



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

May 12, 2026

Janet Mann, Secretary
Arkansas Department of Human Services
Donaghey Plaza, P.O. Box 1437
Little Rock, AR 72203

Dear Secretary Mann:

On May 5, 2026, the Arkansas Department of Human Services requested to modify the restricted food and beverage definitions of the State agency's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Food Restriction Waiver.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approves this modification request. As expressed in the request, Arkansas seeks to modify its beverage and candy definitions to further clarify what allowable and unallowable items under their pilot and ease implementation for SNAP retailers. This modification adds detail to the State agency's existing definitions. It makes no changes Arkansas's implementation date nor their planned approach to implementation.

As approved by FNS on June 10, 2025, Arkansas will implement their project on July 1, 2026. All other terms and conditions, as outlined in the June 2025 approval, remain in effect.

FNS applauds Arkansas and its SNAP team for the efforts you have made towards the implementation of your SNAP Food Restriction pilot thus far. We look forward to continuing to support your efforts to successfully implement this innovative and impactful project on July 1, 2026.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patrick A. Penn", written over a circular blue stamp or seal.

PATRICK A. PENN
Acting Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service
Deputy Under Secretary, Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Enclosure

ARKANSAS SNAP FOOD RESTRICTION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT WAIVER: MODIFICATION TO RESTRICTED FOODS DEFINITION

Beverages

Soda, low and no-calorie soda, fruit and vegetable drinks with less than 50% natural juice, and other unhealthy drinks include:

1. Coffee, Ready to Drink

1. Not allowed for purchase: Any ready-to-drink coffee beverage, both shelf-stable and refrigerated. Products typically include ready-to-drink lattes, ready-to--drink espressos with creamer, and ready-to-drink coffee drinks with syrups. (Note: Hot coffee is already not allowed for purchase under standard SNAP rules.)

- Still allowed: Coffee capsules/pods, whole coffee beans, ground coffee beans, instant/soluble coffee, not ready-to-drink coffee, and ready-to-drink coffee or espresso with no creamer, no milk or no artificial cream.

2. Coffee Substitutes, Ready to Drink

- Not allowed for purchase: Any products that can be described/observed as a ready-to-drink non-carbonated beverage made from coffee substitutes such as chicory. Includes products that are consumed cold and those sold in 'self-heating' cans, which allow the consumer to heat the coffee prior to consumption.
- Still allowed: Ready-to-drink coffee substitutes with no creamer, no milk or no artificial cream as well as coffee, not ready-to-drink coffee substitutes and not ready-to-drink teas.

3. Chocolate/Cocoa/Malt, Ready to Drink

- Not allowed for purchase: Any products that can be described/observed as a ready to drink liquid made from either cocoa beans/powder, malted barley, corn starch, or other grain extracts, and sometimes incorporating milk, sugar, egg extract, or other ingredients.
- Still allowed: Flavored milk and dairy based drinks to which chocolate flavoring has been added, those that are not based on cocoa beans/powder, as well as:
 - Not Ready to Drink Chocolate, Malt and Cocoa
 - Chocolate Flavored Milk
 - Dairy Based Drinks such as Chocolate Flavored Milk Shakes, Baby, and Infant Specialized Beverages.

4. Drinks Flavored – Ready-to-Drink

- Not allowed for purchase: Any products that can be described/observed as a sweet, ready-to-drink, carbonated or non-carbonated beverage that includes no dairy/dairy-substitute ingredients. These products are usually artificially flavored and colored. Products include carbonated drinks which contain caffeine and those sweetened with sugar or artificial sweeteners. Also includes fruit based carbonated drinks.
- Still allowed: Non-carbonated juice-based drinks with at least 50% natural juice, and products like:
 - Not Ready-to-Drink Flavored Drinks, all not ready-to-drink Juice Drinks and Dairy and Dairy Substitute Drinks.

5. Fruit Juice Drinks – Ready-to-Drink (perishable)

- Not allowed for purchase: Any products that can be described/observed as a perishable, ready-to-drink non-carbonated beverage, that contains some fruit juice or a blend of fruit and vegetable juice, having fruit juice as the main characteristic, together with additional ingredients such as water, sugar, colorings and flavorings. These products must be refrigerated to extend their consumable life. Includes products that may be described as Nectar, Fruit Drink or Juice Drink and available in single flavors such as orange and apple or they may be blends of more than one such as orange and apricot, cranberry, and raspberry.
- Still allowed: Fruit juice products with 50% to 100% fruit juice.

