



North Carolina Division of Child and Family Well-Being
Community Nutrition Services Section
Child and Adult Care Food Program
www.ncdhhs.gov/nccacfp

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The North Carolina CACFP Messenger

From the Child and Adult Care Food Program Manager

CACFP Family,

Happy New Year!! A new year, a fresh start. Looking back over the last two years, I'm thinking where has the time gone? NC CACFP CONNECTS has been our focus for so long that it is difficult to think beyond the system. I'm very pleased to announce we have launched our last module – Compliance. This has been a significant undertaking, and I truly believe our new system is something we can all take ownership and pride in. Although we have completed the last module, we are not done. We still have some fine-tuning to do, but I do believe that the hardest part is now behind us. I want to take a moment and thank all of you.

So, what do we do next? We will finally be able to focus on CACFP, making a positive change and impacting our most vulnerable citizens in North Carolina. As we embrace a new year, it is my hope that we never forget what is important and why we do what we do daily. No matter what it looks like all around us, we are and have been in unified agreement. We agree to provide exemplary services to all participants of the CACFP. We have stood strong to ensure our youngest to our oldest participants receive nutritious meals.

You are the heroes of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. We thank each one of you for your hard work and dedication.

With Appreciation,

Cassandra Ward
CACFP Program Manager

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Reminders

- **Friday, February 7 and March 7, from 1 to 2 PM** - next two State agency monthly calls with CACFP Institutions (click [here](#) to join)
- **Wednesday, January 29 and Monday, March 3, 2025** - last days to submit November and December 2024 claims
- Standardized Recipe - **Orange Cranberry Quick Bread** (on [page 7](#)). Have leftover cranberries from the holidays? Put them to good use! This whole grain-rich bread combines tangy cranberries with zesty orange for a flavorful treat.



Announcements

On Monday, January 13, 2025, Dev Sangvai started as [our next Secretary of Health and Human Services](#).

We are excited for his leadership and the perspective that he will bring to the important work of NCDHHS. Following the past few years of significant accomplishments in expanding access to care and investing in behavioral and mental health, Secretary Sangvai brings experience directly working with patients and families, and in communities. When he talks about health it is all-encompassing including mental and behavioral health, and he knows how critical investing in well-being, family, and community is. He is the right person to sharpen how our programs, services, and investments make their way into communities, to providers, and ultimately benefit North Carolinians.

Stay tuned for opportunities to hear from Secretary Sangvai.

Policy Memo

⇒ [CACFP 05-2025, Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers:](#)

This memorandum updates guidance on grain requirements for the CACFP, reflecting the final rule. It includes questions and answers and replaces CACFP 09-2018, *Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers*, published April 4, 2018.



⇒ [CACFP 07-2025, Requirement to Accept Medical Statements from Registered Dietitians for](#)

Schools and Child and Adult Care Institutions and Facilities: This memorandum with the attached Questions and Answers clarifies the updated regulatory requirement for Program operators to accept medical statements from registered dietitians. The change requiring Program operators to accept medical statements from registered dietitians must be implemented by October 1, 2025, for CACFP. Program operators have the option to implement this change prior to the implementation date, but are not required.

The FNS is seeking public comments on the ***Request for Information: Child Nutrition Programs Tribal Pilot Projects*** authorized by the [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024](#). Comments received in response to this Request for Information will inform the application process, and eligibility and selection criteria, for the Child Nutrition Tribal Pilot Projects. Read [more](#) and submit comments by March 24, 2025: [online](#) (preferred method) or by mail to School Meals Policy Division, Child Nutrition Programs, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314.



Grant Opportunity: The Creating New Economies Fund (CNEF) provides direct investment in community-based efforts that promote social justice, community economic development, and environmental stewardship. Projects include nutrition programs, local food access initiatives, alternative energy production, and more.

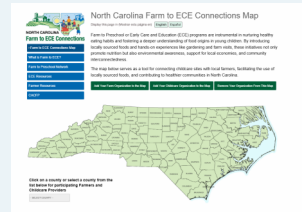
- **Grant Amounts:** Grants awards up to \$15,000.
- **Eligible Applicants** include:
 - 501(c)3 nonprofits, small towns, churches, and faith-based organizations
 - Community organizations without a 501(c)3 nonprofit can still apply in partnership with a [fiscal agent](#).
- **Applications due:** By February 14, 2025. Find application materials and guidelines [here](#). If you have questions, please [email](#) or contact Donna Pratt directly at (919) 902-0889 or via [email](#).

Resources

NC Farm to ECE Connections Map: Discover local food sources for your childcare program! This online tool connects childcare providers with local food producers, making it easier to incorporate healthy, fresh, local foods into your meals and snacks.

