



# Vermont Food Standards & Implementation Guide

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Division of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

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# Vermont Food Standards

## Background

In 2016, Vermont passed a law involving food and beverages provided by the State of Vermont. This [law](#) requires all food and beverages purchased, sold, served, or otherwise provided by the State of Vermont, or on behalf of the State of Vermont, to meet certain standards approved by the Commissioner of Health. Vermont Food Standards for cafes, cafeterias, concessions at State parks, vending and rest stops, meetings and events, and institutional food service at the State hospital and within Corrections are posted on the [Vermont Department of Health's website](#).

Research shows that three behaviors lead to four chronic conditions, which cause more than 50% of deaths in Vermont each year. While recognizing that chronic diseases are complex, multifactorial conditions influenced by environmental conditions where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age (otherwise known as social determinants of health), these three behaviors include tobacco use, lack of adequate physical activity, and not meeting nutrient needs. As an employer and host of State facilities and meetings, it is imperative that we lead the effort to make healthier options available and accessible.

It is also known that State of Vermont employees are interested in healthier food based on a survey of State employees, conducted in 2015, regarding food preferences for an on-site café. Based on the survey results, 89% of employees said they preferred healthy food in their diet always or as often as possible. Furthermore, 75% of employees said they would be willing to spend more money on healthier options if they were available in the building, and 72% said they prefer locally grown or prepared items.

The Vermont Food Standards are based on the following guiding principles:

- Emphasize fruit, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats, and plant-based proteins,
- Reduce overall sodium content,
- Deemphasize foods with higher concentrations of added sugar,
- Recommend healthy cooking techniques including baking, roasting, broiling, grilling, poaching, steaming, and stir-frying,
- Allow the option to enjoy smaller portions like half bagels or sandwiches,
- Serve local and seasonal options when possible, and
- Make water available at every meal.

The approach of the Vermont Food Standards is simple: Ensure that healthy options are always available. Healthy foods are already available at the cafes and cafeterias in State office buildings. Many conference venues and catering companies involved with State functions have already been working with these guidelines, so implementation is easy. Sample menus and other resources are available in this document. These standards do not apply to private vendors in buildings where the State rents space.

## Applicable Settings



## This Guide

This guide can be used to learn about the Vermont Food Standards for each applicable setting, maintain systems of compliance, and identify areas of continuous improvement. Included in this guide are implementation checklists and sample monitoring tools, which can be replicated for your State Agency's use. This guide also offers cost-savings suggestions, sample menus, seasonality information, and additional resources. *It is each agency's responsibility to implement a monitoring process to ensure compliance with these standards.*

## Provision of Culturally Responsive Food

It is an expectation that each setting actively seeks information and opportunities to ensure food and beverages purchased, sold, served or otherwise provided by the State of Vermont are culturally responsive to consumers.

## Technical Assistance

For technical assistance and support with menu planning, please contact the VDH Physical Activity and Nutrition Program within the Division of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention: [AHS.VDHPublicCommunication@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHPublicCommunication@vermont.gov).

# Cafes and Cafeterias

## Food and Beverage Standards

### Food Requirements:

All food service venues are required to implement the following criteria:

- All foods should be low in sodium:
  - Side dishes should have no more than 230 mg of sodium,
  - Soups should have no more than 480 mg of sodium, and
  - Entrees should have no more than 600 mg of sodium per serving.
- All meal items are free of artificial trans-fat or partially hydrogenated oils and low in saturated fats (less than 10% per serving),
- When using oils, use varieties high in unsaturated fats such as olive, canola, corn, or other fats that are liquid at room temperature,
- Offer fish or seafood at least two times per week (canned, fresh, or frozen),
- Preference should be given to seasonal and locally grown or produced foods, which many organizations define as within 250 miles of the purchaser,
- Limit deep-fried options to no more than one choice per day, not to be promoted as a daily special,
- Include options that provide an alternative for those with religious needs (kosher or halal, for example) or food allergies which may include milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soybeans, and sesame,
- Actively seek information and opportunities to provide culturally responsive food and beverages,
- If desserts are offered, offer 25% of desserts with  $\leq 200$  calories as served, and
- Offer daily:
  - A variety of non-fried protein foods such as fish, seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, legumes (beans and peas), nuts, seeds, and soy products,
  - Offer half of total grains as whole grains with a whole grain rich product as the primary choice,
  - Offer at least 3 non-fried vegetable options which can be served raw, canned, frozen, or cooked,
  - Offer at least 3 fruit options, without added sugar, which can be served raw, canned, frozen, or dried, and
  - Offer a variety of low-fat dairy products (or dairy alternatives) such as milk, yogurt, cheese, or fortified soy, almond, or oat beverages.

### Beverage Requirements:

- Have free water that is safe to drink available and advertise its availability,
- At least 50% of available beverage choices (other than 100% juice and unsweetened fat-free or low-fat milk) must contain  $\leq 40$  calories per 8 fluid ounces,

**Beverage Requirements (continued):**

- Offer milk and milk alternative (calcium fortified soy, almond, or oat beverages) that are low-fat or fat-free with no added sugar, and
- If juice is available, offer 100% juice with no added sugar.

