

How to Participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Background

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal program that provides healthy meals and snacks to children and adults receiving day care services. The program plays a vital role in improving the quality of care and making it more affordable for many low-income families. In addition to care, CACFP helps make afterschool programs more appealing to at-risk youth. By offering nutritious meals and snacks in programs serving low-income areas, programs can increase participation and ensure that at-risk youth have access to healthy meals and snacks.

Eligible Institutions

- **Child Care Centers**
 - Eligible public or private nonprofit or qualifying for-profit childcare centers, Head Start programs, and other institutions which are licensed or approved to provide child care services may participate independently or as sponsored centers.
 - Must be licensed by the Vermont Department of Children and Families (DCF).
- **Day Care Homes**
 - Family child care homes can only participate under an agreement with an eligible sponsoring organization.
 - Must be registered or licensed by the Vermont Department of Children and Families (DCF).
- **At-Risk Afterschool Care Centers**
 - Eligible public or private schools, nonprofit or qualifying for-profit centers providing community-based programs that offer regularly scheduled, structured, and supervised education or enrichment activities for at-risk children and youth. This may occur after school or on weekends, holidays or school vacations during the regular school year. It may not occur during summer vacation.
 - Licensing is not required but centers must meet state or local health and safety standards.
- **Outside of School Hours Care Centers**
 - Eligible public or private schools, nonprofit or qualifying for-profit centers.
 - Licensing is not required but centers must meet state or local health and safety standards.
- **Homeless or Emergency Shelters**
 - Public or private nonprofit residential emergency shelters (including shelters for battered women, homeless shelters, and other facilities whose primary purpose is to provide temporary residential shelter to homeless families with children).
 - Licensing is not required but must meet health and safety codes that are required by state or local law.
- **Adult Day Care Centers**
 - Eligible public or private nonprofit or qualifying for-profit centers, which are licensed or approved to provide non-residential care services for elderly and disabled adults may participate independently or as sponsored centers.
 - Must be certified by the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAIL).



Application Process

New Institution or Sponsor Application Process

The application process requirements will vary depending on the type of organization, sponsor type and program(s) to administer. Below outline the steps on how to apply to participate in the CACFP. The application process takes between two to three months to complete and receive approval to participate in the Program.

1. **Submit a completed Letter of Intent to VTAOE.** Contact Child Nutrition Programs to speak with the CACFP Coordinator. If it is determined that a potential sponsor or institution meets eligibility requirements, Child Nutrition Programs will e-mail a blank Letter of Intent Form that must be completed and returned to VTAOE. This begins the application process.
2. **Complete the CACFP New Managers Training.** Attend the day-long training session conducted by VTAOE within 6 months of being approved to participate in the Program. These trainings take place regularly and is required as part of the approval process for new entities. The institution's director, owner, CACFP coordinator, cook, and/or business manager should attend this training. The person(s) attending this training are responsible for training all staff at each facility prior to beginning operation of the CACFP.
3. **Complete the online application and submit supporting documentation.** Once VTAOE has received the Letter of Intent Form, this information is forwarded to the business office to assign an LEA and supplier number. Once this information is received by the CACFP coordinator, a username and password will be assigned to the program contact and website information will be provided to begin the online application process. This process consists of completing hardcopy documents, in addition to completing each step within the online application. All supporting documentation and the online application must be completed and submitted before the application can be approved. Be sure to make copies of all supporting documentation and maintain on file.
4. **Establish and implement operational procedures and receive a pre-approval visit.** Once the application has been approved, a pre-approval visit must be scheduled one month into operating the Program. These actions are required in order to determine if you can administer the Program and have the organization and managerial capabilities to be accountable for this Program. If approved, meals and snacks served will be eligible for reimbursement.
5. **Submit claims for reimbursement.** If Program operations indicate that Program requirements were met during the pre-approval visit, the CACFP Coordinator will approve you to file a claim for reimbursement for meals and snacks served during the month and a welcome letter will be sent announcing participation in the CACFP.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.