Explore the map [here](#). Click on your county to find farmers near you and see what foods and services they have available. If your facility is not yet listed, add your childcare program to the map today! There is a button on the webpage to “Add Your Childcare Organization to the Map.” There is also a newly added option to “Remove Your Organization From This Map.”

Harvest of the Month newsletters are distributed monthly to those registered on the map. Each newsletter will connect you to local farmers offering the featured produce and provide recipes, educational activities, and more! Check out the January *Harvest of the Month* newsletter [here](#). If you are registered on the map, please complete the [survey](#) available in the January newsletter. Your feedback about the NC Farm to ECE Connections Map is important and appreciated.



Training Opportunities

⇒ Around the World: Cultural Food Resources

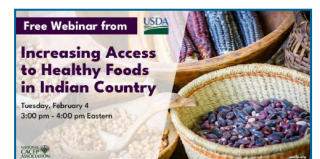
- January 30, 2025 | 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM (EST)
- Enhance CACFP menus with diverse flavors and explore resources to incorporate culturally relevant foods. Register [here](#).

⇒ Increasing Access to Healthy Foods in Indian Country

- February 4, 2025 | 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (EST)
- Learn about the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) and its role in supporting food and nutrition security in tribal communities. Register [here](#).

⇒ Soup's On! A Warm Dive into Comfort Bowls

- February 6, 2025 | 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM (EST)
- Learn to create delicious and nutritious CACFP creditable soups for every season. Register [here](#).



Calling all Educators!

Join the [Growing Minds](#) program for a free virtual introduction to Farm to School on February 19th at 3:30 PM. In this training, you'll learn about the different components of Farm to School, discover how to use the toolkits and resources to support your farm to school goals, gain insights from regional champions, and brainstorm engaging activities for your students of all ages. Register [here](#) to reserve your spot. Bonus for NC Educators! Attend the training and receive a FREE "I Tried Local Toolkit" mailed directly to your school. Simply note your school's address during the registration process. A digital version of the toolkit can be found [here](#).

Growing Minds Farm to School Program is part of [Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project \(ASAP\)](#), a nonprofit based in Asheville, NC. Visit [growing-minds.org](#) to learn more.

For Our Health

Given that the holidays have just passed, I may be a little late in sharing the next lifestyle habit of the world's healthiest, longest-lived people; the habit of [Hara hachi bu](#) or the 80% Rule. This is a very old Confucian mantra that [Blue-Zone](#) elders in Okinawa say before any meal to remind themselves to stop eating when they feel 80% full. [Researchers](#) say, "The 20% gap between not being hungry and feeling full could be the difference between losing weight or gaining it."

Listening to our internal cues is key. This concept of mindful eating is deeply rooted in Japanese culture, emphasizing balance and moderation. In today's fast-paced world, *Hara hachi bu* is a valuable reminder to slow down, savor our food, and pay attention to our body's signals.

How do you know when you have reached your 80%? Focus on eating until you are no longer hungry but not totally full. Be mindful while eating. Learn what it feels like to be hungry, and then what it feels like to no longer be hungry but not feel completely full. This might take some practice; it takes about 20 minutes for your brain to know your stomach is full.

Whether you believe in making new year resolutions or not, this could be an easy healthy habit to adopt and keep long term. Slow down and take time to learn your hunger cues. Enjoy every bite and avoid eating until you feel uncomfortable.

I wish everyone a successful and joyous 2025. Remember before each meal, *Hara hachi bu*.

(Karen Lainez Rubi, Supervisor - Nutrition, Training, and Policy Team)



Image of Okinawa, Japan

Meet Your State Agency Staff SaMonya McGirt and Chika Mita

SaMonya McGirt

Title: Administrative Specialist I

Region: Wake County

- **My favorite food is...**sushi.
- **My favorite place and/or activity/event in North Carolina is...**the NC State Fair.
- **My favorite part of my job is...**how friendly and supportive everyone is.
- **The best tip I have for success in the CACFP is...**always ask questions even if you feel like it's self-explanatory, you never know!



Chika Mita (Satoko Chika Mita)

Title: Administrative Officer I

Region: Raleigh Office

- **My favorite food is...**locally produced fruits and vegetables, especially sundried tomatoes made from locally grown tomatoes.
- **My favorite place and/or activity/event in North Carolina is...**exploring farmers' market in NC and trying something new each time.
- **My favorite part of my job is...**collaborating with my supervisor and coworkers and learning from each other. I also enjoy the opportunity to apply both my Computer Science and Nutrition backgrounds in my work.
- **The best tip I have for success in the CACFP is...**to prioritize ensuring all served food items meet program creditability requirements. If you are unsure about the creditability of a food item, do not serve it. Remember: 'When it doubt, leave it out!' And always feel free to reach out to us for assistance.



