

Federal Program Provides Resources for Feeding Children and Youth in Houston Shelters: The Child and Adult Care Food Program

History/Purpose

The Child and Adult Care Food Program provides nutritious meals and snacks to children and youth in homeless, runaway, and domestic violence shelters. The maximum age for eligibility to participate in the program is now up to eighteen years of age. The State Child and Adult Care Food Program agency is administered by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

Benefits/ Participation

The program provides reimbursements for food and meal preparation costs and technical assistance in meeting the program's requirements. Nationally, the Child and Adult Care Food Program is used in 292 homeless shelters to serve nearly 5,208 children each night. In Houston, there are 4 homeless shelters using CACFP funding.

Which shelters can participate?

To participate in CACFP, an emergency shelter must provide residential and food services to homeless children and their parents or guardians. It must be a public or private nonprofit institution. Unlike most other CACFP facilities, a shelter does not have to be licensed to provide day care. However, it must meet any health and safety codes that are required by state or local law.

A homeless shelter or a temporary residential site sponsored by a shelter, or another public or private nonprofit agency, is eligible to participate in CACFP. A Houston shelter may complete an application and sign an agreement with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, or it may participate as a facility under an existing CACFP sponsoring organization.

Eligibility

Any child under age 18 in a homeless or domestic violence shelter is eligible for meals funded by the Child and Adult Care Food Project. Homeless and domestic violence shelters will operate under special rules that take into account the difficult circumstances of these families. Shelter providers will not have to ask families to prove their income or fill out any applications for children served through the food program. Instead the shelter will receive a full reimbursement for each child fed who is eligible under the age criteria.

Reimbursement

This program can bring significant resources into often very limited shelter budgets. Participating shelters receive \$1.35 for each breakfast, \$2.47 for each lunch or supper and 68 cents for each snack. For each child served, shelters can receive food program reimbursement for up to three meals or two meals and

one snack each day. Shelters also receive commodities or a "cash-in-lieu" of commodities reimbursement of 18.75 cents for each lunch and supper.



FOUNDATION



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