



Expanding Participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program: An Important Economic Stimulus

As Governors, state legislators and policy-makers strive to address the current economic downturn, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, a federally funded entitlement, is an often overlooked asset for injecting 100 percent federal funds into the state and local economy. In these difficult times, the Child and Adult Care Food Program supports the needs of working families and employers by supporting reliable affordable child care through:

- reimbursements for meals and snacks,
- nutrition standards, and
- training.

An Economic Stimulus

The Child and Adult Care Food Program federal funds:

- provide an economic stimulus from the federal government as the money flows directly into the economy to buy food and pay for food service labor, and
- help to sustain child care providers through this economic downturn.

A Financial Resource

The Child and Adult Care Food Program is a key source of financial support for child care in family child care homes. (Family child care providers operate a licensed or regulated child care business in their homes.)

- Last year, over three quarters of a billion dollars in food program funds were expended in states to serve an average of nearly a million children in family child care homes each working day. The funding comes without any state match requirement and with separate federally funded state administrative funds.

- On the small business level the food program can provide up to \$4,500 a year for a family child care home serving 6 children.

A Hidden Asset

Unfortunately, many child care providers do not know about the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Nationally, only about half of the eligible child care homes participate. There is an enormous potential for increasing the use of this resource.

- For each additional 1,200 children participating in the program, up to one million dollars in reimbursements will be injected into the state economy.

Taking Action

Governors, state legislators and policy-makers can help expand the use of the Child and Adult Care Food Program by:

- helping to remove any barriers to maximizing the use of the federal resources available,
- encouraging the cooperation needed for comprehensive program outreach, and
- assuring that the program is available to all eligible child care homes.

There are a number of steps that your state can take or may already be taking to expand the use of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Check with your state Child and Adult Care Food Program agency regarding the following questions:

Key Questions For Working With Your State Agencies To Expand Child and Adult Care Food Program Participation

Does your state Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) agency maximize the federal resources available?

- Does the agency promote the use of federal CACFP expansion grants, which provide funding for sponsoring organizations to conduct outreach to family child care homes in low-income and rural areas? (Sponsoring organizations administer CACFP on the local level directly to family child care homes.)
- Is the agency adequately staffed to provide the necessary services and conduct outreach? For example, are state hiring freezes limiting the ability of CACFP state agencies to use the federally funded administrative funds to hire staff?

Do your state child care and licensing agencies cooperate with your state Child and Adult Care Food Program agency to provide assistance with outreach?

- Does your state child care subsidy agency (the agency that distributes the Child Care Development Fund and/or TANF child care funds) provide assistance with CACFP outreach by including CACFP promotional materials along with the child care subsidy check mailed to parents or providers?
- Does your state child care licensing agency provide assistance with CACFP outreach by including CACFP promotional materials as part of the licensing application and training process?

Does your state extend Child and Adult Care Food Program eligibility to all licensed and regulated family child care?

- Where appropriate, does the CACFP agency extend eligibility to license exempt family child care homes that meet federal, state or local approval standards? (Many states exempt small family child care homes from full licensing requirements considering them “license exempt”. Many of these homes serve low-income children and receive child care subsidy funds. This type of care supports the working poor and welfare to work efforts. A number of states extend CACFP eligibility to license exempt child care by taking full advantage of the federal rules allowing state agencies to create standards and an approval process for this type of care.)

Is your state Child and Adult Care Food Program agency included as part of state interagency child care councils, child care coordinating committees, or Governors’ partnerships for child care?

For a list of the state CACFP agency contacts or additional CACFP information, visit the Food Research and Action Center’s website or call Geri Henchy at FRAC (202) 986-2200 extension 3018.

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