

CACFP Professionals Certification Program



Handbook

CACFP Professional Certification

For over forty years, our association has been elevating the professional standards of our community. Since the creation of the CACFP Professionals Certification Program, we have recognized close to 2,000 individuals who continually go above and beyond with true passion for the CACFP and what it means to millions of children and adults.

Why Should I Earn a CACFP Professional Certification?

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 organization 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**
- **Professional Status**
- **Personal Achievement**

NCA offers two certification opportunities. Both certifications require applicants to submit documentation of education and experience which allow them to receive the designation.

“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 Certification is 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 for a minimum of one year.



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 earn both certifications. Each application must be completed separately and include all required documentation and payments. Earned CEUs cannot be duplicated and used for both the CCNP and CMP. Meaning, if you submit a CEU for the CCNP application, it cannot be used again for the CMP application. You may apply for these at different times, the expiration date will be based on when the application is received, paid and approved.

To be eligible for either the CCNP or CMP certification, your current role must be with an organization that operates or administers the CACFP. Consultants and industry are not eligible at this time.

Application Steps



Requirements Review

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



CEU Worksheet and 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 sanitation, 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 or state agency representative, 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.

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



“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



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

*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, CMP
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. Completion of continuing education 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
- Higher Education Courses OR Postsecondary Coursework

Calculating Hours

CEUs must have been 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

Relevant postsecondary coursework can count towards CEUs based on the table below if not used to satisfy a degree requirement.

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

Education

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

Community, Family and Personal Services

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

Nutrition

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

Public Health

Others as Approved by NCA

“There’s an unlimited access to resources, ongoing trainings and guidance within the CACFP. Obtaining my certification not 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

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 CEUs 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.

“As the Executive Director at Milestones, I look for opportunities to show stakeholders how professional development and certification build trust and integrity within a program. If you truly care about serving children, families and providers, certification is one of the best ways to demonstrate your belief in the program and the support it offers.”

Jeremy Schreifels, CCNP
Milestones



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



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

What is the difference between CCNP and CMP?

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

Who can apply?

- Administrators who work in an agency that administers the CACFP for providers. Examples: Sponsor, Center, State Agency, etc.
- Staff that work for operators.

CEU – Continuing Education Units

What is a CEU?

- Continuing Education Unit (CEU), a standardized measure of participation in professional development programs. 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?

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

What CEUs are offered by NCA?

- You can earn CEU hours by attending the National Child Nutrition Conference, attending Live Events and taking on demand courses through the Learning Center.

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

- 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?

- 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?

- 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?

- 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?

- 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?

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

Do you have additional CEU resources?

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



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

Can I mail in my application?

- a. No. Apply online at cacfp.org/certification-application/. If you need to submit additional documentation, you can email certification@cacfp.org.

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.

Is the application fee refundable?

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

What happens if my application is incomplete?

- a. It is important that you review your application before submission as application fees are non-refundable.
- b. If your application is incomplete, NCA will email you with a list of any additional documents or requirements needed to complete the certification process. Please submit the requested documents within 14 calendar days of receiving the notice. If documents are received after the 14-day timeframe, you will need to submit a new application and pay the 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, you are not eligible.

Other questions?

Contact us at:

512-850-8278

certification@cacfp.org