**Packaged Snacks:**

There should be an assortment of healthier food choices with a focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and dairy products. At least 75% of the snack items must meet all the following criteria:

- Have as the first ingredient a fruit, vegetable, dairy product, or protein food; Be a whole grain-rich grain product; or be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetable,
- No more than 200 calories per item,
- No more than 10% of calories from saturated fat, except for:
  - Reduced-fat cheese and part-skim mozzarella,
  - Nuts,
  - Seeds,
  - Nut butters, and
  - Dried fruit with nuts or seeds with no added sugar.
- 0 grams of artificial trans-fat or partially hydrogenated oils, and
- No more than 200 mg of sodium per package.
- See 'Concessions and Vending' section for more information about Vending.

**Labeling and Promotion:**

- As feasible, have readily available a list of nutritional facts for all items, including serving size, calories, protein, carbohydrates, fat and sodium or a list all ingredients in the dish if nutritional facts cannot be calculated, and
- Promotion of healthy items is encouraged with point-of-purchase displays to highlight healthier foods or providing samples of healthier products for customers.

**Placement:**

- Healthy foods and beverages must be placed in highly visible areas of the counter, at the front and grouped together. This includes snacks that meet the healthy standards above, fresh fruit and vegetables, low-fat milk, beverages ≤40 calories and unsweetened water, and
- A variety of healthy items are available daily.

**Other Suggestions:**

- Make healthier options more appealing by offering them as specials,
- Offer desserts that use less or no added sugar including, for example, desserts prepared with fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, apple sauces and yogurts without added sugars,
- Make half or reduced size portions of entrees available, and
- Offering healthier items in an easily accessible 'grab-and-go' form.

## Implementation Checklist

Yes / No / In Progress	Food and Beverage Standards
Y / N / IP	Side dishes contain 230 milligrams of sodium or less.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Soups contain 480 mg of sodium or less.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Entrees contain 600 milligrams of sodium or less.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Meals are free from trans fat or partially hydrogenated oils.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Meals contain 10% or less saturated fat per serving.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	When using oils, oils are rich in unsaturated fats.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Deep-fried foods are limited to one option per day and are not featured as a daily special.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Seafood or fish is offered at least twice per week.
	Notes:

Yes / No / In Progress	Food and Beverage Standards
Y / N / IP	There are alternate options for religious or allergy needs.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	If desserts are offered, 25% of desserts contain 200 calories or less.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Preference is given to local and/or seasonal products.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	There is a variety of non-fried proteins offered daily.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Half of the grains that are served are whole grains and offered as the primary choice.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	There is a variety of low-fat dairy products or dairy alternates.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	There are at least three fruit options without added sugar.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	There are at least three non-fried vegetable options.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Free water that is safe to drink is available and advertised.
	Notes:



Yes / No / In Progress	Food and Beverage Standards
Y / N / IP	50% of beverages contain 40 calories or less per 8-ounce serving.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Low-fat or fat-free milk and milk alternative are offered without added sugar.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	If juice is available, juice is 100% juice with no added sugar.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	The first ingredient for snacks is fruit, vegetable, dairy, protein, whole grain, or ½ cup fruit and ½ cup vegetable combined.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Snacks contain 200 or less calories per item.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Snacks contain 10% saturated fat or less per item (see above list of exceptions).
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Snacks are free from trans fat or partially hydrogenated oils.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Snacks contain 200 milligrams or less of sodium.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	As feasible, calorie and/or ingredient information is readily available.
	Notes:

Yes / No / In Progress	Food and Beverage Standards
Y / N / IP	Items that meet standards are highly visible and grouped together.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	There is a variety of items that meet standards available all day.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	This establishment actively seeks information and opportunities to provide culturally responsive food and beverages.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Encouraged: Desserts contain less or no added sugar.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Encouraged: Items that meet standards are accessible in 'grab-and-go' format.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Encouraged: Half or reduced-sized portions of entrees are available.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Encouraged: Items that meet standards are offered as specials to increase appeal.
	Notes:

### Implementation Goals:

N or IP above: \_\_\_\_\_ Implement by: \_\_\_\_\_

N or IP above: \_\_\_\_\_ Implement by: \_\_\_\_\_

N or IP above: \_\_\_\_\_ Implement by: \_\_\_\_\_

# Concession and Vending

## Food and Beverage Standards

### **Food Requirements:**

There should be an assortment of healthier food choices with a focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and dairy products. At least 75% of the food items must meet all of the following criteria:

- Have as the first ingredient a fruit, vegetable, dairy product, or protein food; Be a whole grain-rich grain product; or be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetable,
- No more than 200 calories per item,
- No more than 10% of calories from saturated fat, except for:
  - Reduced-fat cheese and part-skim mozzarella,
  - Nuts,
  - Seeds,
  - Nut butters, and
  - Dried fruit with nuts or seeds with no added sugar.
- 0 grams of artificial trans-fat or partially hydrogenated oils,
- No more than 200 mg of sodium per package,
- The quantity of candy, desserts, baked goods, or items with any form of sugar as the first ingredient should be reduced,
- Preference should be given to seasonal and locally grown or produced foods, which many organizations define as within 250 miles of the purchaser, and
- Actively seek information and opportunities to provide culturally responsive food and beverages.

