow, Accountant.....(608) 267-9134

Deborah Mann, Accountant.....(608) 266-6856



**To find your agency's consultant, refer to the [Consultant Assignments document](#) on the [CACFP Consultant Assignments webpage](#).**

# About Us

CACFP Today is published three times per year by the Department of Public Instruction.

Questions or comments should be directed to:  
Bureau of Community Nutrition  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
PO Box 7841  
Madison, WI 53707-7841  
608-266-9614 or 1-800-441-4563  
[nicole.howard@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:nicole.howard@dpi.wi.gov)



*The CNT is wishing  
you all happy holidays  
and a joyful new year!*

This publication is available from:  
Division of School and Library Operations  
Bureau of Community Nutrition  
(608) 267-9129  
[dpi.wi.gov/community-nutrition](http://dpi.wi.gov/community-nutrition)

December 2025 Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, creed, age, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital status or parental status, sexual orientation, or ability and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups.

In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), age, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

**mail:**  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or  
**fax:**  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or  
**email:**  
[program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

