

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) pays for nutritious meals and snacks for eligible children and elderly or disabled adults who are enrolled at participating child care centers, family child care homes, afterschool programs, Head Start programs, adult care centers, and homeless shelters.

Why CACFP is Important

- New healthy nutrition standards for the meals and snacks that CACFP provides make a good program even better.
- CACFP ensures that children:
 - receive a nutritious diet;
 - start good nutrition habits early in life;
 - grow healthy and strong; and
 - are prepared for school, ready to learn.
- CACFP plays a vital role in improving the quality of child care and making it more affordable for many low-income families.
- CACFP's resources and training support communities, especially rural, by supporting child care.

CACFP's Economic Value

- CACFP helps working families work.
- CACFP funding supports the local economy, by purchasing required healthy foods at grocery stores and farmers' markets.
- CACFP funding is a significant resource for supporting child care providers, afterschool programs, homeless shelters and adult care centers.
- CACFP supports jobs in child care.

Reimbursement and Funding

- In fiscal year 2016, USDA reimbursed \$3.5 billion to providers.
- Family child care homes are reimbursed using a two-tiered system. Tier 1 covers homes in low-income areas, low-income providers, and children from low-income homes.

- Child care centers receive payments based on the type of meal served and the income of the child's family. Based on parental income, meals are reimbursed as free, reduced-price, or paid.
- Afterschool care programs in low-income areas and homeless and domestic violence shelters are reimbursed at the free rate.
- Reimbursement rates for 2016–2017 can be found [here](#).

Participation

- In fiscal year 2016, CACFP provided meals to 4.3 million children and 130,000 elderly or disabled adults each day.
- CACFP provided 2.08 billion total meals and snacks during fiscal year 2016.

Participant Eligibility

- Children age 12 and younger are eligible to receive up to two meals and one snack daily at a child care home or center; also, migrant children age 15 and younger and persons with disabilities of any age.
- Afterschool meals and snacks are available to children through age 18.
- Homeless shelters may be reimbursed for up to three meals each day for resident children age 18 and younger.

Benefits

- Participating programs provide meals according to the nutrition standards set by USDA ensuring that children and adults in care receive balanced, nutritious meals and snacks.
- Studies show that children in CACFP receive meals that are nutritionally superior to those served to children in comparable child care settings without CACFP.
- New research shows that CACFP reduces food insecurity, thus helping families protect children against hunger.
- Research has demonstrated CACFP's clear role in helping to assure good nutrition and high quality, affordable child care. The program is a well-documented success.
- Research cites participation in CACFP as one of the major factors influencing quality care.