### **Beverage Requirements:**

- Have free water that is safe to drink available and advertise its availability,
- At least 50% of available beverage choices (other than 100% juice and unsweetened fat-free or low-fat milk) must contain ≤40 calories per 8 fluid ounces,
- If milk is offered, offer milk and milk alternative (calcium fortified soy, almond, or oat beverages) that are low-fat or fat-free with no added sugar, and
- If juice is available, offer 100% juice with no added sugar.

### **Labeling and Promotion:**

- As feasible, have readily available a list of nutritional facts for all items, including serving size, calories, protein, carbohydrates, fat and sodium or a list all ingredients in the dish if nutritional facts cannot be calculated, and
- Promotion of healthy items is encouraged with point-of-purchase displays to highlight healthier foods or providing samples of healthier products for customers. For example, labeling healthier items as 'Park Picks'.

## Implementation Checklist

Yes / No / In Progress	Food and Beverage Standards
Y / N / IP	The first ingredient for snacks is fruit, vegetable, dairy, protein, whole grain, or ½ cup fruit and ½ cup vegetable combined.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Snacks contain 200 or less calories per item.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Snacks contain 10% saturated fat or less per item (see above list of exceptions).
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Snacks are free from trans fat or partially hydrogenated oils.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Snacks contain 200 milligrams or less of sodium.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	The quantity of candy, desserts, baked goods, or items with any form of sugar as the first ingredient should be reduced.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Free water that is safe to drink is available and advertised.
	Notes:

Yes / No / In Progress	Food and Beverage Standards
Y / N / IP	50% of beverages contain 40 calories or less per 8-ounce serving.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Low-fat or fat-free milk and milk alternative are offered without added sugar.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	If juice is available, juice is 100% juice with no added sugar.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Preference is given to local and/or seasonal products.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	This establishment or vendor actively seeks information and opportunities to provide culturally responsive food and beverages.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	As feasible, calorie and/or ingredient information is readily available.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Encouraged: Items that meet standards are promoted.
	Notes:

### Implementation Goals:

N or IP above: \_\_\_\_\_ Implement by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 N or IP above: \_\_\_\_\_ Implement by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 N or IP above: \_\_\_\_\_ Implement by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 N or IP above: \_\_\_\_\_ Implement by: \_\_\_\_\_

# Meetings and Events

## Food and Beverage Standards

### Food Requirements:

All meetings and events are required to implement the following criteria:

- All foods offered should be low in sodium:
  - Side dishes should have no more than 200 mg of sodium,
  - Soups should have no more than 480 mg of sodium, and
  - Entrees should have no more than 600 mg of sodium per serving.
- All meal items are free of artificial trans-fat or partially hydrogenated oils and low in saturated fats (less than 10% per serving),
- When using oils, use varieties high in unsaturated fats, such as olive, canola, corn or other fats that are liquid at room temperature,
- Meals should have enough non-starchy vegetables to cover at least half of the plate (examples of starchy vegetables include, but are not limited to, potatoes, corn, peas, and winter squash),
- Preference should be given to seasonal and locally grown or produced foods, which many organizations define as within 250 miles of the purchaser,
- Include options, and label them, that provide an alternative for those with religious needs (kosher or halal, for example) or food allergies which may include milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soybeans, and sesame,
- Actively seek information and opportunities to provide culturally responsive food and beverages,
- Offer a variety of non-fried protein foods such as fish, seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, legumes (beans and peas), nuts, seeds, and soy products,
- Include a fruit option, without added sugar, which can be served raw, canned, frozen, or dried,
- Include whole grains whenever grains are served,
- Make half or reduced size portions of sandwiches or entrees available,
- If snacks are provided, choose baked, low-fat or low sodium (less than 200 mg sodium per serving) items, and
- If dessert is desired, no more than one portion of dessert per person served alongside a fruit of choice. For example, brownie bites and a bowl of fresh fruit.

### Beverage Requirements:

- Have free water that is safe to drink available and promote its availability, and
- Offer 100% juice, 1% or fat-free milk and milk alternate that are unflavored and calcium fortified, or beverages with  $\leq 40$  calories per serving.

**Breakfast Ideas:**

- Fruit pieces or whole fruit – offer seasonal, local fruit whenever possible.
- Yogurt that is low-fat or fat-free and low in added sugar.
- Breakfast sandwiches with eggs and low-fat cheese on a whole grain English muffin.
- Breakfast bagel with lox, low-fat cream cheese, and assorted vegetable toppings on a whole grain bagel.
- Breakfast burrito with egg, black beans, and salsa on a whole wheat tortilla.
- Small muffins or large muffins cut in half (look for whole grain muffin options).
- Whole grain bread or whole grain English muffins.
- Whole grain, unsweetened cereal served with fat-free or low-fat milk (Cheerio's, Shredded Wheat, Oatmeal).
- Mini whole grain bagels or larger bagels cut in half.
- Hard-boiled eggs.
- Granola or granola bars that are low in added sugar.
- Low-fat or whipped cream cheese spread.
- Non-fat or low-fat milk.
- Coffee, tea, 100% juice.
- Single serving spreads, such as peanut butter, jam, jelly, low-fat cream cheese or trans-fat free spread.

