

April 21, 2023

The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Committee
California State Senate
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for an Equitable State Meal Reimbursement for Family Child Care Home Providers in the 2023-24 Budget

Dear Chairs Ting and Skinner,

On behalf of Nourish California, the CACFP Roundtable, and the undersigned organizations, we write to request an ongoing investment in the 2023-24 budget to eliminate the discriminatory meal reimbursement rate gap that underpays and undervalues family child care providers serving healthy meals to kids in their care.

All children deserve to be well nourished and thrive. It is the current policy of this state that no child be hungry while attending a preschool program, and that preschools have an obligation to provide for the nutritional needs of children in attendance. Even with this policy, California fails to fairly invest in nourishing our kids in care and supporting child care providers. Each year, child care providers absorb hundreds of millions of dollars in costs for meals served to children, despite the fact that they are already operating on razor thin margins.

Existing state law also creates an inequitable gap that keeps family child care home providers from receiving the full state reimbursement for meals served to children in their care, unfairly requiring family child care homes to be reimbursed for only 75 percent of the meals served to kids in their care. **This gap means certain family child care providers receive no state funding for one out of every four meals they serve.**

California's child care system has continued a legacy of undervaluing and underpaying labor historically performed by Black, Latina, and immigrant women of color. Ending the meal reimbursement rate gap is an important first step toward eliminating those inequities.

Family child care providers face additional structural and systemic barriers to economic success. Most are women of color (71 percent), and nearly half were born outside the U.S. (42 percent). According to the [UC Berkeley Center for the Study of Child Care Employment](#), FCC providers' income levels are often below a thriving or even living wage; median income is only \$16,200 to \$30,000 for small child care homes, and only \$40,000 to \$56,400 for large child care homes. This despite the fact that two-thirds of providers work more than 40 hours per week. Alarming, while providers are responsible for feeding healthy meals to kids in their care, one-third of family child care providers reported being food insecure.

We therefore respectfully request an ongoing allocation of \$1.33 million in the 2023-24 state budget to finally eliminate the unfair meal reimbursement rate gap that is the legacy of historically racist state policy that discriminates against family child care providers.

We look forward to working with both Budget Committees and the Administration to make the investment needed to move the state closer to ensuring a truly equitable child care nutrition program that works for kids, parents and providers alike. Good nutrition is the foundation of a healthy start for children, and family child care providers deserve to be compensated equally for the invaluable service they provide. Thank you for your consideration of this request, and please don't hesitate to reach out to us at the email addresses below should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jared Call, Senior Advocate
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Samantha Marshall, Director of Programs & Policy
CACFP Roundtable
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Cc: Senate President pro Tem
Speaker of the Assembly
Senate Budget Subcommittee 3

Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1
Department of Social Services
Department of Finance
Governor Gavin Newsom
Assemblymember Buffy Wicks (AD-14)
Senator Melissa Hurtado (SD-16)



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