



A National Platform for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Community

July 15, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

On behalf of the National CACFP Sponsors Association (NCA), we thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback for the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health. The NCA represents a network of sponsoring organizations, child and adult care providers and afterschool programs feeding almost 5 million children annually through the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). In a time when food insecurity has increased in children and child care in America is in crisis, it is critical for the Biden-Harris Administration to prioritize strategies to improve, streamline and expand the CACFP. CACFP must be at the forefront of the conversation when discussing early health and nutrition interventions as providers across the nation work to improve the nutrition security of our youngest, most vulnerable population.

Action must be taken to:

- 1) increase the number of meals and reimbursement in child care
- 2) simplify and expand eligibility, and
- 3) streamline and reduce administrative barriers of participation.

Child care, both in early child care settings and afterschool, is essential in supporting the American workforce and is the backbone of a strong economy. The CACFP plays an important role in not only providing nutritious meals and establishing positive eating habits, but also in making child care more affordable. Studies show that children in CACFP homes, centers and afterschool programs which participate in the CACFP consume more nutritious meals and consume more vegetables and milk when compared to non-CACFP homes, centers, and programs.

Likewise, sponsoring organizations play a crucial role in supporting CACFP providers by providing nutrition education and technical assistance, while maintaining the integrity of the program. The majority of sponsoring organizations are mostly small nonprofit businesses, many of which are women and minority operated. Since 1996, there has been a 52% decrease in sponsoring organizations from 1,211 in fiscal year 1996 to only 580 in fiscal year 2021. It is imperative to ensure sponsoring organizations remain viable by making sure they maintain a diversified portfolio of provider sites, increasing reimbursement to reflect the full cost of meals and service, streamlining paperwork and minimizing additional program requirements created by State agencies so that they can focus on provider support.

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It is said that crisis breeds opportunity and flexibilities implemented during the pandemic helped providers across the country reach more children. Flexibilities such as non-congregate feeding, mealtime waivers, and virtual monitoring were implemented without sacrificing program integrity. It is time to modernize child nutrition programs and implement more equitable solutions to both address food insecurity and improve nutrition security for America's children.

We welcome further discussion and we hope that the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health recognizes the important role the CACFP plays in providing children with the healthy start they deserve. Any conversation that includes high quality child care, universal pre-school and Head Start should include the CACFP. It is imperative that the CACFP be given priority as healthy eating in the formative years leads to better life-long health outcomes. Thank you once again for championing the CACFP. We look forward to working together as we continue feeding children and adults nationwide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Mack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Lisa Mack
President and CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexia Thex". The signature is cursive and elegant, with a small flourish at the end.

Alexia Thex
Director of Policy and Partnerships