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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 General Information

What is the CACFP?

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federally funded program that provides monthly reimbursement to eligible participating institutions for serving nutritious meals and snacks.

Eligible participants include:

- Child Care Centers
- Head Start and Even Start Programs
- At-Risk Afterschool Meals Programs
- Outside School Hours Programs
- Emergency Shelters
- Family Day Care Homes
- Adult Day Care Centers
- Pre-Kindergarten Programs

➡ Goals of the CACFP are to:

- Meet the nutritional needs of enrolled participants
- Promote healthy eating behaviors
- Improve the quality of daycare, making it more affordable for families

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), also referred to as the State agency throughout this handbook, to administer the CACFP. All participating institutions have an agreement with the State agency to operate the CACFP, and the State agency's CACFP staff provides assistance to institutions to help them meet program and recordkeeping requirements.

- The CACFP for Family Day Care Homes is administered by separate State agency staff, who may be contacted at 217-782-2491.
- Adult Day Care Centers should contact the Illinois Department on Aging at 217-782-2407 to inquire about the adult portion of CACFP.

For additional program information, you may refer to the ISBE website online at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Nutrition-and-Wellness.aspx>, and follow the links for the CACFP.

1.2 General Requirements

Eligible Institutions

Eligible institutions include:

- *Public institutions* – municipal, state, or Federal institutions. For example, a public school district, a parks and recreation department, or a community college.
- *Non-Profit institutions* – institutions with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax-exempt status, such as community child care centers, after school programs, teen parent programs, Head Start programs.
- *For-Profit institutions* – institutions that do not qualify for tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code.

Licensing Requirements

Most child care facilities must be licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Facilities not required to be licensed by DCFS must meet DCFS license exempt requirements.

Training and Technical Assistance

CACFP and Civil Rights training is required to be conducted annually. Information about trainings and workshops is available online at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Nutrition-and-Wellness-Resources.aspx>

For training or technical assistance, sponsors may contact CACFP staff by phone or e-mail:

- Phone: 800-545-7892 (for in-state phone calls) or 217-782-2491
- Email: cnp@isbe.net



Watch for this symbol throughout this handbook. It indicates that training for specific topics is available on our website.

1.3 Program Requirements

Facilities may participate in the CACFP either as an independent institution or under the sponsorship of a sponsoring organization. Refer to the chart below for eligible programs:

Eligible Programs:	Operated by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Care Centers• Pre-kindergarten Programs• Outside Schools Hours Programs• Head Start and Even Start Programs• At-Risk Afterschool Meals Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Entities• Non- profit institutions• For-Profit Child Care Institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency Shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Entities• Non-profit institutions

Eligibility Criteria by Program Type

Child Care Centers

- *Licensing Requirements:* Must be licensed or license-exempt as determined by DCFS.
- *Operational Time:* Year-round
- *Age Range:* Children ages birth through 12 years

Pre-kindergarten Programs

- *Licensing Requirements:* Must be licensed or license-exempt as determined by DCFS.
- *Operational Time:* In conjunction with the Pre-kindergarten Program calendar
- *Age Range:* Children ages 3 through 5

Outside School Hours Programs

- *Licensing Requirements:* Must be licensed or license-exempt as determined by DCFS.
- *Operational Time:* Year-round
- *Age Range:* Children ages 3 through 12; children of migrant workers through age 15; or disabled persons of any age. (NOTE: Disabled participants must be disabled, as defined by the State, and enrolled in an institution serving a majority of persons 18 years of age and younger.)
- *Schedule and Organization:* Must be regularly scheduled and organized for the purpose of providing services to children outside of regular school hours: before school, after school, on school holidays and/or during school vacation periods, including summer break. Weekend-only programs may not participate. Must be distinct from any extracurricular programs organized primarily for scholastic, cultural or athletic purposes.

Head Start and Even Start Programs

- *Licensing Requirements:* Must be licensed or license-exempt as determined by DCFS.
- *Operational Time:* In conjunction with the Head Start or Even Start Program calendar
- *Age Range:* Children ages birth through 5 years

Emergency Shelters

- *Annual fire and health inspections:* Shelters must comply with all applicable State or local health and safety standards. The shelter premises must have proper permits or certificates to show that health, sanitation, fire, and safety codes have been met.
- *Operational Time:* May claim meals 365 days per year
- *Age Range:* Ages birth through 18, and disabled persons of any age (NOTE: Disabled participants must be disabled, as defined by the State and receiving services from a shelter that serves children. Emergency shelters serving only adults are not eligible to participate.)

At-Risk Afterschool Meals Programs

- *Licensing Requirements:* Must be licensed or license-exempt as determined by DCFS.
- *Annual Fire and health inspections* (Non DCFS sites) -A current health/sanitation permit or satisfactory report **and** a current fire permit or satisfaction report of an inspection conducted by local authorities within the past 12 months shall be submitted.
- *Operational Time* – May participate in CACFP in conjunction with the public school calendar of the school used to meet area eligibility. Meals or snacks may not be claimed during summer break, unless the public school used for area eligibility operates on a year-round calendar.
- *Age Range* – May claim meals for children who have reached school age, up to 18 years of age; and for disabled persons of any age. (NOTE: Federal law does not stipulate a minimum age, but the child must be enrolled in school to participate in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program. If a child turns 19 during the school year, the child may continue to participate the rest of the school year. Disabled participants must be disabled, as defined by the State, and enrolled in an institution serving a majority of persons 18 years of age and younger.)
- *Location eligibility:* Must be located in the attendance area of a public school where at least 50 percent of the enrolled students are certified as eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

- *Organization:* Must provide educational or enrichment activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment after the end of the school day, on weekends, or on holidays during the school year.
- *Enrollment:* Must be open to all children, and not limit enrollment or membership on the basis of a child's ability.
 - Programs designed to meet the special needs of enrolled children, such as programs for children with learning disabilities or children who are academically gifted, may also be eligible to participate.
 - Programs may be targeted to specific age groups or may accommodate the needs of a wide variety of ages. Programs that provide meals to various age groups also must provide educational or enrichment activities for the various ages of the children served.
 - Students who are part of school sports teams and clubs can receive afterschool snacks or meals as part of a broad, overarching educational or enrichment program offered by a school.
 - Afterschool "drop in" programs are acceptable. There is no enrollment requirement, so individual student athletes who attend afterschool programs before or after team practices may receive meals and snacks. There is no requirement that the afterschool programs track the specific activities in which the children participate or document that the children participated in the offered activities. As long as appropriate educational or enrichment activities are provided, the site is eligible to serve meals to the children that attend the program.

1.4 Reimbursement Rates

The Federal government adjusts the meal reimbursement rates every year on July 1. Meal reimbursement is based on:

- Eligibility status of enrolled participants
- Type of meals served (breakfast, lunch, snack, or supper), and
- The program in which an institution participates

Reimbursement rates can be found online at [Eligibility, Income and Reimbursement Information](#)

Participation in other Child Nutrition Programs

A sponsoring institution which claims meals that are reimbursed under the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) are not eligible to claim those same meals under the CACFP.

1.5 CACFP Federal Regulations

The content of this handbook is based on Federal Regulation 7 CFR Part 226, Food and Nutrition Service Instructions, and CACFP Policies from the USDA and procedures set forth by the State agency. This handbook is intended to be used in conjunction with other CACFP forms and resources found on the ISBE website at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/CACFP-Administrative-Handbook-for-Child-Care-Centers.aspx>.

More information about CACFP Program Legislation, Regulations, and Policies can be found online at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program>.

Notes: