CACFP Professionals Certification Program



CACFP Child Nutrition Professional CCNP 2026-2029 National CACFP Association

CACFP Management Professional CMP 2026-2029 National CACFP Association

Handbook

CACFP Professional Certification

For over thirty years our association has been elevating the professional standards of our community. Now we have the means to recognize those who continually go above and beyond with true passion for the program and what it means to millions of children.

Why Should I Earn the Certification of CACFP Professional?

Receiving your CACFP Certification shows your commitment to your profession and your willingness to uphold high standards. You will be able to enhance your professional image by adding credibility to your position and your agency while staying current on the latest topics, issues and solutions. Additional benefits for those who obtain the CACFP Professional designations include:

- **Community Recognition**
- **Competitive Advantage**
- **Salary Enhancement**
- **Personal Achievement**

NCA offers two certification program opportunities. Both certifications require applicants to submit documentation of education and experience which allow them to receive the designation. If you do not work as a CACFP operator or administrator, we do not currently have a certification path for you.

"Receiving my certification allows me to show my commitment and knowledge. to the Family Child Care Providers. In addition, it demonstrates that I have the knowledge as well as passion to uphold high standards for the CACFP program."

Ivelisse Marrero, CMP, CCNP
Rochester Childfirst Network



CACFP Child Nutrition Professional (CCNP)

CCNP is the professional certification for the home child care provider or staff employed at a center operating CACFP, and/or a CACFP agency (Sponsor, Head Start, State Agency, etc.) administering CACFP.

CACFP Management Professional (CMP)

CMP Certification is for the CACFP administrator that has a minimum of 5 years of experience with at least 3 of those years being CACFP administration experience at a CACFP Agency (Sponsor, Center, State Agency, Head Start, etc.).

Dual Certification

CACFP Professionals may hold both certifications. If you apply for both at the same time, candidates must submit an application form, documentation of education and experience as well as the application fee for each of the certification designations. If a candidate holds one certification and applies for a second certification at a later date, s/he will be given a new certification expiration date specific to that designation. S/he will be expected to meet the CEU requirements and fees for each of their designations at the respective expiration date.

Requirements Review

Determine whether or not you meet the requirements needed to qualify for a specific certification category.

Documentation Checklist

Gather copies of all your training documents (including certificate of training or attendance, transcripts, etc.). The CEU worksheet is required for application and it also helps you determine if you are ready to apply. Fill in the courses you would like to use to meet the requirements for your certification. Please make sure to total the hours on the CEU Worksheet and indicate which training fulfills each of the specific requirements for the CCNP and/or CMP. Trainings should be within the last 5 years. The CCNP and CMP Certifications are CACFP-specific. CEUs submitted should be relevant to CACFP. Trainings on topics such as sanitiation, unless CACFP-specific, first aid, CPR and child abuse, will not be accepted for the CCNP and CMP. Please see Page 5 for the fields of accepted degrees. If your degree is not accepted, you are responsible for the year's experience and the additional CEU credits needed to qualify. If you do not meet those standards, your application will not be approved.

Application Process

Don't forget to submit your documentation mentioned above and your payment as well, or else your online application won't be considered complete. Want to apply for both the CMP and CCNP? That's great and we encourage you to do so if you meet the requirements! You'll just need to apply separately for each. Important note: the application will not be processed until payment is made.

Certification Confirmation

You will be notified via email if your application was approved. We want to help you celebrate earning your certification! If you would like us to alert a supervisor, state agency representative, and/or media, simply supply the appropriate contact information on the application and we will send an email notice regarding your achievement to any agencies as requested and announce on social media.

"You may have many years of experience and knowledge but not the degree to go along with that. This certification is a way of recognizing and validating what we do every day and our passion for CACFP."