**Lunch Ideas:**

- Broth-based, low sodium soups with vegetables.
- Half- sandwiches or wraps:
  - Whole grain bread with roasted or grilled tofu, lean meats, low-fat cheese, or a variety of vegetable toppings.
  - Chicken gyro on a whole wheat pita with lettuce, tomato, and tahini sauce.
  - Vegetable sandwiches or wraps on whole grain wraps:
    - Southwestern beans and vegetables.
    - Tomato and basil.
    - Roasted vegetables.
    - Hummus.
- Mixed green salad.
- Hummus.
- Hard-boiled eggs.
- Whole or cut fruit.
- Whole grain pasta or rice salad made with oil-based or low-fat dressing.
- Whole grain rolls or challah.
- Bean salad.
- Kebabs prepared with lean meats and assorted vegetables.
- Protein salads with low-fat mayonnaise (egg salad, tuna salad, chicken salad, chickpea).
- Low sodium or baked chips or air-popped popcorn.

## Implementation Checklist

Yes / No / In Progress	Food and Beverage Standards
Y / N / IP	Side dishes contain 230 milligrams of sodium or less.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Soups contain 480 mg of sodium or less.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Entrees contain 600 milligrams of sodium or less.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Meals are free from trans fat or partially hydrogenated oils.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Meals contain 10% or less saturated fat per serving.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	If oils are utilized, oils are rich in unsaturated fats.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	There are enough non-starchy vegetables offered to cover half of the plate.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	There are labeled alternate options for religious and allergy needs.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	There is a variety of non-fried proteins.
	Notes:



Yes / No / In Progress	Food and Beverage Standards
Y / N / IP	If grains are offered, grains are whole grains.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	There is a fruit offered without added sugar.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Half or reduced-sized options are offered.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	If snacks are offered, snacks are baked, low-fat, and/or low-sodium.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	No more than one portion of dessert per person served with a fruit of choice.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Free water that is safe to drink is available and advertised.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Beverages are 100% juice, low-fat or fat-free milk or milk alternate, or other beverages containing 40 calories per serving or less.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Preference is given to seasonal and/or local products.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	This event actively seeks information and opportunities to provide culturally responsive food and beverages.
	Notes:

## Menu Approval Process

When a state agency is hosting a meal during a meeting or conference, the Vermont Food Standards will be used to guide menu selections. Meeting planners should take the following steps to comply with the standards:

1) Make selections using the menu provided by the caterer or venue.

A. Provide the caterer or venue with a copy of the Vermont Food Standards.

B. Use the Vermont Food Standards as guidance, making sure that both the foods and beverages supplied follow the guidelines.

B. If you don't see what you need on the menu, discuss it with the caterer or venue. They should be able to supply this food.

2) **Use your state agency's approval system for ordering food.** The person who approves expense request forms for your agency will review menus to ensure the guidelines have been followed. If for some reason the caterer or venue cannot follow the guidelines and changing vendors is not possible, you will need to explain why you will still use this vendor on the request form.

3) Once approved, the food order can be placed.

# Institutional Food Service

## Food and Beverage Standards

### Food Requirements:

All institutional food service settings are required to implement the following criteria:

- All foods should be low in sodium, within a 5% range from the standards below:
  - Side dishes, soups, and entrees should have no more than 230 mg, 480 mg, and 600 mg of sodium, respectively, per serving.
- All meal items are free of artificial trans-fat or partially hydrogenated oils,
- When using oils, use varieties high in unsaturated fats such as olive, canola, corn, or other fats that are liquid at room temperature,
- Foods are not to be deep fried during preparation,
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables each day, varying in color and totaling at least 2 cups and 2.5 cups per day respectively,
- Offer at least one raw, steamed, baked, or grilled vegetable with lunch and dinner,
- Consider seasonal and locally grown or produced foods, which many organizations define as within 250 miles of the purchaser,
- Actively seek opportunities to provide culturally responsive food and beverages,
- At least half of the grains offered are whole grains,
- Unless medically contraindicated, offer fish or seafood at least two times per week (canned, fresh, or frozen),
- Offer a variety of non-fried protein foods such as fish, seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, legumes (beans and peas), nuts, seeds, and soy products daily totaling at least 5.5 ounces per day,
- Offer at least one entrée at least five out of seven days per week that is comprised of plant-based proteins such as legumes, nuts, seeds, and soy products,
- Include options that provide an alternative for those with religious needs (kosher or halal, for example) or food allergies which may include milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soybeans, and sesame,
- Maintain, at minimum, a two-week supply of food for emergency purposes or a written policy in place including emergency food supply procedures,
- Therapeutic diets and texture modifications are provided as medically appropriate,
- Unless contraindicated based on nutrient needs, adult daily menus must contain:
  - At least 2100 calories, less than 2300 mg of sodium, less than 10% of calories from saturated fat, 25 grams of fiber, less than 10% of calories from added sugar, 10-35% of calories from protein, and 45-65% of calories from carbohydrates.

