

CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program

Overview

The At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) offers federal funding to afterschool programs that serve a meal and/or snack to children and teens who participate in afterschool programs in low- income areas.

Reimbursement for At-Risk afterschool snacks has been available since the 1990s. However in December 2010, The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (P.L. 111-296) expanded the availability for At-Risk afterschool meals to all states.

Terminology

At-Risk Afterschool Care Centers or Sites- This is a place where children and teens participate in an afterschool program. They can be located in many types of places, such as schools, libraries, child care centers or community centers. Centers may participate in CACFP At-Risk independently or under a sponsoring organization that manages multiple programs.

Area eligibility in CACFP – A factor that determines if a center or site is eligible to serve free or reduced-price meals in CACFP. Area eligibility determinations must be based on the total number of public school students approved for free and reduced-price school meals; a center or site is eligible if March free/reduced eligibility is at least 50 percent and determinations are valid for five years.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) - A federally-funded program that provides payments for eligible meals served to participants who meet age and income requirements. Meals served by participating institutions and facilities must meet minimum guidelines set by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The CACFP helps institutions and facilities serve well-balanced, nutritious meals to the participants in their care. Serving nutritious meals helps improve and maintain the health and nutritional status of participants in a day care environment and can help them develop and maintain good eating habits.

Institution- A sponsoring organization, child care center, At-Risk afterschool care center, outside-school- hours care center, emergency shelter or adult day care center which enters into an agreement with the Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) to operate the CACFP in Idaho.

Facility- A sponsored center or day care home.

Sponsors- Organizations that oversee afterschool care centers. Schools, local government agencies, camps, faith-based and other non-profit community organizations may be sponsors. Sponsors communicate with the State and get reimbursement for meals and snacks served in their afterschool programs.

What is the Afterschool Meal Program?

The At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program is a part of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and provides federal funds to afterschool programs to serve a nutritious meal and snack to children age 18 and under at the start of the school year. Federal law has no minimum age for At-risk participants. Meals and snacks served to children who are enrolled in preschool, Head Start, Even Start, etc., and who are participating in an eligible afterschool program are eligible for reimbursement.

After school on school days, the afterschool program may serve the supper at any time during the afterschool program. Afterschool programs that operate on non-school days, weekends, and holidays during the school year may serve one meal and one snack on those days as well. The meal may be either breakfast, lunch or supper.

Eligibility

To be eligible to receive reimbursement for At-risk afterschool snacks and At-risk afterschool meals the center or site must meet the criteria below:

1. Be an At-risk afterschool care center that is approved to participate in CACFP either as an independent center or as a facility under the auspices of a sponsoring Organization. Public and private nonprofit centers may not participate under the auspices of a for-profit sponsoring Organization.
2. Be organized primarily to provide care for children after school or on weekends, holidays, or school vacations during the regular school year (an At-risk afterschool care center may not claim snacks or meals during summer vacation, unless it is located in the attendance area of a school operating on a year-round calendar)
3. Have education or enrichment activities that are organized, regularly scheduled in a structured and supervised environment.
4. Be located in an eligible area, as described above under Area Eligibility.
5. Meet the local health and safety requirements. This will include receiving annual health department and fire safety inspections.
6. Except for for-profit centers, At-risk afterschool care centers must be public, or have tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or be currently participating in another Federal program requiring nonprofit status.

Education and Enrichment Activities

The afterschool care program must provide education or enrichment activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment. The program must be open to all and may not limit participation for reasons other than space, licensing or security considerations. Although there are no specific requirements for the types of educational and enrichment activities that a program can offer, examples include, but are not limited to, arts and crafts, homework

assistance, life skills, remedial education, organized fitness activities, etc. Note: there is no requirement that all children receiving meals participate in the offered activities. Academic clubs, such as math club or foreign language club, are not eligible for this program.

Organized athletic programs engaged in interscholastic or community level competitive sports (for example, youth sports leagues, community soccer and football leagues, area swim teams) are not eligible. Students who are part of school sports teams and clubs can receive afterschool snacks or meals as part of a broad, overarching educational or enrichment program, but the program cannot be limited to a sports team. Programs which include supervised athletic activities together with educational or enrichment activities may be eligible.

Claiming and Reimbursement

Centers or sites may claim reimbursement for **one snack and one meal, per child, per day**. Seconds and adult snack or meal cannot be claimed. All meals and snacks served in the afterschool programs in CACFP earn reimbursement at the “free” rate. USDA rates are adjusted every July 1.

Meal Pattern

All meals and snacks served must meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements. For example, supper served in the At-risk Afterschool Meal Program must include:

- 1 serving of milk
- 1 servings of vegetables
- 1 serving of fruit
- 1 serving of grain
- 1 serving of meat/meat alternate

For more information on the CACFP meal pattern please visit the Idaho Child Nutrition Program website under Child and Adult Care Food Program resource files for Final Meal Pattern.

Why is the At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program Important?

By the time children arrive at their afterschool programs, lunch is a distant memory. They need a meal or snack to help get them through the afternoon. Providing healthy food after school allows children to be fully engaged in the activities at their afterschool program.

Suppers are increasingly important because more and more children are spending long hours in afterschool programs while their parents are working. The children require more than a snack to sustain them throughout the afternoon and early evening. In some cases, the food a child receives at an afterschool program might be their only meal until the next school day.

Resources

Additional resources are available for this topic. Please check the Idaho Child Nutrition website under Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) resource files for manuals, USDA handbooks, and helpful links to relevant subject matter.