

# CACFP Professionals Certification Program



## 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. However, we are excited to introduce a new certification path in 2021 to validate and recognize the valuable work other professionals accomplish in CACFP.

*“To be able to combine my education and experience to show that I am certified in the CACFP says a lot. It was a big personal and professional accomplishment.”*

Shelby Beverly, CCNP  
Georgia Nutritional Services



#### 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.

## How to Earn Your CACFP Certification



### Requirements Review

Review the requirements of the certification designation for which you would like to apply. 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.) and indicate which training fulfills each of the specific requirements of the certification for which you are applying. 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 sanitation, unless CACFP-specific, first aid, CPR and child abuse, will not be accepted for the CCNP and CMP.



### Application Process

Complete the application form and submit it together with documentation and certification payment to the address listed on the form. A completed Certification CEU Worksheet is required as part of the application. You can also complete the process online at [www.cacfp.org](http://www.cacfp.org).



### Certification Confirmation

After review and upon approval of your application, NCA will send you a confirmation email indicating you have earned your CACFP Professional Certification. If you would like NCA 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 30 calendar days of receipt of notice. If NCA receives your documents after 30 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
Dual CCNP/CMP	\$250.00





## Requirements for CACFP Certification

### CACFP Child Nutrition Professional (CCNP)

CACFP Operator or Administrator

#### Education

(16) Hours in Specialty 1  
(16) Hours in Specialties 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

*“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 Hours

### 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



## 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.*

*“Receiving my CACFP certification demonstrates that I have knowledge and education in child nutrition and shows other professionals my commitment to my profession.”*

Jami Lee, CCNP  
Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.



## Maintaining Your CACFP Certification

*Your CACFP Professional Certification is valid for three years.*

### How to Renew Your CACFP Certification

**Renewal Process.** NCA will email you a renewal form and notify you 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.

Submit your renewal fee with the renewal form to NCA at least four weeks prior to certification expiration. After NCA reviews and approves your certification renewal, you will receive notification of approval. If your renewal form is incomplete, you will receive a letter explaining what is required to maintain your certification.

NCA will check proof of CEUs via a random audit. Only those chosen for the audit will be required to send in documentation of CEUs earned. If you are selected for an audit, a notification to send CEU documentation to NCA will be included in your renewal notice.

If NCA does not receive your renewal documents 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
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#### CACFP Management Professional

(24) Hours in Specialties 1-7

CMP Renewal Fee	\$175
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*“ I decided to certify my entire staff because it signifies my investment in them as well as highlights their CACFP qualifications. Some may not have a college degree but they have years of experience, continuing education, and training. My staff is proud to wear their pins and it elevates them to a different level. The value to our organization far outweighs the cost. ”*

Senta Hester, CMP, CCNP  
Our Daily Bread CACFP



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

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### 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

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### 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 5 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. Associates and higher are accepted in any subject.

### 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 USDA training webinars on this webpage: <https://www.cacfp.org/resources/thirty-thursdays/>



## Documentation and Application

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### 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. Email: [certification@cacfp.org](mailto:certification@cacfp.org)
- b. Fax: 512-519-1704
- c. Mail: NCA, PO Box 1748, Round Rock, TX 78680

### What formats do you accept?

- a. Digital (PDF, Word, JPEG, PNG, etc.)
- b. Physical copies via mail
- c. Faxed copies

### 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 30 calendar days of receipt of notice. If NCA receives your documents after 30 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.



### Other questions?

#### Contact us at:

512-850-8278

[certification@cacfp.org](mailto:certification@cacfp.org)





# Calculating Continuing Education Units (CEUs) Worksheet



## Applicant:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Years of CACFP Experience \_\_\_\_\_

## Payment:

Payment Submitted? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Date of Payment \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

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	1/8/2020

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	



Visit [cacfp.org/certification](http://cacfp.org/certification) to apply online.

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