

2016 State Administrative Agenda: Child Nutrition



For over two decades, California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) has worked to incubate and advance innovative policy solutions that increase low-income Californians' access to nutritious food. We envision a healthy and food-secure California for all residents. We ask state administrators to join us in this vision and take action in support of California's kids.

2016 Administrative Actions

- ➔ Optimize direct certification by adopting USDA-endorsed practices and processes
- ➔ Maximize the use of Medi-Cal data in direct certification
- ➔ Extend the "travelling apple" rule to the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Nutrition Program
- ➔ Ensure effective, coordinated implementation of the new CACFP nutrition standards
- ➔ Identify & disseminate strategies to advance LCAP priorities through improved school nutrition programs

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Optimize Direct Certification

Throughout 2015, California took important strides to strengthen state-level direct certification. As reported by the California Department of Education, improvements to direct certification with CalFresh data resulted in an additional 326,029 eligible students being automatically enrolled in free school meals. More work remains to be done. The State can help connect even more eligible students with free school meals by adopting known best practices that have proven effective in other states.

- ➔ **Administrative Action:** Employ USDA-endorsed best practices to increase the number of eligible students being directly certified with CalFresh data via the state-level system.

Maximize the Use of Medi-Cal Direct Certification

In early 2016, USDA invited states to apply for demonstration projects that will test the use of Medi-Cal (Medicaid) data in direct certification for free and reduced-price meals. This is a critical opportunity for California to build on its current Medi-Cal direct certification demonstration project, which is limited to 14 school districts and just 240,000 students. An expanded demonstration project in California has the potential to streamline enrollment and increase access to school meals for millions of eligible students.

- ➔ **Administrative Action:** Pursue a federal demonstration project to implement statewide direct certification for free and reduced-price school meals using Medi-Cal data -- and fully implement the demonstration using a state-level direct certification system.

Direct Certification Contact: Elyse Homel Vitale | 510.433.1122 x206 | elyse@cfpa.net

The Travelling Apple and CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Nutrition

The CACFP At-Risk Afterschool meal/snack program is the notable exception to the travelling apple” rule which applies, in varying forms, to the school lunch, school breakfast, and summer meal programs. The rule, which must be established through federal action, would allow children to consume some portion of their afterschool meals/snacks at a later time. This change would help ensure that food served in afterschool settings is consumed by children in need rather than unnecessarily discarded.

➔ **Administrative Action:** Join California stakeholders in asking USDA to establish a “travelling apple” rule for the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Nutrition Program.

Afterschool Nutrition Contact: Anna Colby | 213.482.8200 x204 | anna@cfpa.net

Ensure Effective & Coordinated Implementation of New CACFP Nutrition Standards

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides meal and snacks to California’s youngest, most vulnerable low-income children in child care settings. The nutrition standards for CACFP are set to be strengthened for the first time in decades. A robust implementation plan is needed to ensure these standards support ongoing – and perhaps even increased – participation in CACFP among child care providers and the low-income children in their care.

➔ **Administrative Action:** Engage stakeholders in developing priorities for the implementation of the new CACFP standards, incorporate those priorities into the State’s implementation plan, and share the plan publically with child care stakeholders.

CACFP Contact: Elyse Homel Vitale | 510.433.1122 x206 | elyse@cfpa.net

LCAP and the School Nutrition Programs

California’s statewide focus on the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and accompanying Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs) presents a unique opportunity to position school nutrition as a resource for academic success. Effective school nutrition programs can advance equity, academic achievement, attendance, and other LCAP priorities.

➔ **Administrative Action:** Collaborate with California stakeholders to identify effective strategies for strengthening school nutrition programs as a means of meeting LCAP priorities. Educate state and local decision makers about the critical connections between school nutrition programs and student success -- and the value of integrating school nutrition programs into LCAPs.

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