Rhonda Kobylecky, CMP, CCNP
Acelero Learning



Incomplete Applications

If NCA receives an incomplete application, candidates will receive an email requesting any additional documentation needed to earn your certification. Requested documents must be received by NCA within 14 calendar days of receipt of notice. If NCA receives your documents after 14 calendar days, you will have to re-submit the entire application and pay the initial certification fee again. Submitting the application fee does not guarantee approval and is non-refundable.

Application Fees

CCNP	$75.00
CMP	$175.00

Requirements for CACFP Certification

CACFP Child Nutrition Professional (CCNP)

CACFP Operator or Administrator

Education
(16) Hours in Specialty 1
(16) Hours in Specialities 1, 2 or 3

Experience
(3) Years

OR

Education
Associates degree or higher*
(16) Hours in Specialty 1

Experience
(1) Year

OR

Education
Associates degree or higher*
(12) Hours in Specialty 1
(4) Hours in Specialties 2 or 3

Experience
(1) Year

CACFP Management Professional (CMP)

CACFP Administrator with at least 3 years of agency administration.

Education
(4) Hours in Specialties 1 or 2
(4) Hours in Specialties 5 or 6
(8) Hours in Specialties 4 or 7

Experience
(8) Years

OR

Education
Associates degree or higher*
(4) Hours in Specialties 1 or 2
(4) Hours in Specialties 5 or 6
(8) Hours in Specialties 4 or 7

Experience
(5) Years

OR

Education
(12) Hours in Specialties 1 or 2
(12) Hours in Specialties 5 or 6
(12) Hours in Specialties 4 or 7
(24) Hours in Specialties 1-7

Experience
(5) Years

*Associate's degree or higher in the following fields are accepted: business; nutrition; public health; education; and community, family and personal services. Other degrees may be considered, **but not guaranteed approval**, if the relationship between CACFP and the work performed can be explained. If your degree is not accepted, you are responsible for the year's experience and the additional CEU credits needed to qualify. If you do not meet those standards, your application will not be approved.

"My certification demonstrates my credibility and investment to my professional development. I wanted to increase my awareness, access, and the opportunity to gain relevant, practical, and content-rich information that I can implement into my leadership within my organization and the communities we serve."

Christina Flythe, CCNP
Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc.



Earning Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

The purpose of CEUs is to provide job-related professional development and growth experiences. Annual training (earning CEUs) is a requirement to earn and maintain your CACFP Certification. All training should be within the last 5 years. Candidates can earn continuing education credits in any of the following ways:

- Webinars & Online Training Participation
- Workshops/Trainings/Conference Attendance
- Secondary Learning Coursework

Calculating Hours

CEUs should be recorded in one-hour increments and completed within the last 5 years. They must be equal to a minimum of one hour in length. Trainings that are thirty minutes in length are accepted but must be added accordingly to equal one hour. If using your degree to qualify for the certification, the classes you took to satisfy the degree cannot be converted to CEUs.

Examples:

Two thirty-minute trainings = 1 CEU
Three-hour training = 3 CEUs
1.5-hour training = 1 CEU

Requirements can also be met by taking relevant college courses.
1 Credit Hour College Course = 16 CEU Hours
2 Credit Hour College Course = 32 CEU Hours
3 Credit Hour College Course = 48 CEU Hours

Specific Degree Fields Accepted

Associate's degree or higher in the following fields are accepted: business; nutrition; public health; education; and community, family and personal services. Other degrees may be considered, but not guaranteed approval, if the relationship between CACFP and the work performed can be explained. If your degree is not accepted, you are responsible for the year's experience and the additional CEU credits needed to qualify. If you do not meet those standards, your application will not be approved.

