

Getting Nutritious Meals to Children: A Key Player in Decline

Largest Drop in CACFP Sponsoring Organizations in 5 Years

ROUND ROCK, TEXAS, USA, February 14, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Family child care homes, who are vital to the child care system, especially in rural areas, could lose access to nutritious meals in some states due to the decline in sponsoring organizations.

Sponsoring organizations serve as the lifeline of the food program by contracting with State agencies to help train and monitor child care providers who participate in the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Support is needed now to ensure sponsoring organizations stay in business.

The CACFP gives funds to child and adult care providers to serve nutritious meals and snacks to those in their care. More than 138,000 child and adult care providers work with the CACFP, serving nutritious meals and snacks to over 4.5 million children and adults every day. These CACFP provided meals contribute to the healthy growth and development of young children and wellness of adults throughout the United States.

Without sponsoring organizations, many providers would not have access to the program or the support they need to operate the program successfully. Not only do sponsoring organizations distribute funds to providers, but they also provide vital training, technical assistance, and education and help to ensure the integrity of the program. Sponsoring organizations have been highlighted as making the CACFP easier for providers to understand and increasing provider participation in the CACFP.

There has been a continuous decline in the number of CACFP sponsoring organizations. A recent data report from USDA shows that 32 sponsoring organizations have dropped the CACFP since June – the largest drop in a single quarter in more than 5 years.



While this may seem like a small number, sponsoring organizations can oversee hundreds or even thousands of providers. When a sponsoring organization drops the program, providers in their area lose access to the program, unless another sponsoring organization is able to step in and cover that area. Some states only have one sponsoring organization and if that sponsor drops the CACFP, family child care homes across the state will have no avenue for participating in the CACFP.□

In one instance a sponsoring organization dropped 58 providers, resulting in 850 children losing access to CACFP provided meals. The chain reaction that's triggered when a sponsoring organization leaves the program can be detrimental to the food security of underserved communities.

There are many challenges for sponsoring organizations of the CACFP which have caused the continuous decline. During the pandemic there were multiple flexibilities put into place that allowed the CACFP to succeed – and in some cases even expand. However, many of these flexibilities ended in June, resulting in an accelerated drop in sponsoring organizations.

Help prevent the continued decline in sponsoring organizations by [supporting initiatives](#) to simplify and streamline the CACFP.

Since 1986, the [National CACFP Sponsors 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 thousands of members in the CACFP community and to sponsors of all sizes from across the country. We strive to improve communication between families, care givers, sponsors, and their supervising government agencies.

Jennifer Basey
National CACFP Sponsors Association
+1 512-850-8278

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