

The Afterschool Meal Program

Serve Meals on Weekends, School Holidays, and School Breaks

The Afterschool Meal Program, offered through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), can provide meals, not just after school, but also on weekends, school holidays, and school breaks during the school year. Weekend enrichment or educational activities, such as tutoring, academic meets or competitions, and faith-based activities, can receive federal funding for meals and snacks served to children 18 and under. Similarly, programs that are offered during school holiday breaks — YMCAs, park and recreation agencies, and Boys & Girls Clubs — can also be reimbursed for the meals and snacks. Organizations that operate when school is closed (for the day or for breaks) should serve meals and ensure that children have access to healthy food when school is out.

Organizations Operating on Weekends and School Holidays May Be Eligible for Funding to Serve Meals

- CACFP Afterschool Meal Program requirements apply (i.e., programs must be located in a low-income area where 50 percent or more of children qualify for free or reduced-price school meals; educational or enrichment activities are required; programs may be drop-in or enrolled; meals and snacks must follow federal nutrition standards).
- There is no requirement that sites must serve during the regular school week in order to serve meals on the weekend or during school holidays and breaks.
- Breakfast, lunch, or dinner may be served. The maximum number of meals and snacks per day is one meal and one snack per child.
- School holidays include any day during the school year that school is closed, such as federal, state, or city holidays, and professional development days.

Get Started

- School nutrition departments, local government agencies, and private nonprofits are eligible. Those interested can apply at any point during the year and should contact the state child nutrition agency at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/school-meals-contacts>
- The state agency can provide organizations with more information about the program, an application, and inform them when the next CACFP Afterschool Meal Program training will take place. In many communities, afterschool programs are able to receive meals through a “sponsor,” which is often a larger organization, such as the school nutrition department, the parks and recreation agency, a YMCA, or a food bank that already is operating the Afterschool Meal Program.
- Going through a sponsor reduces administrative work for the afterschool program. The state child nutrition agency may be able to inform you of existing sponsors in your community.

Already a Sponsor? Consider These Factors.

- Contact your state agency to receive approval to operate beyond the regular school week.
- Notify your vendor. Check to see if they have different menu options for you to choose from if adding new meals (such as breakfast or lunch) to your existing operations. Ask if you can amend your current contract to include these new meal service times. Determine if you need to refine your meal delivery logistics to handle the additional food.
- Work with your current staff to ensure they have the capacity to cover these new meal service times. If not, would bringing on more volunteers help?

It Pays to Serve on the Weekends and During School Holiday Breaks

A program operating just on Saturdays during the school year (a total of 40 days) could receive the following reimbursement for serving meals, snacks, or both.

CACFP Reimbursement for July 2017 to June 2018			
	50 children	100 children	150 children
Serving one meal or a snack			
Breakfast (\$1.75)	\$3,500	\$7,000	\$10,500
Lunch/Dinner (\$3.46)*	\$6,920	\$13,840	\$20,760
Snack (\$0.88)	\$1,760	\$3,520	\$5,280
Serving a meal plus a snack			
Breakfast & Snack	\$5,260	\$10,520	\$15,780
Lunch/Dinner & Snack	\$8,680	\$17,360	\$26,040

* Note: The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides commodities, or cash-in-lieu of commodities, at the value of \$0.23 (July 2017–June 2018) for every lunch or dinner served through CACFP.

FRAC Resources

- *Moving from Afterschool Snack to Meal: It's easier than it looks* is a resource for afterschool sponsors to expand their program by offering more food to participating children. http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/moving_snack_to_meal.pdf
- FRAC's Afterschool Meals and Summer Meals Matter monthly conference calls and webinars cover topics aimed at helping groups create successful afterschool and summer meal programs. Learn more: <http://frac.org/events>