

Child Care Centers, Head Start, and School-Sponsored Pre-K Programs Fact Sheet

Institution's Eligibility

- The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides reimbursement for meals served to children ages birth to twelve years enrolled in child care centers, Head Start, and school-sponsored Pre-K programs.
- Programs may be operated by a public, private non-profit, or private for-profit organization.
 - √ A Federal tax-exempt status letter (e.g., Internal Revenue Service 501(c)(3) document) is required for private non-profit organizations.
 - √ Private for-profit child care centers are eligible, but must receive subsidized child care payments for at least 25 percent of their Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) license capacity or 25 percent of their total enrollment, whichever is less. Centers can also use free/reduced-price applications to meet the 25 percent eligibility.

Facility Requirements

- A facility must be licensed with DCFS where applicable.
 - √ School sites are license-exempt when children are three years of age and older.
 - √ License-exempt facilities, other than schools, must have a license-exempt letter from DCFS and must meet State or local health and safety standards.
- A facility must operate an enrolled program.
 - √ CACFP Annual Enrollment Forms must be collected and on file for EVERY enrolled child.
- A facility must determine the eligibility category of each child to claim meals for reimbursement.
 - √ Household Eligibility Applications must be collected annually and maintained for all children claimed in the free or reduced-price categories.
 - √ Children enrolled in federally-funded Head Start Programs are automatically eligible to receive free meal benefits in the CACFP. Household Eligibility Applications are NOT required for the Head Start children. A current Master List of Enrolled Children must be maintained.
 - √ If school-sponsored, the same applications used to determine free and reduced-price categories for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) may also be used for the CACFP.
- Meals offered to children from birth to 12 years of age must meet the established meal pattern requirements by offering all required food items in appropriate portion sizes to receive reimbursement.
 - √ Institutions must make available all food components indicated in the meal patterns.
 - √ If caring for infants, one type of iron-fortified formula and other age-appropriate foods designated in the Infant Meal Pattern must be provided by the center.

Age Group Served

- Children birth to twelve years of age

Time of Operation

- Year around

Reimbursement

- The amount of meal reimbursement received depends on each child's eligibility category. The CACFP also provides cash-in-lieu of donated commodities, which is paid on each lunch and supper served to children. Children enrolled in Head Start are automatically eligible for free meals.
- Meals for children who have no Household Eligibility Application on file can only be claimed in the *paid* category.
- Meals for children without a CACFP Annual Enrollment Form on file cannot be claimed. Meals for children not enrolled at the facility cannot be claimed.

- Up to three meal services per child per day can be reimbursed. The combinations are one meal (breakfast, lunch, and/or supper) and two supplements (snacks), or two meals and one supplement per child per day.
- The meals and supplements served to children must be eaten while in attendance at the site. Meals and supplements cannot be sent home with the child and claimed for reimbursement.

Records to Maintain

All CACFP records must be maintained for three years plus the current fiscal year.

The following records must be maintained and kept on file for three years plus the current fiscal year.

- Approval letter and application documents to participate in current year's CACFP.
- Household Eligibility Applications are approved and on file for all children claimed in the free or reduced-price category; Head Start enrolled children are exempt from this requirement.
- CACFP Annual Enrollment Forms collected every year for all children in the center.
- Daily attendance records are kept to track the children present in the center.
- Accurate meal counts are recorded during each meal service when it can be determined the children received a reimbursable meal or supplement. At the end of the month, the meal recap forms will help consolidate the meal counts for an accurate Claim for Reimbursement.
- The number of meals served to adults assisting with the CACFP and non-program adults must be kept daily. The adult meals cannot be claimed for reimbursement.
- Daily menus listing the food items served for each meal and supplement. Medical exception statements are required for children with special feeding needs.
- Expenses associated with the CACFP must be maintained (itemized receipts for food and milk, bank statements, canceled checks, mileage records, and indirect costs). The food service must operate at a non-profit status. This does not mean the institution has to operate the food service program at a loss or break-even condition; however, any excess funds must be used to purchase equipment or supplies for the children's food service operation.
- The institution must conduct annually CACFP training for key staff with CACFP responsibilities. A record of each training session must be maintained and include the date, location, agenda topics, and list of participants who attended the training.
- If applicable, food vendor contracts must comply with federal procurement procedures. Documentation of the number of meals delivered must be maintained daily.
- Institutions with more than one site are called sponsoring organizations and are required to establish a monitoring process to effectively manage their programs.
 - √ The sponsor's monitoring staff must review each prospective new site.
 - √ Each site must be monitored three times per year. At least two of the required reviews must be unannounced and at least one of the unannounced reviews must include a meal observation. Reviews must be conducted no more than six months apart, and a new site must be reviewed within the first four weeks of starting the CACFP.
 - √ Monitoring reports and corrective action taken must be kept on file.
- Documentation of civil rights compliance and training conducted according to FNS (Food and Nutrition Service) Instruction 113-1, *Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement*.

<p>In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.</p>
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