Afterschool Meals

Outside of the traditional school day, many children do not know where their next meal will come from. The Afterschool Meal Program, part of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), helps kids get the nutritious meals they need in a safe, supervised location after the school day ends.

Why are afterschool meals important?

Afterschool meals combine the nutrition students need with constructive activities that help them learn.

Serving supper through the Afterschool Meal program can bring in significant revenue for your program. Suppers are reimbursed through CACFP, and if you take cash instead of USDA commodity foods, supper reimbursement is nearly four times more than the reimbursement for an afterschool snack.[1]

Increased Child Nutrition Revenue
USDA's reimbursement rate for afterschool meals is nearly four times the rate for snacks.[1]

Improved Academic Performance
Students who participate in high-quality afterschool programs show significant gains in standardized math test scores when compared to their peers who did not participate.[2]

Higher Attendance and Graduation Rates
70% of kids who participate in afterschool programs have exemplary attendance rates, and 95% of those students graduate.[3]

"Brownsville ISD believes that every student deserves a healthy future. Through the provision of supper meals, the BISD Food and Nutrition Services Department is committed to providing nutritious food to students who would otherwise get inadequate nourishment after school. Each day, approximately 8,000 children receive a supper meal that emphasizes a variety of milk, whole grains, fruits and vegetables and fills the evening hunger gap to ensure they do not go to bed hungry. Offered to students districtwide, the Brownsville ISD Supper Program contributes to overall student health and well-being."

– Laura-Zelda S. Villarreal, MBA, RDN, LD, SNS is Administrator for Food and Nutrition Services
Brownsville ISD, Brownsville, Texas

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q Where can afterschool meals be served?

A For a school to qualify to serve afterschool meals, they must be located in an attendance zone of an elementary, middle or high school where at least half of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. No individual enrollment or eligibility documentation is required for the children, and all meals are reimbursed at the same rate

Q Do afterschool meals have to be served in conjunction with an afterschool program?

A Yes. All afterschool meal sites must also offer afterschool educational or enrichment programming, and programs cannot operate for the sole benefit of competitive athletics.

Q Who is eligible for afterschool meals?

A Reimbursable meals and snacks can be served to children, including teenagers age 18 or under, at the start of the school year. There are no application forms for parents or guardians to fill out. All afterschool meals and snacks are served in group settings, at no cost to the child or to the child's parents or guardians. Children who are not enrolled at the school that is serving meals, such as siblings, may still participate.

Q Is this program limited to regular school days?

A It may be operated on weekends, holidays or school vacations, but not in the summer unless students are enrolled in a year-round school.

Q How are we reimbursed for afterschool meals?

A Your state agency will handle reimbursement. CACFP is administered at the federal level by the USDA and in each state by a designated agency (the host agency may or may not be the same in each state). Reimbursement rates for meals are published annually in the Federal Register. You will be reimbursed through USDA Foods or, if your program is eligible, through cash payments.[4]

More questions?
Reach out to your Dairy MAX **School Wellness Consultant**.

References:
1. https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/supper-makes-cents-for-schools_0.pdf 2. https://globalfrp.org/ 3. http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Evaluation_Backgrounder.pdf 4. https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/reimbursement-rates