### Beverage Requirements:

- Have free water that is safe to drink available and promote its availability, and
- Offer 100% juice, reduced fat milk and milk alternate (based on demand) that are unflavored and calcium fortified, or beverages with  $\leq 40$  calories per serving.

## Implementation Checklist

Yes / No / In Progress	Food and Beverage Standards
Y / N / IP	Side dishes contain 230 milligrams of sodium or less, within a 5% range.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Soups contain 480 mg of sodium or less, within a 5% range.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Entrees contain 600 milligrams of sodium or less, within a 5% range.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Meals are free from trans fat or partially hydrogenated oils.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	If oils are utilized, oils are rich in unsaturated fats.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	The menu is free from deep fried options.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	There is a variety of fruits offered, varying in color and totaling at least 2 cups per day.
	Notes:

Yes / No / In Progress	Food and Beverage Standards
Y / N / IP	There is a variety of vegetables offered, varying in color and totaling at least 2.5 cups per day.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	There is at least one raw, steamed, baked, or grilled vegetable each day with lunch and dinner.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Half of the grains that are served are whole grains.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Unless medically contraindicated, fish or seafood is offered at least twice per week.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	There is a variety of non-fried proteins offered daily totaling at least 5.5 ounces per day.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	One entrée with plant-based proteins is offered five of seven days per week.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	There are alternate options for religious or allergy needs.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Free water that is safe to drink is available and advertised.
	Notes:

Yes / No / In Progress	Food and Beverage Standards
Y / N / IP	Beverages are 100% juice, reduced fat milk or milk alternate (based on demand), or other beverages containing 40 calories per serving or less.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Unless medically contraindicated based on nutrient needs, daily menus contain at least 2100 calories.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Unless medically contraindicated based on nutrient needs, daily menus contain less than 2300 mg of sodium.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Unless medically contraindicated based on nutrient needs, daily menus contain less than 10% or calories from saturated fat.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Unless medically contraindicated based on nutrient needs, daily menus contain at least 25 grams of fiber.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Unless medically contraindicated based on nutrient needs, daily menus contain less than 10% of calories from added sugar.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Unless medically contraindicated based on nutrient needs, daily menus contain at least 10-35% of calories from protein.
	Notes:

Yes / No / In Progress	Food and Beverage Standards
Y / N / IP	Unless medically contraindicated based on nutrient needs, daily menus contain at least 45-64% of calories from carbohydrates.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Maintain, at minimum, a two-week supply of food of a written policy in place including emergency food supply procedures.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Therapeutic diets and texture modiviations are provided as medically appropriate.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	Consider seasonal and/or local products.
	Notes:
Y / N / IP	This establishment actively seeks information and opportunities to provide culturally responsive food and beverages.
	Notes:

### Implementation Goals:

N or IP above: _____	Implement by: _____
N or IP above: _____	Implement by: _____
N or IP above: _____	Implement by: _____
N or IP above: _____	Implement by: _____
N or IP above: _____	Implement by: _____
N or IP above: _____	Implement by: _____
N or IP above: _____	Implement by: _____
N or IP above: _____	Implement by: _____

# Healthy Food For Less

## VERMONT HARVEST CALENDAR

**Eat with the seasons!** This calendar presents the diverse array of farm products that are available throughout the seasons at local farmers markets, farm stands and retail stores. Eating food when it's in season means flavor and nutritional value are at their peak and cost is often at its lowest. Find out when your favorite fruits and veggies are freshest and which products are **in season now**.

January	February	March	April	May	June
Apples Beets Cabbage Carrots Celeriac Garlic Parsnips Potatoes Rutabaga Turnips Winter Squash 	Apples Beets Cabbage Carrots Onions Parsnips Potatoes Rutabaga Turnips Winter Squash 	Apples Beets Carrots Onions Parsnips Potatoes Rutabaga Turnips Winter Squash 	Apples Carrots Parsnips Potatoes Turnips 	Asparagus Greens Parsnips Radishes Rhubarb Scallions Spinach 	Asparagus Chard Greens Lettuce Peas Radishes Rhubarb Scallions Spinach Strawberries 
July	August	September	October	November	December
Beans Beets Broccoli Carrots Cauliflower Fennel Greens Kale Lettuce Melons Peas Potatoes Radishes Raspberries Scallions Spinach Summer Squash Tomatoes Turnips 	Apples Beans Beets Blackberries Blueberries Broccoli Cabbage Carrots Cauliflower Celery Chard Corn Cucumbers Eggplant Fennel Garlic Greens Kale Leeks Lettuce Melons Onions Peas Peppers Potatoes Radishes Raspberries Scallions Spinach Summer Squash Tomatoes Turnips Watermelon 	Apples Beans Beets Blueberries Broccoli Brussel Sprouts Cabbage Carrots Cauliflower Celery Chard Corn Cucumbers Eggplant Fennel Greens Kale Leeks Lettuce Onions Parsnips Peppers Potatoes Pumpkins Radishes Raspberries Scallions Spinach Summer Squash Tomatoes Turnips Winter Squash 	Apples Beans Beets Blueberries Broccoli Brussel Sprouts Cabbage Carrots Cauliflower Celery Chard Kale Leeks Onions Parsnips Peppers Potatoes Pumpkins Radishes Rutabaga Turnips Winter Squash 	Apples Beets Broccoli Brussel Sprouts Cabbage Carrots Cauliflower Celeriac Celery Chard Kale Leeks Onions Parsnips Potatoes Pumpkins Radishes Rutabaga Turnips Winter Squash 	Apples Beets Brussel Sprouts Cabbage Carrots Celeriac Garlic Kale Onions Parsnips Potatoes Pumpkins Radishes Rutabaga Turnips Winter Squash  <p><b>*Fruit or vegetable comes into season this month.</b></p>

