

Child and Adult Care Food Program

OVERVIEW

What is it?

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides financial assistance to adult and child care providers to encourage them to provide nutritious foods to their clients. CACFP also supplies nutrition education materials to these facilities.

Who is it for?

NC licensed public, non-profit and some for-profit child and adult care facilities that provide meals meeting federal guidelines.

Where are applications taken?

To apply, day care providers should call the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) offices in Raleigh at 919-715-1923. Day care centers may apply directly to the state. Day care homes need a sponsoring agency in order to participate in the program. The CACFP state office in Raleigh can provide a list of sponsoring agencies. Centers that apply directly are reimbursed more than centers that apply through a sponsoring agency, but have more paper work to complete.

INTRODUCTION

The Child Care Food Program began in 1968 and was expanded in 1989 to include adult care centers. CACFP provides participating day care providers with nutrition education materials and reimbursement for serving meals that meet federal guidelines.

BENEFITS/ SERVICES

Participating centers/homes receive nutrition education materials and reimbursement for the provision of healthy meals to all children or adults in their care. The amount of reimbursement is based upon the income level of the family receiving care. All families are charged the same for the day care services. The CACFP acts as an incentive to assure that day care providers offer nutritionally sound meals and snacks to their clients. Reimbursement rates for day care centers and homes are determined based on the following information:

- *Day Care Centers.* The rates vary according to the income of the adult/child's family and are based on a three category system: free, reduced or paid/denied. Families do not have to provide their income information to the center. Centers without income information are reimbursed at the lowest of the three levels (denied). The following are the rates that the centers receive (June 31, 1998-July 1, 1999):

Reimbursement rates per individual:

	Free meals	Reduced price	Paid (denied) meals
Breakfast	\$1.0725	\$0.7725	\$0.20
Lunch/Supper	\$1.9425	\$1.5425	\$0.18
Supplement (snack)	\$0.5325	\$0.2675	\$0.04

- *Day Care Homes.* The rates vary according to the location and income of the home and are based on a two-tier system. Homes located in school districts where more than 50% of the children receive free meals, in low income census tracts, or whose own income is equal to or less than 185% of the federal poverty guidelines are reimbursed at the higher Tier 1 level. Otherwise, homes are reimbursed at the lower, Tier 2 level. The following are the rates that day care homes receive (June 31, 1998-July 1, 1999):

Reimbursement rate per individual:

	Tier 2 rate	Tier 1 rate
Breakfast	\$0.34	\$0.90
Lunch/Supper	\$1.00	\$1.65
Supplement (Snack)	\$0.13	\$0.49

In addition, institutions receive \$0.1475 in cash in lieu of commodities for each lunch and supper.

APPLICATIONS

To apply, day care providers should call the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) office in Raleigh at 919-715-1923. Centers may apply directly to the state or through a sponsoring agency, while homes must apply under a sponsoring agency. There are currently 36 sponsoring agencies in North Carolina. The sponsoring agency is responsible for providing the day care home with monthly reimbursements, based on the reports the home submits regarding the meals served and the applicable payment tier. The Raleigh offices can provide a list of sponsoring agencies.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

General Facility Eligibility Requirements

In order to participate, centers must be licensed in North Carolina and be either non-profit, public or have at least 25% of their children receiving day care subsidies. All licensed homes that meet these requirements are eligible to participate. Child care providers must serve meals meeting the CACFP meal pattern requirements, which includes all the food groups in amounts based on the age of the participants. In addition, they must receive nutritional training, maintain good sanitation, promote the safety and well being of participants and provide monthly reports describing their menus and numbers of participants served.

Fees

There are no fees for families or day care centers and homes to participate in this program. Families continue to pay their regular rates to the adult or child day care providers.

NUMBERS SERVED

Approximately 149,100 children in 5,600 child care centers and homes receive meals supported by the CACFP in North Carolina. Approximately 2,600 adults in North Carolina adult care centers participate.

PRIORITIZATION SYSTEM

The CACFP is an entitlement program so the program is available to all eligible child and adult care programs.

APPEAL RIGHTS

Sponsoring agencies and independent centers can appeal adverse decisions made by the state, including suspension of agreements, denial of payments or participation, and other actions affecting an institution's participation in the program or claim for reimbursement. Day care centers and homes cannot appeal directly to the state, a sponsoring agency must appeal the decision on their behalf. The state will notify sponsoring agencies of an intended action by certified mail. An institution has two options in appealing. They may submit a written request for an informal conference within fifteen days of receipt of the notice of adverse action. Alternatively, they may request a review of the decision without an informal conference. This request must be submitted in writing within thirty days of receipt of the notice of adverse action.

- *Informal Conferences.* The written request for an informal conference must be made within fifteen days of receiving the state's notice of intended action. The request for an appeal must include the state's proposed action which is being contested and the name, address and phone number of the contact person handling the informal conference for the institution. The state will acknowledge the request within ten days after it receives the request from the sponsoring agency. The state will notify the agency of the informal conference date, time and place at least ten days prior to the scheduled conference. Any documents that the institution would like to be considered at the informal conference must be received by the state no later than five days prior to the scheduled date of the conference. The institution may present information at the conference. Informal conferences are held at regional offices.
- *Review without an informal conference.* The written request for a review without an informal conference must be made within 30 days of receiving the state's notice of intended action. The request for an appeal must include the state's proposed action which is being contested, and the name, address and phone number of the person submitting the documentation on behalf of the institution. The state will fully consider all information provided by the institution before making a final decision.

For both informal conferences and reviews without an informal conference, the state will notify the sponsoring agency of its decision by certified mail. If the institution is dissatisfied with the results of the informal conference or review, the institution may file a petition with the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH). Petition forms may be obtained by calling or writing the OAH (919-733-0926). The petition must be received by the OAH within 30 days of when the institution receives notice of the state's decision. A contested case hearing will be conducted before an administrative law judge. The institution may be assisted or represented at the hearing by another party such as an advocate or legal counsel. The administrative law judge will render a recommended decision in the case. The final decision in the case will be made by the State Health Director. Prior to the decision of the Director, both parties will be given an opportunity to file exceptions to the recommended decision and provide written arguments.

FINANCING The program is funded entirely by federal dollars.

ADMINISTRATION The CACFP program is administered at the federal level by the US Department of Agriculture and at the state level, by the Nutrition Services Section, NC Department of Health and Human Services. Sponsoring organizations administer the program locally.

SOURCES OF LAW Federal statute: 42 USC 1766
Federal regulations: 7 CFR 226.1 et seq.

FOR MORE INFORMATION Special Nutrition Programs
NC Department of Health and Human Services
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Raleigh, NC 27605-0008
919-715-1923