



Nutrition Support

OVERVIEW

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, school children are facing unprecedented challenges with access to food. The Department is committed to working with local school systems and community partners to help bridge food gaps for families. Afterschool suppers and snacks enable schools to provide students access to nutritious meals, regardless of financial circumstances. Reimbursements from afterschool meals served may help schools balance food service budgets. With [USDA-issued waivers](#), all children in Louisiana are eligible for a daily, free supper and snacks through the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

This document serves as an informational guide to one program that local school systems can leverage, or invite community partners to help them leverage, as a means of providing food access to children.

PRIORITY ALIGNMENT

Remove barriers and create equitable, inclusive learning experiences for all children.

WHAT IS THE CACFP AT-RISK AFTERSCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM?

The [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\)](#) is a federal entitlement program that provides funding to help offset the cost of providing healthy meals and snacks to infants, children, teens, and adults in a variety of care settings, including afterschool programs. Although free snacks have been available through CACFP and [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#) for over twenty years, it was not until 2010 that educational or enrichment programs in low-income areas across the country became eligible to serve meals (usually suppers) free of charge through CACFP, formally known as the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals component.

REASONS TO ADD AN AT-RISK AFTERSCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM

- **For schools and afterschool programs:** Increased interest in tutoring and other programs
- **For children:** Better focus and improved performance
- **For foodservice programs:**
 - Increased participation at breakfast and lunch due to the relationship-building that occurs in the smaller setting after school
 - Opportunity to test new menu items and get feedback from a smaller group
 - Additional revenue; The reimbursement rate for a supper is more than three and a half times the reimbursement for a snack. All meals are reimbursed at the free rate, regardless of individual children's eligibility status. Children do not have to be enrolled students at the school or formally enrolled in any afterschool activity.

QUALIFICATIONS TO OFFER THIS PROGRAM

- Offer educational or enrichment programming in a structured and supervised environment. A wide variety of activities qualify – from tutoring to band and chess club to mentoring and life skills education. The At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program may not operate for the sole benefit of competitive sports teams, but athletes may receive meals as part of a broader afterschool program that offers activities for other students. Closed-enrollment clubs may also be eligible to receive meals. An activity must be available to any student who receives meals; however, schools can partner with other organizations to provide the activities.
- Offer meals free of charge, although a reasonable fee may be charged for the activity
- Be within the attendance zone of an elementary, middle, or high school where at least 50% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals

Additional details on these requirements can be found in the [USDA Afterschool Meals Handbook](#). The [reimbursement rates for afterschool meals](#) are also available.