Brought to you by VT FEED and VT Agency of Education. VT FEED is a partnership of Shelburne Farms and NOFA-VT. Funded by a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant through VT Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets.

All FFVP materials available at:  
[vtfeed.org/feed-resource-library](http://vtfeed.org/feed-resource-library)



# Sample Menus

## Cafes and Cafeterias

Meal Component	Lunch Service Menu
Entrees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grilled chicken taco on a whole wheat tortilla.</li><li>• Tuna salad prepared with low-fat mayonnaise on 100% whole wheat bread.</li><li>• Chicken gyro on a whole wheat pita with lettuce, tomato, and tahini sauce.</li><li>• Black bean burger on a whole wheat bun.</li></ul>
Side Dishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mixed greens, cherry tomato, cucumber slices.</li><li>• Seasonal vegetable sauteed in olive oil.</li><li>• Fruit kabobs.</li></ul>
Snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mixed nuts and dried cranberries.</li><li>• Hummus and baby carrots.</li><li>• Low-fat yogurt with no sugar added and blueberries.</li></ul>
Desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Angel food cake with strawberry slices.</li><li>• Sherbert.</li><li>• Fresh fruit with low-fat yogurt dip.</li></ul>
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water.</li><li>• Low-fat milk and milk substitute with no added sugar.</li><li>• Coffee and tea.</li></ul>

## Concessions and Vending

Meal Component	Concessions Menu
Snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fruit and nut granola bar.</li><li>• Frozen fruit bar.</li><li>• Apple.</li><li>• Air-popped popcorn.</li><li>• Whole grain pita chips.</li><li>• Frozen fruit sorbet with no added sugar.</li><li>• Part skim mozzarella cheese stick.</li><li>• Baked potato chips.</li><li>• Jerky that is low in sodium.</li></ul>
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plain or uncarbonated water.</li><li>• Seltzer water without added sugar.</li><li>• Low-fat milk without added sugar.</li><li>• 100% juice with no added sugar.</li><li>• Unsweetened iced tea.</li></ul>

## Meetings and Events

Meal	Conference Catering Menu
Breakfast Buffet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-fat Greek yogurt with no sugar added.</li> <li>• Whole wheat bagel with lox, low-fat cream cheese, and assorted vegetable toppings.</li> <li>• Seasonal fruit.</li> <li>• Granola with no sugar added.</li> <li>• Scrambled eggs.</li> <li>• Baked home fries.</li> <li>• 100% juice.</li> </ul>
Lunch Buffet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed greens with cucumber, cherry tomato, shredded carrot, red onion.</li> <li>• Barley and seasonal vegetable stew.</li> <li>• Grilled, seasoned chicken.</li> <li>• Roasted turkey breast.</li> <li>• Roasted pepper and portabella mushroom.</li> <li>• Whole wheat dinner rolls or challah.</li> <li>• Unsweetened iced tea.</li> </ul>
Afternoon Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sliced, seasonal fresh fruit.</li> <li>• Hard boiled eggs.</li> <li>• Air-popped popcorn.</li> </ul>
Available All Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water.</li> <li>• Coffee and tea.</li> <li>• Low-fat milk and milk alternate without added sugar.</li> </ul>

## Institutional Food Service

Meal Component	Dinner Service Menu
Entrees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meatloaf served with mashed potatoes.</li><li>• Vegetable and bean soup served with Spanish rice.</li><li>• Turkey burger on a whole wheat bun.</li></ul>
Side Dishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roasted seasonal vegetables.</li><li>• Mixed green salad with chopped seasonal vegetables.</li><li>• Carrot sticks and sliced cucumber.</li><li>• Whole wheat dinner roll or challah.</li></ul>
Desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shortcake with strawberries.</li><li>• Low-fat yogurt with no sugar added and melon.</li><li>• Applesauce.</li></ul>
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water.</li><li>• 100% juice.</li><li>• Coffee and tea.</li><li>• Low-fat milk and milk alternate without added sugar.</li></ul>

# Additional Resources

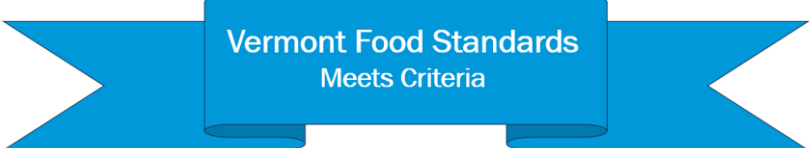
## Sample Monitoring Tools

Here are some suggestions on how to monitor progress toward implementing the Vermont Food Standards. Use the implementation checklists as auditing tools and re-check responses that move from 'no' or 'in-progress' to 'yes' over time.

