



Integrity Initiative CACFP Family Day Care Home Sponsor Self-Assessment Tool

Background Information

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) plays a vital role in improving the quality of child care and making it more affordable for many low-income families. Each day, over 2.8 million children receive nutritious meals and snacks through CACFP.

As sponsors of family day care homes you are aware of the complexities of operating the CACFP. In recent years there have been numerous changes in program requirements. We have also faced the challenge of rebuilding the program reputation after negative findings from OIG audits.

Sponsors are responsible for implementing an ever changing list of rules and requirements. Often it is difficult to determine what source to use as a reference, given no one resource contains all the requirements compiled into a single document. Comprehension, interpretation and implementation of these requirements are very challenging. Simply understanding the many sources of program rules requires a special effort:

Sources of CACFP program requirements:

- Legislation
- USDA regulations
- USDA memos and guidance
- USDA Regional office memos and guidance
- Financial Management 796-2, Revision 3
- Management Improvement Guidance
- State policies
- Sponsoring agency policies and procedures

Child Care Assessment Project Launched by USDA FY 2004

USDA is responsible for making sure family day care home sponsoring organizations are operating the program in accordance with the law and program regulations. In FY 2004 USDA launched the Child Care Assessment Project (CCAP) to evaluate how well new Federal regulations and Management Improvement Guidance have been implemented across the United States. In order to demonstrate that CACFP operations have improved since the OIG "Operation Kiddie Care" audits, USDA is now conducting unannounced visits to CACFP sponsors and associated day care homes. These visits will be much like State level reviews gathering information on: sponsor board of directors; handling of CACFP funds; training of both staff and providers; policies and procedures related to serious deficiency, termination and appeals; monitor staffing; edit checks for claim processing; and overall internal controls.

National CACFP Forum Integrity Initiative

The Board of Directors of the National CACFP Forum recognizes the importance of CACFP in ensuring quality nutrition services for all children in day care settings. We are committed to assisting sponsors in operating the CACFP with integrity. It will be important that the outcome of the CCAP project demonstrates improved operations and compliance with existing regulations and legislation. The Forum wishes to thank the CACFP Professionals Association for their review of this document.

Using the Self Assessment Tool

For your convenience each tool was printed on master quality slick paper. This will allow you to make multiple copies each time the tool is used.

The tool is comprised of two parts: *The Operations Review* and *Provider File Review*. Each tool has instructions and ends with a summary. The summary should include areas that need to be strengthened, which will then lead you to develop your plan of action: staff training; provider training; rewriting and/or implementing new policies; or other appropriate actions which will improve your operations.

The Self Assessment Tool compiles the minimum Federal requirements into one resource. This tool was developed to assist sponsors in preparation for State and Federal reviews. The tool can also be used to:

- **Increase Program Integrity:** The *Provider File Review* can help identify at risk providers who need additional technical assistance and/or monitoring.
- **Develop a Formal Quality Assurance Program:** Establish an annual cycle to review overall program operations and provider files.
- **Train Board of Directors:** The tool offers an excellent overview of program rules and best practices.
- **Orient New Staff:** The checklist can offer guidance to new staff on job expectations and federal regulations.
- **Train Existing Staff:** Utilize the *Provider File Review* as a “refresher” with existing staff to reinforce their understanding of how all job functions and documentation fit together in the “big picture” of the program.

Complying With State Requirements

Please note that States can implement additional rules and requirements over and above the Federal requirements. Because all states are different, sponsors should work with their State Agencies to ensure that they understand and are in compliance with these additional expectations. You may wish to contact your State Agency and ask for a copy of the state’s forms that would be used in a review of your sponsorship.

Questions and Comments

Please feel free to contact the Forum with your questions and comments:

Website: www.cacfpforum.org *Toll Free:* 1-800-695-6988

Mailing Address: National CACFP Forum • 123 E. Powell Blvd., Ste 300 • Gresham, OR 97030

Tips For A Successful Assessment

- ◆ As soon as you are notified you have been selected for the assessment, request a copy of the “data collection form.” This will allow you to compile the requested information for the team of reviewers prior to the assessment and ensure that the information is complete.
- ◆ Have your policies and procedures handy, specifically policies related to:
 - Serious deficiency, corrective action process*
 - Outside employment*
 - Internal controls and accounting procedures*
 - Provider notification when away from the child care during approved meal times.*
- ◆ Documentation of staff and provider training will be reviewed. Have training agendas and attendance rosters available.
- ◆ Although specific providers cannot be notified in advance that they have been selected for a visit by the CCAP team, it is appropriate to educate your providers now that as CACFP participants, they may be visited unannounced by State and or Federal representatives.
- ◆ Stay involved. Be available to the reviewers. Designate a “Go-To” person to answer questions or retrieve requested information.
- ◆ Check in frequently with the assessment team to answer questions.
- ◆ Request that your monitor staff accompany the reviewers on home visits. This can help to alleviate anxiety and improve provider cooperation.
- ◆ Because sponsor policies dictate that meals be deducted if records are not up to date, request information on any providers who did not have records current.
- ◆ Request an “exit interview” to summarize data and findings. CACFP is a complex, complicated program. Make sure that you get the opportunity to clarify or supply additional information if there are areas of concern.
- ◆ If areas of concern arise, make corrections or a plan of correction prior to completion of the assessment to eliminate the need for any State agency follow up.





**A Project of the National CACFP Forum
Integrity Initiative**

**Lynn Goering
Past President, National CACFP Forum,**

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