Business

- Business Administration & Management, General
- Office Supervision & Management
- Operations Management & Supervision
- Purchasing/Procurement/Contracts Management
- Finance, General
- Banking & Financial Support Services
- Secretarial Studies & Office Administration

Community, Family and Personal Services

- Family & Consumer Sciences, General
- Adult Development & Aging/Gerontology
- Child Care Services Management
- Child Development
- Food & Nutrition
- Social Work

Education

- Counseling & Student Services
- Early Childhood Education
- Elementary Education
- Junior High/Middle School Education
- Secondary Education
- Teacher Assisting/Aide Education
- Health Education

Nutrition

- Nutrition Science
- Applied Nutrition
- Clinical Nutrition
- Nutrition and Dietetics
- Dietary Management
- Dietetic Technology
- Culinary Arts

Public Health

"There's an unlimited access to resources, ongoing trainings and guidance within the CACFP. Obtaining my certificationnot only benefits my employer, our team, our community; but most importantly, my own professional growth and development."

Christine Gillison, CCNP
Georgia Nutritional Services, Inc.



Identifying CEU Specialties

Education credits should be self-declared in one of these following categories:

Specialty 1. Nutrition

Nutrition is the study of nutrients in food, how the body uses them, and the relationship between diet, health, and disease. The CACFP strives to teach lifelong healthy habits, decreasing obesity and increasing physical activity.

e.g., Understanding Whole Grains, Best Practices, Infant, Child & Adult Nutrition, Child Obesity Prevention, Eating Behaviors, Dietary Guidelines, Special Diets, Food Allergies, CACFP Substitutions, Picky Eaters, Breast Feeding, CACFP Meal Patterns, Creditable Foods, CN & Manufacturer Labeling

Specialty 2. CACFP Program Operations

CACFP Operations consist of the tasks that are performed to support the requirements of the CACFP program. For example, a provider may take training on how to keep records that are required to participate in the CACFP. Trainings to learn how to properly plan a menu to meet CACFP requirements or how to review and process claims are other examples.

e.g., Record-Keeping, Menu Planning, Meal Patterns, Claims Processing, Meal Service, Program Monitoring, Safe Food Handling

Specialty 3. Training & Technology

Training & Technology CEU credits consist of train-the-trainer workshops you may attend designed to give you the tools to teach others. It can also include workshops to learn CACFP software for uses such as record keeping, menu planning, or determining how to ensure you are meeting food crediting minimums. For example, training on the use of the USDA Food Buying Guide can be applied here.

e.g.,Training Strategies, CACFP Software

Specialty 4. Program Administration

CACFP Administration consists of the activities that are related to operating a CACFP sponsoring organization or state agency with regards to the food program specifically. For example, a director or manager may take trainings on ways to develop corrective action plans or how to enroll a new site. Classes like these, which address how to administer the food program, are counted in this specialty.

e.g., Serious Deficiency, CACFP Management Plans, Program Integrity, Enrollment, Eligibility Determinations, NDL, Program Eligibility, Food Program Record-keeping, Program Appeals, Program Eligibility

Specialty 5. Financial Management

Financial management may be defined as planning, organizing, directing and controlling the financial activities of an organization.

e.g., Budgeting, Claims, Cost-Allocation, Financial Management, Accounting, OMB Super Circular, Procurement, Administrative Payment Systems, Program Review and Audit Requirements

Specialty 6. Management

Management is the act of overseeing or supervising a team or organization. The CEU's in this category do not have to be CACFP specific and can include trainings like leadership, how to engage teams, developing a succession plan, and working with a board of directors.

e.g., Staffing, Marketing, Communications, Vendor Management, Governing Bodies

Specialty 7. Civil Rights & Policy

CACFP Civil Rights training is required annually with the purpose of informing compliance and enforcement against any type of discrimination in all FNS nutrition programs and activities. Policy training consists of CACFP regulations, USDA guidance, and Congressional action while advocacy sessions include topics of public support or recommendations for the CACFP.

e.g., Civil Rights, CACFP Advocacy, Regulations, Child Nutrition Reauthorization, IOM

Note: Make sure to label each of your documents with its corresponding Specialty.

"The CACFP Certification recognizes my dedication to providing quality services to families, and exemplifies my continual commitment to learn and grow within my profession."

Alethea Etinoff, CCNP
POC Learning Academy



Maintaining Your CACFP Certification

Your CACFP Professional Certification is valid for three years.

