

CHILD CARE INSTITUTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions

Q 1. What is the Child and Adult Care Food Program?

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is federally-funded through the United States Department of Agriculture. The funding helps organizations to provide more nutritious meals and snacks to children in non-residential child care facilities; however, emergency shelters providing assistance to children may participate.

Q 2. What type of organizations can participate in the CACFP?

Organizations that can participate in the CACFP include:

- Public institutions such as municipal, county, state, or federal government agencies
- Nonprofit institutions that have documentation from the U.S. Department of Treasury that they meet Section 501(c)3 criteria of the Internal Revenue Code
- For-profit institutions who have at least 25 percent of their license capacity or enrolled children receiving either
 - 1) Subsidized child care benefits or
 - 2) Free and reduced-price meals

Q 3. What type of programs can participate in the CACFP?

Organizations participating in the CACFP can offer different types of programs to children. They include:

- Licensed child care institution
 - Eligible children = 12 years and younger
- Head Start and Early Head Start
 - Eligible children = birth through 5 years
- Preschool program
 - Eligible children = 3 to 5 years
- Before- and after-school hour program providing education and enrichment activities
 - Eligible school-age students = 12 years and younger
- At-Risk After-School Snack/Supper Program offered in areas where at least 50 percent of the children are eligible for free and reduced-price meals based upon school data. The program must offer education and enrichment activities for at-risk children and teenagers, after the regular school day ends
 - Eligible school-age students = up to 18 years
- Emergency shelter residents
 - Eligible children = 18 years and younger, and disabled adults

Q 4. Do all programs have to be licensed?

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is the licensing agency. Please check with DCFS to find out if your program needs to be licensed.

Q 5. What meal services can be claimed in the CACFP?

Up to three meal services (2 meals plus 1 snack OR 1 meal plus 2 snacks) per child per day

- Licensed child and infant care institution
- Head Start and Early Head Start
- Preschool program
- Before- and after-school hour program providing education and enrichment activities

Snack and/or supper only

- At-Risk After-School Snack/Supper Program in low income areas providing education and enrichment activities

Up to three meal services (3 meals OR 2 meals plus 1 snack OR 1 meal plus 2 snacks) per child or disabled adult per day

- Emergency shelter

Q 6. What are the food requirements for each meal?

There are two different meal pattern requirements, 1) for children 1 year old and over; and 2) for infants birth through 11 months old. For detailed information on the meal requirements, click on the links below.

- [Meal Chart for Children and Grains/Breads Requirements](#)
- [Infant Meal Pattern Chart and Requirements](#)

If you would like a brief overview of what is required for children 1 year and older, please look at the following.

- *Breakfast* requires three food items—milk, fruit/vegetable or juice, and grain/bread
- *Lunch and Supper* requires five food items—milk, fruit/vegetable or juice (two different servings), grain/bread, and meat/meat alternate
- *Snack* requires two food items—select two from the following groups: milk, fruit/vegetable or juice, grain/bread, and meat/meat alternate

Q 7. Do meals have to be prepared at the CACFP facility?

No, meals do not have to be prepared on site; they can be prepared at a central kitchen operated by the organization or by a vendor. Organizations purchasing annually \$100,000 or more in vended meals must use a formal Invitation for Bid and Contract process to obtain a food vendor contract. This process

includes advertising the bid and obtaining several sealed bids which are publicly opened on a specified date at a specified time and location. A copy of the *Invitation for Bid and Contract* packet is available on our website at http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/forms_cacfp_vendors.htm.

If your organization spends less than \$100,000 per year, you will want to contact several potential vendors to obtain the lowest price possible. A list of vendors is available on our website. Also, use the ISBE contract prototype, [Small Purchase Agreement for Procurement of Vended Meals](#), available on our website.

Q 8. How are institutions reimbursed for meals?

On a daily basis you accurately record every meal served to a child and at the end of each month, you total the number of meals and snacks served and submit the Claim for Reimbursement on the Internet. In addition to the meal reimbursement, you will receive cash-in-lieu of commodities for each lunch and supper served. The meal reimbursement rates and rate of cash-in-lieu of commodities change every July 1; therefore, check our website for the most recent funding.

Q 9. Can parents be charged for their child's meals?

Organizations cannot charge a separate fee for meals. Child care institutions charging tuition must include the cost of meals in with the tuition.

Q 10. How can you apply to participate in CACFP?

To participate in the CACFP, applicants must complete all steps of the application process, including attending the mandatory training, [CACFP Orientation for New Institutions](#), submitting complete application documents, implementing CACFP procedures, successfully completing a Pre-Operational Review, and submitting the final application documents on the internet.

For more information on how to apply, [click here](#), or contact us at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Nutrition Programs at CNP@isbe.net, or 800-545-7892.

All institutions will enter into an agreement with ISBE to assume administrative and financial responsibility for the CACFP operations. They must agree to follow USDA regulation 7CFR Part 226 and FNS Instruction 113-1, Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement. No CACFP participant can be discriminated against regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.