

The State of the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Despite Challenges, Hope Remains

In a 2024 survey conducted by the National CACFP Sponsors Association, respondents expressed both frustration and hope in the program. It is clear that operators in all sectors of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) are struggling and yet, they continue to believe in the value of the food program.

“

“We are currently in a child care crisis! The CACFP helps day cares remain open, but the amount of paperwork and the regulations make it very difficult to participate.”



Insufficient Reimbursement a Barrier to Participation

- ▶ 79% of providers say their reimbursement does not cover their food costs.
- ▶ 93% of providers say their reimbursement does not cover their labor costs to provide meals.
- ▶ 22% of providers serve more meals than they are reimbursed for.



Concerning Decline in Program Participation

- ▶ 46% of sponsoring organizations indicated their biggest challenge is recruiting and retaining providers.
- ▶ 6% of family child care home sponsoring organizations have stopped sponsoring the CACFP in the last year (since March 2023).
- ▶ 12% of providers have stopped operating the CACFP in the last year (since March 2023).



Program Administrative Requirements Overburdensome

- ▶ 46% of providers indicated their biggest challenge is the paperwork requirements of the program.
- ▶ Providers indicate the paperwork burden is a barrier to participation.
- ▶ 87% of sponsoring organizations supported program modernization through off-site monitoring implementation.



Action Needed

- ▶ Increase reimbursement rates
- ▶ Eliminate tiering of family child care homes
- ▶ Provide reimbursement for an additional meal or snack
- ▶ Streamline paperwork
- ▶ Allow off-site monitoring flexibilities



The Power of the Food Program

96% of CACFP providers recognize the importance of the program and would still recommend the CACFP to others.

“

“I take pride in giving children choices of fresh and nutritious foods and providing family style meals. I am asking that child care homes and centers be valued for our time, work, love, and effort to keep providing high-quality food to the children in our care.”



For more information, read the [National CACFP Sponsors Association's Report: The State of the Child and Adult Care Food Program.](#)

CACFP is an indicator of quality care. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.