How to Renew Your CACFP Certification

Renewal Process. NCA will notify you via email before your certification is due to expire. It is your responsibility to renew on time to avoid your certification expiring. Each individual is responsible for maintaining and keeping records of CEUs earned.

In the renewal notification email, you will receive a link to the renewal application. Please submit your renewal application and payment through the link. After NCA reviews and approves your certification renewal, you will receive notification of approval.

If NCA does not receive your renewal application and payment within 30 calendar days of your certification renewal date, you will have to re-submit a new application and pay the initial certification fee again.

Renewal Requirements

You must complete the required number of CEUs during your certification period to be eligible for renewal.

CACFP Child Nutrition Professional	
(16) Hours in Specialties 1-3 with a minimum of (12) hours in Specialty 1	
CCNP Renewal Fee	$75

CACFP Management Professional	
(24) Hours in Specialties 1-7	
CMP Renewal Fee	$175

"Receiving my CACFP certification was important to me because the continuing education gives me the knowledge to support program integrity and keep our supper programs in full compliance and accountability. It helps me train staff, manage meal claiming accurately and maintain strong standards in child nutrition. It also reflects my commitment to professional excellence and serving students well"

Jennifer Davis CCNP, CMP
Kern High School District



Frequently Asked Questions

CACFP Child Nutrition Professional (CCNP) & CACFP Management Professional (CMP)

What is the difference between CCNP and CMP?

a. CCNP is for the home child care provider or staff employed at a center enrolled in CACFP and/or a CACFP Agency (Sponsor, Head Start, State Agency, etc.)

b. CMP Certification is for the CACFP administrator that has a minimum of 5 years of experience with at least 3 of those years being CACFP administration experience at a CACFP Agency (Sponsor, Center, State Agency, Head Start, etc.).

What is an Operator and Administrator?

a. An Operator works for an organization on the CACFP like a family home child care, child or adult care center, afterschool care facility, emergency shelter, etc.

b. An Administrator works in an agency that administers the CACFP for providers. Examples: Sponsor, Center, State Agency, etc.

CEU – Continuing Education Units

What is a CEU?

a. CEUs are classes/workshops/trainings (minimum of 30 minutes) you have attended that are documented by a certificate of attendance.

How old can my CEUs be?

a. CEUs accrued within 5 years of the application date are eligible.

Can I attend the annual National Child Nutrition Conference and receive CEU credits?

a. Yes, you can earn CEU hours by attending the classes offered at the annual National Child Nutrition Conference.

How do I know which specialty category my CEU fits in?

a. Specialty types can be found on page 6 of the certification handbook. There are examples below each specialty to help guide you in categorizing your CEUs. Some CEUs can fit into multiple specialties.

Can I use classes I took for my degree as CEUs as well?

a. If using your degree to qualify for the certification, the classes you took to satisfy the degree cannot be converted to CEUs.

Do the trainings taken for childcare licensing, such as first aid, CPR, epipens, emergency plans and child abuse, count towards the CCNP and/or the CMP certification?

a. The CCNP and CMP Certifications are CACFP-specific. CEUs submitted should be relevant to CACFP. Trainings on topics such as sanitation, unless CACFP-specific, first aid, CPR and child abuse will not be accepted for the CCNP and CMP.

Do NSLP and SFSP trainings count towards the certification?

a. General nutrition classes or trainings that could be used in CACFP count towards the certification. NSLP and SFSP-specific classes, such as serving sizes, would not count towards the CCNP or CMP.

What types of degrees are accepted?

a. Associate's degree or higher in the following fields are accepted: business; nutrition; public health; education; and community, family and personal services. Other degrees may be considered, but not guaranteed approval, if the relationship between CACFP and the work performed can be explained. If your degree is not accepted, you are responsible for the year's experience and the additional CEU credits needed to qualify. If you do not meet those standards, your application will not be approved.

Do you need official transcripts?

a. No, copies of your transcript or a copy of your degree is satisfactory.