6. Fruit Juice Drinks – Ready-to-Drink (shelf-stable)

- Not allowed for purchase: Any products that can be described/observed as a shelf-stable, ready-to-drink non-carbonated beverage, that contains some fruit juice or a blend of fruit and vegetable juice, having fruit juice as the main characteristic, together with additional ingredients such as water, sugar, colorings and flavorings. These products have been specially treated or packaged in such a way as to extend their consumable life. Products include individual and blended juice drink varieties.
- Still allowed: Fruit juice products with 50% to 100% fruit juice.

7. Stimulants/Energy Drinks -Ready-to-Drink

- Any products that can be described/observed as a ready-to-drink carbonated or non-carbonated beverage containing glucose, caffeine or other stimulants designed to be consumed like a soft drink. Products are available in a variety of flavors.

8. Vegetable Juice Drinks – Ready-to-Drink (perishable)

- Not allowed for purchase: Any products that can be described/observed as a perishable, ready-to-drink non-carbonated beverage, that contains some vegetable juice or a blend of vegetable and fruit juice, having vegetable juice as the main characteristic, together with additional ingredients such as water, sugar, colorings and flavorings. These products must be refrigerated to extend their consumable life. Includes products that may be described as Nectar or Juice Drink and available in single flavors such as carrot and tomato or they may be blends of more than one such as mixed vegetables or carrot and lemon (having carrot as the main characteristic).
- Still allowed: Vegetable juice products with 50% to 100% natural juice.

9. Vegetable Juice Drinks – Ready-to-Drink (shelf-stable)

- Not allowed for purchase: Any products that can be described/observed as a shelf stable ready to drink, non-carbonated beverage that contains some vegetable juice or a blend of vegetable and fruit juice, having vegetables as the main characteristic together with additional ingredients, such as water, sugar, colorings and flavorings. These products have been specially treated or packaged in such a way as to extend their consumable life. Products include individual and blended juice drink varieties.
- Still allowed: Vegetable juice products with 50% to 100% natural juice.

10. Fruit Herbal infusions/tisanes

- Not allowed for purchase: Any products that can be described/observed as a ready-to-drink beverage, which is derived in part or in total from one or more species of fruit, herb, spice, or flower and does not require any further preparation. Includes products sold in containers with a self-heating mechanism and those with added flavorings and milk or sweeteners.
- Still allowed: Fruit/ herbal infusions or tisanes with no sugar or artificial sweetener added.

11. Tea- Liquid/Ready-to-Drink

- Not allowed for purchase: Any products that can be described/observed as a ready to drink beverage made from the dried leaves of the tea plant, Camellia Sinensis. Includes self-heating products and teas from single tea types such as Assam and Ceylon, and those which are blends of various teas. Products may also have added flavorings such as lemon and milk or sweeteners.
- Still allowed: Ready-to-drink tea products without milk/cream/sugar or artificial sweetener.

Candy

1. Chewing Gum

- Not allowed for purchase: Any products that can be described/observed as a type of gum made of chicle, a natural latex product, or synthetic equivalents such as polyisobutylene. Includes Bubble gum, which is a type of chewing gum, designed to be inflated out of the mouth as a bubble.

2. Chocolate and Chocolate/Sugar Candy Combinations – Confectionery

2. Not allowed for purchase: Any products that can be described/observed as a portion of chocolate or chocolate substitute confectionery or a confectionery item that is a combination of chocolate and sugar candy that may contain additional ingredients such as fondant, nougat, marzipan, caramel, candy cream, nuts, coconut, dried fruits, and other soft fillings. These products may be sold individually or packaged to provide a quantity of similar items.

- Still allowed: Cooking chocolate.

3. Confectionery Products Variety Packs

- Not allowed for purchase: Any products that can be described/observed as two or more distinct Confectionery Products sold together, which exist within the schema belonging to different bricks but to the same class, that is two or more products contained within the same pack which cross bricks within the Confectionery Products class. Includes products such as Chocolate and Chewing Gum sold together. Items that are received free with purchase should be removed from the classification decision-making process.

4. Sugar Candy/Sugar Candy Substitutes Confectionery

- Not allowed for purchase: Includes any products that can be described/observed as a hard or soft confection made mostly from sugar, with added flavorings that may or may not contain gelatine. These products may be individually wrapped, packaged loose in a bag or container, or tightly packaged in a roll or tube. Products include toffees.

5. Confectionery/Sugar Sweetening Products Variety Packs

- Not allowed for purchase: Includes any products that can be described/observed as two or more distinct Confectionery and Sugar Sweeteners sold together which exist within the schema but belong to different classes, that is two or more products contained within the same pack which cross classes within the Confectionery and Sugar Sweetening Products Family. Includes products such as Chocolate with Treacle variety packs. Items that are received free with purchases should be removed from the classification decision-making process.