

The NCA Applauds the USDA Report to Congress: Reducing Paperwork in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

The report centered on increasing local flexibility, tech innovation, and State agency communication to create efficiency while maintaining program integrity.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, March 17, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The USDA released their Report to Congress: Reducing Paperwork in the Child and Adult Care Food Program this week to the public. The report was the result of tireless efforts on the part of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Paperwork Reduction Work Group (Work Group). The Work Group included professionals across national associations, state and local agencies, as well as experts in early childhood



USDA Reduces Paperwork in CACFP Program

education, care, nutrition, and technology. One of our own, the National CACFP Sponsors Association (NCA) President, Vicki Lipscomb, was included in the Work Group. They were tasked with drawing on their diverse backgrounds as well as previous efforts to reduce paperwork through the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 to ultimately improve the program while creating efficiency and maintaining integrity.

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CACFP provides nutrition and nutrition education to improve health and wellness of more than 3.56 million children receiving childcare each day.
CACFP Paperwork Reduction Work Group

The importance of the CACFP for early childhood nutrition and nutrition education for upwards of 3.56 million children a day cannot be overstated. Understanding the vital nature of the program and the modern administrative challenges of diverse populations around the country, the Work Group sought to alleviate some of the administrative burden while upholding program integrity. Administration of the program falls primarily on sponsoring organizations. Child care homes must participate under these organizations and child care

centers, while having the option to participate under a State agency, oftentimes choose sponsoring organizations to conduct training, process claims for reimbursement, monitor compliance, and provide other Program assistance. Sponsoring organizations have been overwhelmingly affected by unnecessary and duplicative paperwork in the face of tightening budgets.

The work group proposes that Congress make improvements to CACFP that would:

1. Extend the use of location in eligible areas to child care centers to determine CACFP eligibility.
2. Extend community eligibility and other approaches to facilitate a child's participation.
3. Engage a representative work group to continue to guide paperwork reduction efforts.

The work group recommends to the USDA to:

1. Work with State agencies to implement existing flexibilities to reduce paperwork
2. Make a child's eligibility easier to document and improve access through direct certification
3. Align monitoring requirements to streamline reviews of child care homes and centers
4. Establish a single, blended-rate method of payment, determined annually for centers
5. Simplify the documentation of food service records required by the State agency
6. Establish annual eligibility determinations for certain for-profit centers
7. Simplify verification of the nonprofit food service status of sponsored centers
8. Eliminate budget requirements that are counterproductive to a fiscally responsible Program operation
9. Further streamline the CACFP renewal process for sponsoring organizations and centers
10. Support the sponsoring organization's ability to mediate and fix problems through improvements in the serious deficiency process
11. Expand the appeals process to resolve disputes over State-specific requirements
12. Embrace technology solutions to improve integrity and reduce paperwork

As the childhood obesity epidemic continues, we strongly feel that the CACFP is more important now than ever before. Millions of children in child care centers, homes, and at-risk afterschool care are not able to access the healthy nutrition and education that the CACFP provides. The recommendations given to Congress by this report are aimed at making the program more accessible with the hope of increased participation and the ability to reach those children most in need as well as emergency shelters and adult day care centers. By embracing flexibility at the local level, supporting technological innovation to expand participation, assisting and incentivizing State agencies to increase communication with one another, and encouraging consistency with other Child Nutrition programs, the CACFP can work towards reaching every child in need.

The full text of the bill [can be found here](#).

Since 1986 the National CACFP Sponsor Association (NCA) is the leading national organization for sponsors who administer the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). We provide education and support to the entire CACFP community and in particular to sponsors of all sizes from across the country. We strive to improve communication between families, caregivers, sponsors, and their supervising government agencies. For more information, [please visit our website](#).

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