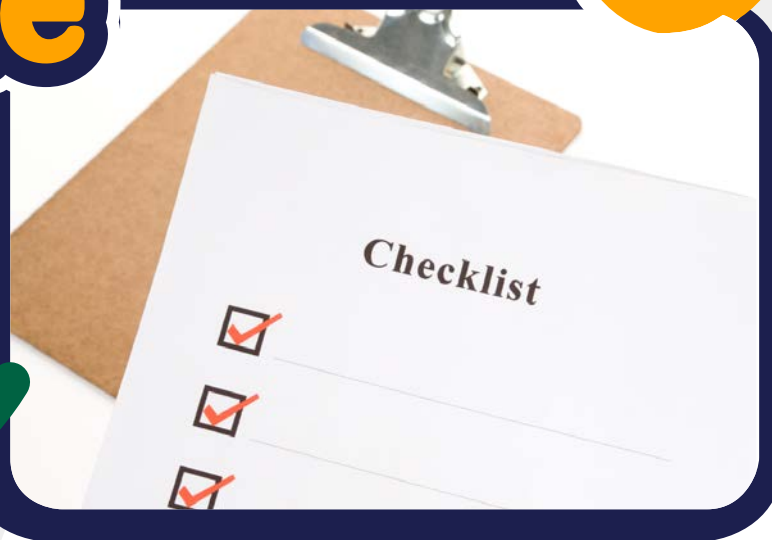


October
2026



Mealtime Memo

CACFP RECORDKEEPING



Accurate recordkeeping is key to meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) requirements and ensuring your program's success. Clear and accurate records help you get reimbursed and stay in compliance. This *Mealtime Memo* provides a list of CACFP recordkeeping requirements to help you stay on track.



Please note: This checklist is a general guide. Check with your State agency or sponsoring organization for specific forms and rules for recordkeeping.

Step 1: Track Your Participants

Keep files on each child in your care. These records show who is enrolled, who qualifies for meal benefits, and who attends each day.

- ☐ **Enrollment records** must include each child's name, date of birth, normal days and hours of care, and meals they receive. Update each year with a parent or guardian's signature.
- ☐ **Eligibility records** show if a child qualifies for free, reduced, or paid meals. Update each year and determine eligibility by comparing the family size and income to federal guidelines.
- ☐ **Attendance records** are a daily log of children present. (Attendance records are not the same as meal counts.)

Step 2: Document Every Meal

Your menus and meal counts show that you are meeting the CACFP meal pattern requirements.

- ☐ **Meal counts:** Document the number of meals and snacks served each day. Record counts **at the time of service**—when children receive a reimbursable meal or snack. This real-time tracking reflects **actual** meal counts rather than estimates.
- ☐ **Menus:** Keep planned, dated menus for every meal and snack claimed. List all meal components and specific food items (for example, write: "1% unflavored milk" instead of just "milk"). Write in any substitutions.





Step 3: Manage the Money

You must use CACFP funds to provide meals for the children in your program. Keep clear financial records to be ready for your audit.

- ☐ **Income:** Save copies of your claims and reimbursement payments.
- ☐ **Expenses:** Keep dated, itemized receipts and invoices. These fall into two groups:
 - **Operating costs:** food, kitchen supplies, meal service staff
 - **Administrative costs:** office supplies, admin staff time
- ☐ **Payroll:** Track labor expenses with payroll and time sheets.

Step 4: Track Training

Training records prove your staff is up to date on CACFP requirements. At a minimum, include:

- ☐ Dates and locations
- ☐ Topics covered (Civil Rights training is required every year)
- ☐ Names of staff who attended



Step 5: Stay Organized

Good organization makes reviews easier and claims more accurate.

- ☐ Organize by Federal fiscal year (October 1–September 30).
- ☐ Use a system that works for you: folders, binders, storage boxes, or electronic files.
- ☐ Label storage boxes with the fiscal year and discard date.
- ☐ Train staff on your system and stay consistent.
- ☐ Keep all CACFP records for **three federal fiscal years plus the current year** and have them available in case requested by your State agency or sponsoring organization.



Organized Records:

- ✓ Smooth reviews
- ✓ Timely claims
- ✓ Peace of mind

Strong recordkeeping keeps your program running smoothly and ready for reviews at any time. Contact your State agency or sponsoring organization for specific requirements.



References

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