

Innovative Ideas to Enrich School Meals & Drive Participation



CACFP Supper
Implementation Guide



Overview

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federally funded program administered by the USDA that provides reimbursement for nutritious meals and snacks served to eligible children and adults.

The CACFP Supper Program allows organizations operating afterschool programs to serve a third meal (supper) to children in low-income areas, helping combat food insecurity and support academic and social development.

To qualify, programs must be:

- Located in areas where 50% or more of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
- Providing educational or enrichment activities after school hours.



Benefits of Implementing a CACFP Supper Program

Implementing a CACFP Supper Program offers a range of benefits for children, families, and organizations:

1. Improved Nutrition & Health Outcomes

Children receive a balanced meal that helps meet their daily nutritional needs, especially important for those who may not have access to dinner at home.

2. Supports Academic Achievement

Students who participate in high-quality afterschool programs show significant gains in standardized math test scores when compared to their peers who did not participate.

<https://www.nokidhungry.org/what-we-do/after-school-meals#:~:text=Afterschool%20meals%20can%20be%20important%20for%20students,significant%20gains%20in%20standardized%20math%20test%20scores.>

3. Financial Reimbursement

Organizations receive federal reimbursement for each compliant meal served, which can offset food and staffing costs.

<https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/supper-makes-cents-schools>



CACFP Supper Program

Implementation Considerations

Service Models

In order to serve After School Meals and Snacks through CACFP, eligible schools must submit an application to their State agency. Once approved, schools must meet meal pattern guidelines and documentation criteria to receive reimbursement. Meals must be eaten on site. For more information, please visit the [CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Care Handbook](#).

To maximize your reimbursement, choose a service model that fits your space, staffing, and program needs:

A. Cafeteria-Style Service

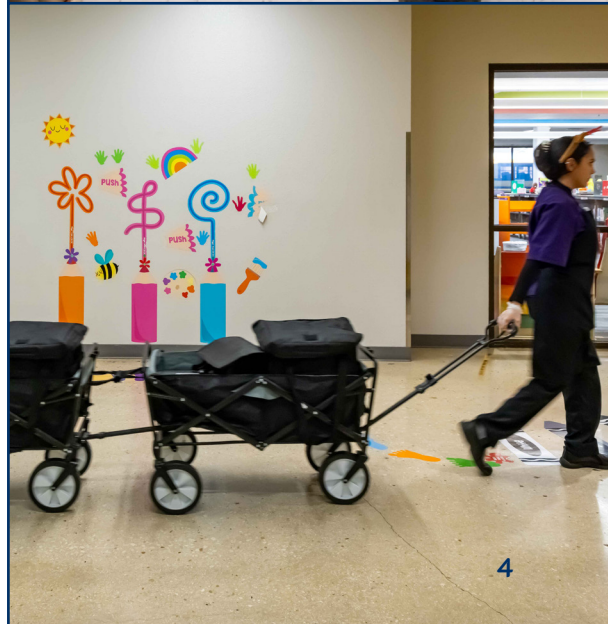
- Meals are served and eaten in the cafeteria.
- **Pros:** Familiar setup, easy to supervise, supports communal eating.
- **Considerations:** May require cleaning staff and scheduled mealtimes.

B. Grab & Go Carts

- Pre-packaged meals are picked up from a cart and eaten elsewhere on the school site.
- **Pros:** Flexible, reduces congregation, can be efficient for older youth.
- **Considerations:** Requires insulated carts, packaging materials, and staff to track meal counts.

C. Classroom Delivery

- Meals are delivered to classrooms where students eat with staff supervision.
- **Pros:** Increases participation in structured environments, especially for younger kids.
- **Considerations:** Requires coordination for delivery and clean-up, more packaging waste.



CACFP Supper Program

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Meal Pattern Requirements

CACFP Supper meals must meet USDA [meal pattern standards](#):

Each **supper meal** must include:

- 1 serving of Milk
- 1 serving of Meat/Meat Alternate
- 1 serving of Vegetable
- 1 serving of Fruit
- 1 serving of Grain

All items must meet minimum portion sizes based on age group. Water must be available throughout the program.

[Refer to [USDA CACFP Meal Pattern Chart](#) for specifics by age group.]

USDA Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Serve Tasty and Healthy Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Sample Meals for Children Ages 6–12 and 13–18

What is in a Breakfast?
Milk (8 fl oz or 1 cup)
Vegetables, Fruits, or Both (½ cup)
Grains (1 oz eq)
Optional: Meats/meat alternates may be served in place of the entire grains component up to three times per week at breakfast.

Sample Breakfast
1 cup Low-Fat (1%) or Fat-Free (Skim) Milk (Unflavored or Flavored)
1 Banana
1 oz eq Whole Grain-Rich Cereal
Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

What is in a Lunch or Supper?
Milk (8 fl oz or 1 cup)
Meats/Meat Alternates (2 oz eq)
Vegetables (½ cup)
Fruits (¼ cup)
Grains (1 oz eq)

Sample Lunch/Supper
1 cup Low-Fat (1%) or Fat-Free (Skim) Milk (Unflavored or Flavored)
1 Banana
1 oz eq Whole Grain-Rich Cereal
Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.
½ cup Watermelon Chunks
½ cup Brown Rice
2 oz Chicken Stir-Fry Made with Chicken Breast and Mixed Vegetables

What is in a Snack?
Pick 2:
Milk (8 fl oz or 1 cup)
Meats/Meat Alternates (1 oz eq)
Vegetables (½ cup)
Fruits (¼ cup)
Grains (1 oz eq)

Sample Snack
1 oz eq Crackers
¾ cup Mandarin Oranges

Offer water and make it available all day.

Note: Serving sizes are minimums.
Learn more about the CACFP meal patterns at [TeamNutrition.USDA.gov](#).

