

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Food Service Operations Guidance for Re-opening During COVID-19

Purpose

For childcare, adult day care, summer and afterschool programs that re-open during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to minimize the risks of spreading the coronavirus. The following guidance is designed to maintain health and safety standards requirements and physical distancing directives while providing food services in compliance with federal and state regulations.

VOSHA Training

In accordance with [Governor Scott's order](#), all employees, including those already working (except healthcare workers, first responders and others already trained in infection control, personal protection/universal precautions), must complete, and employers must document, a mandatory training on health and safety requirements as provided by the Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Administration (VOSHA), or another training program that meets or exceeds the VOSHA-provided standard. [The VOSHA training is available on the Department of Labor website.](#)

Food Service Sanitation

Programs should take the following steps to reduce the risk of transmission.

Reduce the number of items that multiple people will touch. Increase the frequency of sanitization of the following items and any other highly touched surfaces:

- Lunch/dining tables
- Counter tops and food preparation surfaces
- Self-service utensils
- Dishware
- Equipment
- Delivery carts

Refer to the [CDC's Guidance for Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes.](#)

Safe Drinking Water

Participating CACFP sponsors must have potable drinking water available throughout the day for participants.

Owners and managers of buildings that have been closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are urged to take steps that can prevent illnesses associated with stagnant water in

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information please contact: Rebecca Cochran, Child Nutrition, at Rebecca.Cochran@vermont.gov or 802-828-1610

plumbing systems. When buildings close, it can affect drinking water quality and lead to health issues unrelated to the new coronavirus. Stagnant water can lead to the growth of bacteria which can cause diseases. Stagnant water can also cause corrosion of plumbing which can release metals such as lead and copper into the water. Buildings that are preparing to reopen their doors should [follow Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation recommendations](#).

Food Preparation

Programs with food service must continue to follow routine food service practices. Please consult the [Vermont Food Code](#) to ensure all food safety requirements and practices are followed within your food service program.

Food service staff should consider setting up innovative solutions to maintain a 6 feet distance from one another as much as possible. Programs should consider dividing staff up into teams, in which certain teams come in on certain days of the week or on a rotating bi-weekly schedule. This will reduce the number of people interacting with one another. In the event that a staff member gets sick, knowing exactly who they worked with will be beneficial in contact tracing.

Food service staff must wear facial coverings or masks during hours of operation. [Refer to the Vermont Department of Health Guidance on why and how to wear masks](#) and the [Agency of Commerce and Community Development Restart Work Safe Guidance](#).

Food service staff should wash hands or use an alcohol-based sanitizer between tasks. Food service staff preparing participants' food must wash their hands before and after handling food, serving meals and helping participants eat. Staff should wash hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before assisting each participant with eating. Gloves must be used when preparing any ready-to-eat foods. Sinks used for food preparation should not be used for any other purposes (e.g. washing hands).

Staff should wash their hands before and after handling infant bottles, whether prepared at home or in the childcare facility. Bottles, bottle caps, nipples and other equipment used for bottle-feeding should be thoroughly cleaned after each use by washing in a dishwasher or by washing with a bottlebrush, soap and water.

Meal Service

Participants should be given the opportunity to wash hands before and after meals. If the opportunity is not possible, Programs should consider having hand sanitizer dispensers available in the dining locations.

If a cafeteria or group dining room is typically used, serve meals in classrooms or alternative rooms to reduce the number of participants in a given area, when possible.

Use disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes). These supply costs are allowable costs in Child Nutrition Programs. If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a commercial dishwasher. Individuals should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.

If family style meal service is followed within your Program, consider transitioning to pre-plated and unitized meals and snacks. This eliminates the use of the same serving utensils by multiple children. Pre-plated and unitized meals and snacks must provide all the required meal pattern components in the minimum portion size, either on a plate or in an individually packaged unit. Pre-plated and unitized meals must provide all components in the minimum portion size specified by the meal pattern at the same time and participants are not allowed to serve themselves. For Head Start Programs, please consult with your head-start representative around the flexibility to change the meal service style. If Programs decided to change their meal service type, Programs will need to revise the site application(s) and submit for approval prior to implementing the meal service change. Please review the meal service style comparison chart below on the two different meal service styles.

Meal Service Style Comparison Chart

Meal Service Style	Definition	Requirement	Best Practices
Pre-Plated/Unitized	All meal components in the minimum portion sizes specified by the meal pattern are plated and served as a unit.	Minimum portion sizes of all components must be provided at the same time.	<p>Have plates and cups prepared prior to participants being seated.</p> <p>Use scoop sizes or measuring cups to measure out portions.</p> <p>Provide staff with meal pattern sheets and/or standardized recipes to ensure minimum portion sizes are met.</p>
Family Style	<p>Each component is placed in communal bowls with appropriately sized serving utensils. Milk may be served in child-sized pitchers.</p> <p>Participants serve themselves. Staff are expected to sit with participants to assist with the meal service.</p>	<p>Minimum portion sizes must be available for each participant seated at the table.</p> <p>Encourage participants to take all components in the minimum portion sizes, but do not require it.</p>	<p>Place components in communal bowls or dishes on the table prior to participants being seated. Have utensils available such as tongs or spoons for participants to serve themselves.</p> <p>Use appropriately sized bowls, utensils, and dishes for participants to serve themselves.</p> <p>Have staff sit amongst children and assist with serving.</p>