

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

Three Steps for Saving Money on your Food Costs

Your child development center can save money and provide healthy meals and snacks for participating children through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Participating in CACFP will help you stretch your budget by saving you thousands of dollars each year in food costs. Families will be excited to know that you can provide their children with healthy meals during the day.

STEP ONE: FIND OUT ABOUT CACFP

What is CACFP? CACFP is the **C**hild and **A**dult **C**are **F**ood **P**rogram. The program provides federal funds for healthy meals and snacks served in child care centers and family child care homes. Centers can either prepare the meals on site or have the meals delivered.

Why participate in CACFP? You will receive:

- ✓ Monthly financial support to help with the cost of meals
- ✓ Training and technical assistance on daily CACFP management
- ✓ Nutrition education and food safety information

Do you qualify? All licensed public or private nonprofit child care centers may participate in CACFP. For-profit centers must receive Title XX funds for at least 25 percent of enrolled children or at least 25 percent of the children in care must be eligible for free and reduced meals. If you qualify to participate in the program you will receive reimbursements for all of the children in your care regardless of their family's income.

How do I participate? There are two ways to participate in the program. Your organization can enroll in the program through a CACFP sponsor. Or your center can enroll in the program as an independent center. Participating in CACFP will help you stretch your dollars by saving you hundreds of dollars each year in food cost. Just think what you could do with the money you save — purchase more supplies, provide more staff development opportunities, and in some cases hire more staff.

Should I enroll as an independent center? If your center has the staffing to maintain the program's forms and the financial capacity to support the upfront purchase of meals, then becoming an independent center may be the right choice for you.

Should I work with a sponsor? Providing a safe, nurturing, and educational environment for children is an important and complicated job. With your help, the sponsor will oversee many of the administrative responsibilities involved in CACFP participation.

WHAT IS PARTICIPATING IN CACFP WORTH TO YOU?

A center serving 50 children could benefit from these estimated savings.*

Breakfast: glass of milk, banana slices, oatmeal
Savings: **\$64 daily, \$1,342 monthly**

Lunch: glass of milk, apple, turkey sandwich, carrots
Savings: **\$119 daily, \$2,493 monthly**

Snack: peanut butter, crackers
Savings: **\$30 daily, \$628 monthly**

Total monthly savings: \$4,463

*Reimbursement rates are based upon a family's income level, so the amount will vary.

STEP TWO: SERVE NUTRITIOUS MEALS

CACFP can fund up to two meals and a snack a day. To participate in CACFP your center must serve balanced meals that can include a variety of healthy options. You will receive easy to follow guidelines to use when planning meals. Centers with the proper facilities can cook their own meals, or an approved caterer can deliver the meals directly to your center.

STEP THREE: COUNT THE MEALS AND THE CHILDREN

We know that you are busy and do not have time to fill out unnecessary paperwork. Fortunately, the paperwork necessary for CACFP participation is relatively simple. To take advantage of funding for meals, you need to:

- ✓ Keep a daily count of the number of meals that you serve
- ✓ Maintain a daily attendance record
- ✓ Save your daily menus for each month
- ✓ Save your meal production records or your catering delivery receipts
- ✓ Make sure your daily meals meet the dietary guidelines

The timely and accurate completion of these forms is critical to receiving the full reimbursement for the meals that you serve. Fortunately, your sponsor or D.C. Hunger Solutions is available to offer you training and assistance to ensure that meals and children are properly counted.

What else do you need to do to participate? In order to enroll with a sponsor for the CACFP program, you will need to provide the center's child care license and information regarding the children's income eligibility. Additional information is required from independent centers. All of the required documents are most likely information that you already keep on record. Once again, your sponsor or D.C. Hunger Solutions will help you in this process.

Spreading the Good News: Participating in CACFP just got easier.

Timely Payments

The Nutrition Services department of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) has successfully implemented a new claims processing system and protocol that assures timely payment of CACFP reimbursements to participating child care centers, homes, organizations, and sponsors.

Better Client Services

Program participants receive high quality customer service in receiving prompt answers to their CACFP questions. Direct access to records on the computer system allows OSSE staff to answer participant questions much faster.

Reduced Paperwork

The new daily attendance form allows child care centers participating in CACFP and receiving Office of Early Childhood Development subsidies to use just one form to keep daily attendance records.

ARE YOU READY TO GET STARTED?

To enroll in CACFP: Contact, the Office of State Superintendent of Education, Nutrition Services Department, 202.727.6436, www.osse.dc.gov. **To Learn More:** Contact Suzanne Henley, Child Nutrition Associate, D.C. Hunger Solutions, 202.986.2200, shenley@dchunger.org.