Do you have additional CEU resources?

a. Yes, you can find training webinars, including from USDA, at cacfp.org/learning-center

Frequently Asked Questions

Documentation and Application

What types of documentation are accepted?

a. Webinars & Online Training Participation

b. Local, regional, state, employer provided workshops/trainings/conference attendance

c. Secondary Learning Coursework

How do I submit my documentation?

a. Submit your documentation in the links provided within the application. Should you need to send further documentation, you can email certification@cacfp.org.

What formats do you accept?

a. Digital (PDF, Word, JPEG, PNG, etc.)

b. Physical copies via mail

Is the application fee refundable?

a. Submitting the application fee does not guarantee approval and is non-refundable.

What if I apply and I do not qualify?

a. If NCA receives an incomplete application, candidates will receive an email listing additional documentation needed to earn your certification. Requested documents must be received by NCA within 14 calendar days of receipt of notice. If NCA receives your documents after 14 calendar days, you will have to re-submit the entire application and pay the initial certification fee again.

How long is my certification good for?

a. The certification is good for 3 years.

I am not a CACFP operator and do not work for a CACFP agency. Do I qualify for the CCNP or CMP certification?

a. If you do not work as a CACFP operator or administrator, we do not currently have a certification path for you.

NATIONAL CACFP ASSOCIATION

Other questions?

Contact us at:

512-850-8278

certification@cacfp.org

Calculating Continuing Education Units (CEUs) Worksheet

Applicant:

Name _____

Email _____

Years of CACFP Experience _____

Payment:

Payment Submitted? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Date of Payment ____ / ____ / ____

Type of Degree *(if applicable)* _____

Copy of Degree Attached *(if applicable)* ❑ Yes ❑ No

Select Certification Type & Experience Level

❑ CACFP Child Nutrition Professional (CCNP)

CACFP Operator or Administrator

❑ 3 years experience (16) Specialty 1 (16) Specialty 1, 2 or 3	❑ 1 year experience (16) Specialty 1 *with degree*	❑ 1 year experience (12) Specialty 1 (4) Specialty 2 or 3 *with degree*

❑ CACFP Management Professional (CMP)

CACFP Administrator with at least 3 years of agency administration.

❑ 8 years experience (4) Specialty 1 or 2 (4) Specialty 5 or 6 (8) Specialty 4 or 7	❑ 5 year experience (4) Specialty 1 or 2 (4) Specialty 5 or 6 (8) Specialty 4 or 7 *with degree*	❑ 5 year experience (12) Specialty 1 or 2 (12) Specialty 5 or 6 (12) Specialty 4 or 7 (24) Specialties 1-7

❑ DUAL CCNP & CMP

How to Calculate Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

CEUs should be recorded in one-hour increments and completed within the last 5 years. They must equal to a minimum of one hour in length. Trainings that are thirty minutes in length are accepted but must be added accordingly to equal one hour. Attach documentation to worksheet.

Course Name (Training)	**Specialty Type***	**CEU Hours**	**Course Facilitator/Provider**	**Date Completed** (Within 5 years)
Ex. Serving Vegetables in the CACFP	*Specialty 1*	*0.5*	*USDA Team Nutrition*	*1/8/2021*

Record additional CEUs on back.

** See handbook for details*

Specialties	**CEUs Total Hours**
Specialty 1 - Nutrition	
Specialty 2 - Program Operations	
Specialty 3 - Training and Technology	
Specialty 4 - Program Administration	
Specialty 5 - Financial Management	
Specialty 6 - Management	
Specialty 7 - Civil Rights & Policy	

IMPORTANT:
Please total each specialty from the CEU courses listed. Ensure that your hours match the requirements.

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Visit cacfp.org/certification to apply online.

CCNP CMP

Continued from previous page

Course Name (Training)	**Specialty Type***	**CEU Hours**	**Course Facilitator/Provider**	**Date Completed** (Within 5 years)