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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Implementation Considerations

5-Day Sample Supper Menu (Ages 6–12)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Turkey & Cheese Sandwich (WG Bread)	Buffalo Chicken Wrap (WG Tortilla)	Bean & Cheese Burrito	Curry Chicken Salad	Pepperoni Pizza
Apple Slices Baby Carrots	Orange Wedges	Diced Pears	Protein Box	Grapes
Choice of Milk	Cherry Tomatoes	Corn Salad	Banana	Steamed Broccoli
	Choice of Milk	Choice of Milk	Celery Sticks	Choice of Milk
			Choice of Milk	

WG = Whole Grain



CACFP Supper Program

Staffing Considerations

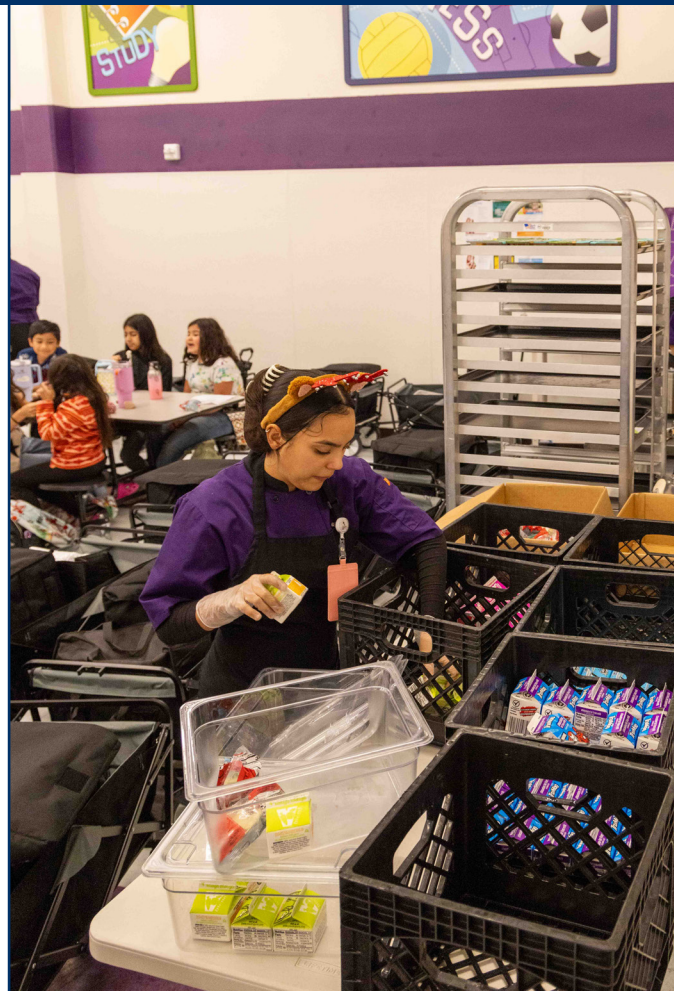
Staffing needs vary by model and scale, but typically include:

- Food Preparation Staff: Prepares and portions meals.
- Meal Service Monitors: Ensures meal counts and compliance during distribution.
- Delivery Staff (if classroom or grab & go): Moves meals to service points.
- Program Supervisors: Oversee compliance, record keeping, and staff scheduling.

Tip: Train all staff on CACFP requirements, including meal pattern compliance and civil rights.

Helpful Resources

1. [Go Where the Kids Are: Find Success with Supper this School Year Webinar](#)
2. [No Kid Hungry Supper In the Classroom Handout](#)
3. [Editable Supper PPT Training](#)



CACFP Afterschool Meals and Snacks



CACFP Supper Program

Cost Considerations

Startup/Operational Costs May Include:

- Food Packaging Supplies: Trays, clamshells, utensils, napkins.
- Staffing: Additional labor hours for prep, delivery, and cleanup.
- Insulated Equipment: Keeps food safe during transport.
- Storage Equipment: Additional coolers or warmers depending on meal type.

Estimated Additional Equipment Needs (For Grab & Go or Classroom Models):

Item	Cost	Use
Insulated Food Cart	\$500–\$1,000	Transport hot/cold meals
Cold Storage Cooler	\$200–\$600	Keeps milk and cold items safe
Sealed Packaging Machine	\$800–\$1,500	For pre-packaged meals
Utility Carts	\$100–\$300	Meal delivery to classrooms
Waste Disposal Bins	\$50–\$100	For meal cleanup

Pro tip: Seek grants or community partners to help fund startup costs.



Equipment Examples

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CACFP Supper Program

Marketing Tips

A well-promoted supper program increases participation and support:

1. Promote to Families

- Send flyers or texts home explaining the free supper option.
- Highlight menu variety and nutrition benefits.

2. Use Student-Friendly Branding

- Call it something fun like “Power-Up Dinner” or “Fuel Up Supper.”
- Use colorful signage or table tents with menus and fun facts.

3. Partner with Teachers & Staff

- Encourage classroom teachers to remind students about the meal.
- Provide staff with talking points to share with parents.

4. Highlight Student Voice

- Involve kids in menu selection through surveys or voting.
- Share testimonials or stories about how the meals help.

5. Social Media & Newsletters

- Post weekly menus or meal photos.
- Celebrate milestones (e.g., 10,000 meals served!).

Check Out

[No Kid Hungry's Afterschool Meals Outreach Toolkit!](#)

**FREE
AFTERSCHOOL
MEALS!**



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Free for kids and teens
No application or registration required



**FREE
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CACFP Supper Program

Next Steps

- Confirm eligibility with your state CACFP agency.
- Choose your service model based on your site capacity.
- Train staff and secure equipment.
- Create a rollout plan and start promoting!