Setting	Data Collection	Frequency	Monitoring Progress
Cafes and Cafeterias	Based on audits of menus, selection, and/or purchasing invoices in accordance with the implementation checklist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of 'Yes' responses</li> <li>Number of 'No' responses</li> <li>Number of 'In progress' responses</li> </ul>	Quarterly auditing of food service menu and selection.	Increased number of 'Yes' responses in accordance with the implementation checklist; Recognition sign provided annually based on monitoring to display.
Concessions and Vending	Based on audits of menus, selection, and/or purchasing invoices in accordance with the implementation checklist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of 'Yes' responses</li> <li>Number of 'No' responses</li> <li>Number of 'In progress' responses</li> </ul>	Quarterly auditing of food service menu and selection.	Increased number of 'Yes' responses in accordance with the implementation checklist; Recognition sign provided annually based on monitoring to display.
Meetings and Events	Based on audits of menus provided by venue or catering business in accordance with the implementation checklist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of 'Yes' responses</li> <li>Number of 'No' responses</li> <li>Number of 'In progress' responses</li> </ul>	Auditing of catering menus provided by venue or catering business.	Increased number of 'Yes' responses in accordance with the implementation checklist; Recognition sign provided annually based on monitoring to display.
Institutional Food Service	Based on audits of menus, selection, and/or purchasing invoices in accordance with the implementation checklist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of 'Yes' responses</li> <li>Number of 'No' responses</li> <li>Number of 'In progress' responses</li> </ul>	Quarterly auditing of food service menu and selection.	Increased number of 'Yes' responses in accordance with the implementation checklist; Recognition sign provided annually based on monitoring to display.

## Optional Recognition Signage: **Meets criteria**


**This establishment  
meets the criteria**



Vermont Food Standards  
Meets Criteria

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The State of Vermont requires all food and beverages purchased, sold, served, or otherwise provided by the State of Vermont, or on behalf of the State of Vermont, meet certain standards approved by the commissioner of health. Vermont Food Standards for cafes, cafeterias, concessions, vending, meetings and events, and institutional food service are posted on the Vermont Department of Health's website.



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Commissioner of Health

Certificate, signed by the Commissioner of Health, for food service location to display if:

25 'Yes' responses out of 33 on the Implementation Checklist for Cafes and Cafeterias.

11 'Yes' responses out of 14 on the Implementation Checklist for Concessions and Vending.

21 'Yes' responses out of 27 on the Implementation Checklist for Institutional Food Service.

**This event  
meets the criteria**



Vermont Food Standards  
Meets Criteria

---

The State of Vermont requires all food and beverages purchased, sold, served, or otherwise provided by the State of Vermont, or on behalf of the State of Vermont, meet certain standards approved by the commissioner of health. Vermont Food Standards for cafes, cafeterias, concessions, vending, meetings and events, and institutional food service are posted on the Vermont Department of Health's website.



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Commissioner of Health

Certificate, signed by the Commissioner of Health, for food service location to display if:

14 'Yes' responses out of 18 on the Implementation Checklist for Meetings and Events.


## Optional Recognition Signage: Exceeds criteria

This establishment  
exceeds the criteria



\_\_\_\_\_

The State of Vermont requires all food and beverages purchased, sold, served, or otherwise provided by the State of Vermont, or on behalf of the State of Vermont, meet certain standards approved by the commissioner of health. Vermont Food Standards for cafes, cafeterias, concessions, vending, meetings and events, and institutional food service are posted on the Vermont Department of Health's website.



\_\_\_\_\_  
*Commissioner of Health*

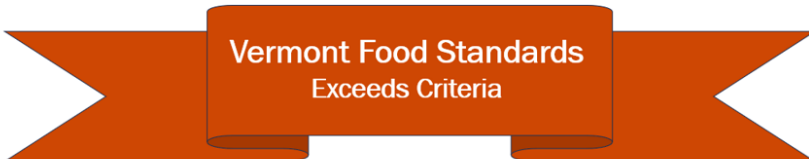
Certificate, signed by the Commissioner of Health, for food service location to display if:

30 'Yes' responses out of 33 on the Implementation Checklist for Cafes and Cafeterias.

13 'Yes' responses out of 14 on the Implementation Checklist for Concessions and Vending.


25 'Yes' responses out of 27 on the Implementation Checklist for Institutional Food Service.

This event  
exceeds the criteria



\_\_\_\_\_

The State of Vermont requires all food and beverages purchased, sold, served, or otherwise provided by the State of Vermont, or on behalf of the State of Vermont, meet certain standards approved by the commissioner of health. Vermont Food Standards for cafes, cafeterias, concessions, vending, meetings and events, and institutional food service are posted on the Vermont Department of Health's website.



\_\_\_\_\_  
*Commissioner of Health*

Certificate, signed by the Commissioner of Health, for food service location to display if:

17 'Yes' responses out of 18 on the Implementation Checklist for Meetings and Events.

