

Child and Adult Care Food Program

Determining Eligibility

In centers, children from households with incomes at or below 130 percent of poverty are eligible for free meals. Children in centers with household incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of poverty are eligible for meals at a reduced price. Institutions must determine each enrolled child's eligibility for free and reduced price meals served in centers.

Children whose families receive benefits from the Food Stamp Program, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or State programs funded through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are categorically eligible for free meals. Children who are income eligible participants of Head Start or Even Start programs are automatically eligible for free meals, without further application or eligibility determination. Children who are residents of emergency shelters are also automatically eligible for free meals.

Claiming Reimbursement for Meals Served

Sponsors must submit accurate monthly claims for reimbursement to their administering agencies. Reimbursement is not allowed for meals or snacks that are: served to a child who is not enrolled for care; served in excess of licensed or authorized capacity; not approved in the agreement; served in excess of the maximum number of approved meal services; or out of compliance with meal pattern requirements.

Meals served at for profit centers during a calendar month when less than 25 percent of the center's enrollment or licensed capacity (whichever is less) receive title XIX or title XX benefits or are eligible for free and reduced price meals may not be claimed for reimbursement.

Shelters may not claim reimbursement for meals served to children who are not residents of emergency shelters.

All meals served under the Child and Adult Care Food Program are served regardless of race, color, sex, age, disability or national origin. There is no discrimination in admissions policy, meal service or the use of facilities. Any complaints of discrimination should be submitted in writing to:

USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410

or call 800-795-3272 or 202-720-6382 (TDD).



Delaware Department of Education
Child and Adult Care Food Program
401 Federal Street, Suite #2
Dover, Delaware 19901
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Benefits to Child Care Centers



Child Care Centers and the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Why is CACFP Important?

USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care and making it more affordable for many low-income families. Each day, millions of children receive nutritious meals and snacks through CACFP. CACFP reaches even further to provide meals to children residing in emergency shelters, and snacks and suppers to youths participating in eligible afterschool care programs.

Program Administration

CACFP is authorized at section 17 of the National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1766). Program regulations are issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) under 7 CFR part 226.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers CACFP through grants to States. The program is administered within most States by the State educational agency. In a few States it is administered by an alternate agency, such as the State health or social services department; and in Virginia, it is directly administered by the FNS Mid-Atlantic Regional Office. The child care component of CACFP may be administered by different agencies within a State, at the discretion of the Governor.

Independent centers and sponsoring organizations enter into agreements with their administering State agencies to assume administrative and financial responsibility for CACFP operations. CACFP requires nutritious meals and snacks be served to eligible children who are enrolled for care at participating licensed child care centers, emergency shelters or approved at-risk sites.

Child Care Centers

Eligible public or private nonprofit child care centers, Head Start programs, and other institutions which are licensed or approved to provide day care services may participate in CACFP, independently or as sponsored centers. For profit centers must receive title XX funds for at least 25 percent of enrolled children or licensed capacity (whichever is less) or at least 25 percent of the children in care must be eligible for free and reduced price meals. Meals served to children are reimbursed at rates based upon a child's eligibility for free, reduced price, or paid meals.

Community-based programs that offer enrichment activities for at-risk children and teenagers, after the regular school day ends, can provide free suppers/snacks through CACFP. Programs must be offered in areas where at least 50% of the children are eligible for free and reduced price meals based upon school data.

Meal Reimbursement

Independent centers and sponsoring organizations receive cash reimbursement for serving meals to enrolled children that meet Federal nutritional guidelines. The CACFP meal pattern varies according to age and types of meal served. Centers may be approved to claim up to two reimbursable meals (breakfast, lunch or supper) and one snack, or two snacks and one meal, to each eligible child, each day.

Reimbursement for centers is computed by actual meal count by type (breakfast, lunch, supper, or supplement) and eligibility category (free, reduced price, and paid). The administering agency assigns a method of reimbursement for centers, based on meals times rates.

Commodities or Cash-in-lieu of Commodities

In addition to cash reimbursement, USDA makes donated agricultural commodities or cash-in-lieu of commodities available to institutions participating in CACFP.

Funding Program Benefits

FNS provides cash assistance to each State agency for meals served to eligible children in day care centers based upon the child's eligibility under the Income Eligibility Guidelines for free, reduced price, or paid meals. National average payments for meals served in centers are adjusted annually on July 1, to reflect changes in the *Food Away From Home* series of the Consumer Price Index. Meals served in emergency shelters and afterschool care snacks are reimbursed at the rates for free meals and snacks.

The level of commodity assistance or cash in lieu of commodities is based on the numbers of lunches and suppers served in centers in the preceding year, multiplied by the national average payment for donated foods. Commodity assistance rates are also adjusted annually on July 1, to reflect changes in the *Food Used in Schools and Institutions* series of the Consumer Price Index.

Eligible Population

Section 226.2 of the regulations describes who may receive CACFP meal benefits.

Children means "(a) Persons age 12 and under; (b) Persons age 15 and under who are children of migrant workers; (c) Persons age 18 and under who are residents of emergency shelters or in eligible afterschool care programs; and (d) Persons with mental or physical handicaps, as defined by the State, which are enrolled in an institution or a child care facility or residing in an emergency shelter serving a majority of persons 18 years of age and under.