



Ending Childhood Hunger in D.C.

Ensure all children enrolled in child development centers and homes have access to high-quality nutritious meals

Nutritious meals are an essential component to a full-service, affordable child development program.

The **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** is a *federal nutrition program* that provides funding to serve nutritious meals to low-income children enrolled in child development programs and before and after care programs. CACFP promotes school-readiness by providing nutritious meals that aid children's cognitive and physical development. CACFP can also act as an income support for both low-income families and child development providers by supplementing their limited budgets.

The urgent need

- One out eight families in the District of Columbia is struggling with hunger. Families with school-age children can depend on school meals to support their children's nutritional needs. Families with infants and toddlers cannot access these meals.
- More than 37,000 children in D.C. live in poverty. That's one out of every three children.
- CACFP funded meals can provide a substantial income support to low-income families by relieving them of the financial pressure to secure consistent, nutritious breakfast and lunch for their children enrolled in childcare. More of their resources can be focused on other needs like paying for nutritious dinners and escalating heating, energy or housing bills.
- Food access issues continue to challenge low-income D.C. residents. Most of the District's poorest residents live in Wards with an inadequate number of food retailers, specifically stores that carry a wide variety of fresh produce, whole grains and other nutrient-rich foods that growing children need to thrive.

The benefit to childcare providers

- Many centers dip into their own funding to cover the costs of meals, infringing on the amount of money left for school-readiness programming.
- CACFP funding increases as more children participate. A center serving 50 children could receive up to \$4,463 in reimbursed funding each month to cover food costs.
- Head Start programs are automatically eligible to receive the highest reimbursement for all the children they serve.
- The most recent regulations for licensed child care providers in the District, released in April 2007, require providers to serve meals that meet CACFP meal standards.
- Child care providers enrolled in CACFP receive nutrition education and health and safety training.

The benefit to the community

- In fiscal year 2006, D.C. child care providers were able to tap into nearly \$3.5 million in federal funding to serve nutritious meals to the District's children.
- Grant-makers that give to child development programs will be able to see more of their funding directed towards school-readiness programming as CACFP reimbursements cover a majority of food and food service related costs.
- CACFP models healthy eating habits, making it is an essential piece in the city's efforts to curb the obesity epidemic. CACFP meal guidelines are based on USDA dietary requirements, ensuring that providers serve meals comprised of appropriate servings of vegetables, protein, grains, and fruits. (In August 2007, the Trust for America's Health identified D.C. as having the highest rate of childhood obesity in the country for children ages 10 to 17, compared to other states.)

D.C. Hunger Solutions is actively recruiting and assisting interested child care providers to enroll in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. To Learn More: Contact Suzanne Henley, Child Nutrition Associate, D.C. Hunger Solutions, 202.986.2200, shenley@dchunger.org. **To enroll in CACFP:** Contact, the Office of State Superintendent of Education, Nutrition Services Department, 202.727.6436, www.seo.dc.gov.