## Tips and Nutrient Information

### **Sodium:**

For many reasons including availability, affordability, and access, the average American diet exceeds sodium recommendations per the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Most of the sodium we eat is in the form of salt that is often concentrated in packaged foods and foods prepared at restaurants. Sodium is used in multiple ways including curing meat, baking, enhancing flavor, and as a preservative. Eating too much sodium increases the risk of high blood pressure. High blood pressure can lead to heart disease and stroke, the nation's first and third leading causes of death. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025 recommends that people consume less than 2300 mg of sodium per day (equivalent to one teaspoon of salt).

Tips for reducing sodium:

- Sodium is often in foods that are not considered savory or salty including dairy products (cheese, for example), cereal and instant hot cereals, bread, and condiments,
- Read labels and choose items with 200 mg of sodium or less, or the option with lower overall sodium when comparing two products,
- Select foods like fruit, vegetables, lower-sodium dairy products, whole grains, dry and fresh beans and peas, unsalted nuts, eggs, and minimally processed meats whenever possible,
- Remain mindful of portions of pickled and brined foods, which are concentrated sources of sodium, and
- Let your caterers and suppliers know you are interested in lower sodium products.

### **Added sugar:**

Added sugars are sugars and syrups that are added to foods or beverages during the processing or preparation process, which can help with preservation, contribute to functional attributes (texture, body, color) and improve the palatability of some nutrient-dense foods. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025 recommends that people consume less than 10% added sugars relative to their total intake each day, which leaves room for foods offering a greater variety of valuable nutrients. This does not include naturally occurring sugars including those consumed within milk and fruit. Choose beverages with no or minimal added sugars including water, 100% juice, or low-fat or fat-free milk. Remain mindful of dessert and sweet snack portions, while choosing canned fruit, fruit sauces, and yogurt with no or minimal added sugar.

### **Dairy:**

It is recommended that most people over the age of two choose fat-free or low-fat milk and other dairy products such as yogurt. This includes lactose-free or lactose-reduced products and fortified soy beverages. Choose fortified dairy alternatives, like oat milk or almond milk, with no or minimal added sugar.



## **Whole Grains:**

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025 recommends that half of all grains consumed be whole grains. Whole grains offer increased fiber and nutrient content, including foods like 100% whole wheat bread, whole grain pasta, and brown rice. Review the ingredient list on packaged foods to select foods that have whole grains listed as the first grain ingredient.

## **Protein:**

Protein is found in many different foods from both animals and plants, each offering valuable nutrients. It is recommended to vary sources of protein including lean meat and poultry, eggs, legumes (beans and peas), nuts, seeds, seafood, and soy products.

## **Incentives That Support Employees' Health:**

Incentivizing employees is an important part of supervision. Employees need to know that supervisors notice and recognize their day-to-day efforts, especially when they go above and beyond their job duties. Here are some ideas for ways to provide incentives and thank employees that will help them feel good about their work, while honoring their health.

### **Non-food incentives:**

- Take the time to thank the employee for a job well done,
- Recognize one employee per week or month,
- Recognize someone at the start of every staff meeting,
- Devote space on a bulletin board or poster for employee recognition,
- Encourage employees to post thank you cards and recognition,
- Feature employee recognition in a newsletter,
- Give a small plant, flowers, or low-cost book, or
- Give stress balls or other trinkets.

### **Food incentives:**

- Smoothies at staff meetings,
- Fruit tray,
- Vegetable tray,
- Potluck encouraging staff to read and meet Vermont Food Standards,
- Parfaits made with yogurt that is low-fat or fat-free and low in added sugar, or
- Catered lunch that meets Vermont Food Standards

## References and Acknowledgements

American Heart Association *Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations*; <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/aha-diet-and-lifestyle-recommendations>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Federal Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities*; <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/food-service-guidelines/index.html>

City of Philadelphia *Food, Beverage and Procurement Standards for Hospitals and Nutrition Standards and Implementation Guide*; <https://www.phila.gov/media/20200218130532/Food-Beverage-and-Procurement-Standards.pdf>

Healthy NYC *Nutrition at Work and in City Facilities*; <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/healthy-workplaces.page>

Healthy People 2030 *Social Determinants of Health*; <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health>

National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity *Healthier Food Choices for Public Places*; <https://www.cspinet.org/protecting-our-health/nutrition/healthier-public-places>

State of Washington *Healthy Nutrition Guidelines*; <https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/worksite-wellness/healthy-nutrition-guidelines>

United States Department of Agriculture *Food Allergies*; <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/food-allergies>

United States Department of Agriculture *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025*; <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/resources/2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-online-materials>

Washington State Department of Health *Healthy Food and Beverage Standards for Meals*; <https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/worksite-wellness/healthy-nutrition-guidelines/institutions/meals>

### Key for Abbreviations and Symbols:

**Mg = Milligrams; ≤ = Less than or equal to; % = Percent**

### Acknowledgments

Department of Corrections  
Department of Mental Health  
Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation  
Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living

For technical assistance and support with menu planning, please contact the VDH Physical Activity and Nutrition Program within the Division of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention: [AHS.VDHPublicCommunication@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHPublicCommunication@vermont.gov).