What's Happening in February

National Children's Dental Health Month (February): The American Dental Association (ADA) is emphasizing the importance of children's dental health year-round and encourages consistent efforts to prevent dental disease through daily oral hygiene practices. To support this focus, the ADA has introduced new resources beyond traditional posters. These materials aim to celebrate and promote children's oral health throughout the year. Digital resources can be downloaded from [here](#) and include:



Posters: Available in two designs and sizes (8.5"x11" and 11"x17") in both English and Spanish.

Coloring sheets: Offered in two designs and the 8.5"x11" size, also in English and Spanish.

2025 Brushing Calendar: A valuable tool for promoting healthy brushing habits year-round, available for digital download.

American Heart Month (February): February is American Heart Month, a crucial time to raise awareness about cardiovascular health, especially for women. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and the leading cause of death for both men and women across most racial and ethnic groups ([source](#)). In 2022, one in five deaths in the U.S. was attributed to heart disease. The [toolkit](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides valuable information and resources to help individuals learn about heart disease risks, identify potential health concerns, and understand the importance of heart health management.



Black History Month (February) celebrates the significant contributions and achievements of African Americans in U.S. history. This year's theme, [African Americans and Labor](#), highlights the vital role of African American workers in shaping our nation. People of all ages can celebrate Black History Month by engaging with the rich cultural expressions of Black artists and writers, including books, paintings, movies, plays, and more. Learning about traditional African



foods can be both educational and enjoyable. Consider incorporating delicious [Multicultural Child Care Recipes From Africa](#) from USDA's Team Nutrition into your menus. It might be fun to try a family-style meal inspired by [Ethiopian cuisine](#), which can encourage children to explore more vegetables. Instead of injera (a spongy flatbread), you could serve the dishes with pancakes. There are many ways to celebrate Black History Month! Be creative and explore the rich cultural expressions of the African American community. Explore how to celebrate Black History Month in North Carolina [here](#).



Orange Cranberry Quick Bread

Want a new tasty grain option for breakfast? Try this whole grain-rich quick bread that is full of orange flavor and cranberries.

Ages: 3–18 years

Prep time: 15 minutes

Makes: 6 servings

Cook time: 55 minutes

the INGREDIENTS

Nonstick cooking spray

1 1/3 cup (5 oz) cranberries, frozen, unsweetened or fresh

1/3 cup sugar, granulated

1 cup flour, whole-wheat

1/4 tsp baking powder

1/4 tsp baking soda

1/8 tsp, salt, table

1 egg, fresh, large, whole

1/3 cup applesauce, unsweetened

1 tsp orange extract

the DIRECTIONS

1. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
2. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
3. Spray a loaf pan (8 1/2" x 4 1/2" x 1 1/2") with nonstick cooking spray.
4. In a small bowl, combine cranberries and 2 Tbsp sugar. Toss and set aside.
5. In a medium bowl, combine flour, remaining sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Whisk to mix well.
6. In a separate small bowl, combine eggs, applesauce, and orange extract. Whisk until well-blended. Wash hands after touching uncooked eggs.
7. Add wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and mix. Do not over-mix.
8. With a rubber spatula, fold the coated cranberries into the dough.
9. Pour dough into loaf pan and bake for 50–55 minutes.
10. Cut pan into 6 even pieces.
11. Serve 1 piece.

the

NUTRITION INFORMATION

1 piece Orange Cranberry Quick Bread

Nutrients	Amount
Calories	149
<hr/>	
Total Fat	2 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	27 mg
Sodium	131 mg
Total Carbohydrate	31 g
Dietary Fiber	3 g
Total Sugars	15 g
Includes Added Sugars	N/A
Protein	4 g
<hr/>	
Vitamin D	N/A
Calcium	26 mg
Iron	1 mg
Potassium	N/A


N/A = Data not available

Source: Team Nutrition CACFP Easy Recipe Project

[TeamNutrition.USDA.gov](https://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov)


the

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

1/8 cup fruit
1 1/4 oz eq grains 

the

CHEF TIPS

- **Contains eggs and wheat (flour).**
- To verify bread is done, insert a wooden toothpick into the center of the bread. If wet batter sticks to the toothpick, the bread needs more baking time.
- The  symbol indicates the recipe is whole grain-rich.
- Creditable grains contribution calculated using the Recipe Analysis Workbook, Method C.