



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

December 12, 2025

Jeffrey Cartmell
Executive Director
Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Sequoyah Memorial Office Building
2400 N Lincoln Boulevard
Oklahoma City, OK 73125

Re: SNAP Food Restriction Demonstration Waiver Modification Request

Dear Executive Director Cartmell:

On September 25, 2025, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) requested to modify its restricted food definitions of “candy” and “soft drinks” for its Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Food Restriction waiver. Additionally, on November 17, 2025, OKDHS requested to modify their waiver implementation date from January 1, 2026, to February 15, 2026.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approves these modification requests. Oklahoma is requesting these modifications to its initial waiver request to clarify the State’s restricted food items and provide necessary additional preparation time for SNAP retailers. FNS agrees that these modifications will provide a stronger foundation for project success.

This approval is for 2 years, effective February 15, 2026, through February 15, 2028. FNS provides the modified restricted food definitions and the adjusted project reporting schedule in the enclosure. All other information, terms and conditions of FNS’s August 6, 2025, waiver approval remain in effect.

FNS applauds Oklahoma and its SNAP team for the significant efforts made towards the implementation of the state’s SNAP Food Restriction Waiver thus far. We look forward to continuing to support your efforts to successfully implement this innovative and impactful project on February 15, 2026.

Sincerely,

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read "Patrick A. Penn", with a stylized, looping initial "P" and a horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patrick A. Penn
Deputy Under Secretary
Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Enclosure

OKLAHOMA SNAP FOOD RESTRICTION WAIVER DEMONSTRATION PROJECT MODIFICATION TO RESTRICTED FOODS DEFINITION

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) will restrict “candy” and “soft drinks” from purchase with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, effective February 15, 2026.

Definition of "Candy":

“Candy” means any product marketed or sold as candy, including but not limited to chocolate bars, gummies, caramels, taffy, licorice, mints, chewing gum, or similar confections. This includes candy bars or any products with wafers, cookies, or flour components when they are primarily sold as candy.

Candy also includes non-bakery items that are dipped, coated, or covered in chocolate, yogurt, or other candy coating, such as chocolate-covered raisins, almonds, or similar products.

This definition also applies to equivalent items, including private-label or store-brand products, that retailers categorize or market as candy.

Candy does not include:

- Baked goods such as cakes, cookies, muffins, brownies, pastries, or bread;
- Items primarily sold as baking ingredients, such as chocolate chips, baking chocolate, or cocoa powder.

Definition of "Soft Drinks":

“Soft drink” means any beverage marketed or sold as a soda, soft drink, sports drink, energy drink, flavored water, or juice drink containing less than 100% juice. This includes colas, sodas, teas, punches, lemonades, sports or energy beverages, flavored waters, and fruit drinks that are not 100% juice.

This definition also applies to equivalent items, including private-label or store-brand products, that retailers categorize or market as soda, soft drinks, energy drinks, flavored waters, or juice drinks.

Soft drinks also include all fountain drinks and slushies, regardless of flavor or packaging.

Soft drinks do not include:

- Milk or milk substitutes;
- Coffee beans, grounds, instant coffee, or brewed coffee;
- Plain bottled water;
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice;
- Drinks prepared at home.

Implementation Approach

To make sure the new definitions for candy and soft drinks are applied fairly and consistently, OKDHS will manage implementation at the UPC level, rather than relying on ingredient lists or individual retailer interpretations. This approach removes ambiguity, provides retailers with a clear list of restricted items, and ensures SNAP participants see the same rules applied across all stores. By maintaining and updating a standardized UPC restriction list, OKDHS can give retailers the tools they need to implement restrictions smoothly while keeping the process transparent and easy to understand.

Oklahoma's proposed alternative procedure makes no changes to the provisions that allow certain populations of SNAP recipients to purchase prepared meals from appropriate facilities like senior centers, domestic violence centers, substance misuse centers, and homeless shelters or to universally banned products.

OKLAHOMA SNAP FOOD RESTRICTION WAIVER DEMONSTRATION PROJECT MODIFICATION TO REPORTING SCHEDULE

Report	Date Range Covered	Due Date
Year 1, Quarter 1	February 15, 2026- May 16, 2026	June 30, 2026
Year 1, Quarter 2	May 17, 2026- August 15, 2026	September 29, 2026
Year 1, Quarter 3	August 16, 2026- November 14, 2026	December 29, 2026
Year 1, Quarter 4	November 15, 2026- February 13, 2027	March 30, 2027
Year 2, Quarter 1	February 14, 2027- May 15, 2027	June 29, 2027
Year 2, Quarter 2	May 16, 2027- August 14, 2027	September 28, 2027
Year 2, Quarter 3	August 15, 2027- November 13, 2027	December 28, 2027
Year 2, Quarter 4	November 14, 2027- February 14, 2028	March 31, 2028
Extension Request	Submitted by August 16, 2027	