

Target Meal Pattern Waiver Substitution Guide

If you can't find a meal component...

CEs unable to meet the meal pattern requirements for serving reimbursable meals may submit a Targeted Meal Pattern Waiver. However, this waiver is only to be used after a CE has actively attempted to purchase the necessary items to comply with meal plan requirements.

Here are some suggestions for offering similar meal component substitutions:

CEs having trouble buying vegetables:

Red/Orange:

- Try these cold items: cherry tomatoes, carrot sticks, red bell peppers
- Serve vegetable juices such as tomato juice within the 50% weekly limit

Dark Green:

- Try these cold items: broccoli, leafy green salads, including romaine, spinach, and kale
- Serve pre-packaged salad entrees

Starchy Vegetables

- Try these cold items: corn salad, potato salad
- Serve baked potato as an entrée

Beans and Peas:

- Try these cold items: bean salad using pinto beans, black eyed peas, black beans, or garbanzo beans
- Use beans in entrees such as tacos or burritos
- Make pre-packaged meals with hummus

Other Vegetables

- Try these cold items: celery, cauliflower, cucumbers, fresh green beans
- Utilize the Texas Department of Agriculture's [Farm Fresh Network](#) and [Seasonality Wheel](#)

CEs having trouble buying whole grains rich items:

- Contact local bakeries in your area
- Add whole grain rich crackers or tortilla chips to your weekly meals
- Use whole grain rich wraps instead of enriched sandwich bread

If after CEs attempt to make appropriate substitutions and are still unable to meet the meal pattern requirements, a meal pattern waiver is to be submitted

Start date must be within 30 days of waiver submission. Anticipated end date cannot be more than 60 days after start date.

If in the next cycle that item or a different item is still unavailable, a new form must be submitted. Vendor communication indicating a longer period must be saved as documentation.



Here are some examples of waiver submission approvals and denials:

CACFP

Examples of approvals:

- Serving low-fat 1% flavored milk (for children 6 years and older and adults only) due to vendor shortage of milk.
- Serving enriched grains for all meals due to vendor shortage of whole grain-rich items.
- Using servings instead of ounce equivalents (oz eq) in October due to lack of training because of COVID-19.

Examples of denials:

- Serving enriched grains for all meals due to children’s preferences of enriched grains over whole grain-rich items.
- Using servings instead of ounce equivalents (oz eq) due to difficulty of changing method.
- User who completed waiver not an authorized user/representative in TX-UNPS.

NSLP/SBP and SSO

Examples of approvals:

- Offering one type of milk due to non-traditional service.
- Serving low-fat 1% chocolate milk due to vendor shortage of non-fat chocolate milk.
- Serving enriched grain product due to leftover inventory from school year 2020-2021.
- Not serving dark green vegetables for grab-and-go meals due to vendor shortage of containers.

Examples of denials:

- Offering only one type of milk with traditional line service.
- Serving enriched grain due to student preference.
- Serving only one sub-group of vegetables all week due to convenience.
- User who completed waiver not an authorized user/representative in TX-UNPS.

Once a waiver has been submitted for review, CEs will receive an approval notification from TDA. If the waiver has been approved, CEs must retain documentation demonstrating the attempts to meet standard meal pattern requirements.



Targeted Meal Pattern Waiver Documentation Reference



If granted a waiver, operators may be asked to report separately the number of meals served under the meal pattern substitution waiver. TDA recommends that program operators retain counts for these meals in an easily retrievable format.

When food substitutions are made for planned menus, program operators must retain documentation demonstrating the operator's efforts to meet meal pattern requirements in each of the following areas:



Component/Food Item¹ Information Contained in Documentation

- Date the substitution will be served
- Component² the substitution represents for the planned type of meal (breakfast, lunch, supper, snack)
- Food item used to replace the original planned food item.
- Date substitution is served
- Number of servings prepared; number of servings served; and number of servings remaining

Required Type of Documentation

- Required food production record (FPR)³

¹ For this guidance, food items are the foods served that contain the required meal pattern components for the meal or snack. This includes milk and juice.

² Components include milk, vegetables, and grains.

³ All substitute food items must be recorded in the FPR.





Efforts to Obtain Original Planned Food Item

Information Contained in Documentation

- Reason the food item is not available
- Expected timeline to get the planned food item (if known)
- Expected timeline to get the substitute food item
- Actions the operator took to obtain the planned food item
- Reason the operator selected the substitute food item

Suggested Types of Documentation

- Email, dated phone notes, faxes, or other communications from the vendor about food items that are not available
- Emails, dated phone notes, faxes, or other communications to vendors, other CEs, or other source
- Log the CE uses to track communications about food item substitutions



Procurement

Information Contained in Documentation

- Food products attempted to purchase
- Method of procurement
- Emergency procurement approval (if applicable)

Suggested Types of Documentation

- Micro-purchase or small purchase logs (if applicable)
- Contract (if applicable)
- Invoices/Receipts



Carryover from School Year 2021-2022

Information Contained in Documentation

- Date of original purchase
- Number of cases in inventory

Suggested Types of Documentation

- Invoices/Receipts
- Inventory count



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Food and Nutrition Division
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Updated 08/2021
 www.SquareMeals.org