

## Feeding Children & Teens After School at the Library

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Want to make a difference for your children and teens? Consider feeding them after school! Many public libraries do – typically through the USDA's [Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) (CACFP). Libraries that offer afterschool enrichment activities can participate in the **At-Risk Afterschool Meals** component of CACFP and provide a daily nutritious meal or snack to 0-18 year olds.



## CHILD & ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM

**The need for this program has never been greater.** The pandemic has brought a sharp increase in economic instability and food insecurity. Many families do not know how to access free meals for children, and if they don't participate in a formal afterschool program, their options are limited.

**Libraries and CACFP are a great fit!** Libraries offer equitable treatment, dignity, respect for young people, and accessibility. Your library is a trusted community center which always welcomes children and teens and is famous for giving stuff out for free.

CACFP is also good for the library. Besides addressing hunger and supporting vulnerable youth – and mitigating behavior issues that can be exacerbated when a child hasn't eaten in hours – participation offers:

- Access to new user groups, especially underserved and marginalized populations;
- Increased visibility of the library as a community asset;
- Opportunities for new partnerships;
- Positioning of the library as an important stakeholder in community well-being and positive child outcomes;
- Support for afterschool programming through increased attendance.

Libraries do not have to purchase or prepare the food. Library staff typically receive temperature-controlled or shelf-stable meals/snacks dropped off at the library, coordinate and manage distribution or sit-down mealtimes, and handle cleanup.

This is an ideal time to participate. Like the Summer Food Service Program, CACFP is a state-administered program paid for by federal funds. These programs exist to support children and teens in low-income areas. Ordinarily, an area eligibility requirement limits participation to areas where at least 50% of children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

But for the 2021-22 school year, this area eligibility requirement has been waived by the USDA to address economic impacts of the pandemic. Depending on your state administering agency's application of this waiver, your library may be eligible to participate this year even if you aren't in an area defined as low-income. Note that you will likely not be eligible in 2022-23 if your area has under a 50% free/reduced school meals rate. But you could maintain an afterschool snack program independently of CACFP, in partnership with a foodbank or other community provider, or through donations, or by including the cost of snacks in the library budget.

If you're interested in becoming a CACFP at-risk afterschool site or have questions about the program, use this map to identify and contact your state administering agency:  
[www.fns.usda.gov/contacts/contact-map](http://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts/contact-map)