

Section 9000

Terms, Definitions, and Acronyms

Log of Section Updates

This table will reflect updates to the handbook implemented during the current Program Year. All substantive updates made since the last release will be highlighted in yellow within this section.

Date of Edit	Content/Purpose	Subsection(s)
March 2026	Reorganized, rewrote, updated, and/or reformatted information throughout the section for clarity. Consolidated sections from four previous handbooks.	Throughout

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9000 Terms, Definitions, and Acronyms

9100 Terms and Definitions

Accountability – Performance standard indicating that a new or renewing contracting organization maintains internal controls to ensure the proper spending of Program funds on compliant meals and snacks, meal service quality, and Program compliance. Organizations must demonstrate Program Accountability in their applications/management plans before approval of CACFP participation.

Administrative Capability – Performance standard indicating that a new or renewing contracting organization has documented staffing and expertise to meet the Program’s requirements. Organizations must demonstrate Administrative Capability in their applications/management plans before approval of CACFP participation.

Administrative Expenses – An organization’s allowable expenses for planning, organizing, and managing a food service under the Program.

Administrative Reimbursement – Payments made by TDA to day care home sponsors for expenses incurred in the Program's administration.

Administrative Review Official (ARO) – The independent and impartial official who conducts a fair hearing or an appeal.

Adult – For the purposes of the collection of the last four digits of social security numbers as a condition of eligibility for free or reduced-price meals, any individual 21 years of age or older.

Adult Day Care Center – Any public or private nonprofit organization, or for-profit center that:

- a) Is licensed by the state to provide care services to adults with disabilities or adults 60 years of age or older in a group setting outside their homes on a less than 24-hour basis; and
- b) Provides these services directly or through arrangements with other organizations while maintaining management responsibility for all services. These centers must offer a structured, comprehensive program with health, social, and support services tailored to each participant’s individual care plans.

Adult Participant – A person enrolled in an adult day care center who is functionally impaired or is 60 years of age or older.

Advance Payments – Financial assistance made available by TDA to an organization for its Program costs before the month in which such costs will be incurred. The advance is based on TDA or organization estimates of future reimbursements and must be repaid.

Affiliated Site – A site that is administered completely by the same legal entity as the sponsoring organization. Sites operating at a legally unaffiliated location, but where the sponsor

has complete operational and financial control of all Program aspects (e.g., affiliated staff, food procurement), may be considered affiliated.

Agreement – An understanding between two or more parties duly executed and legally binding. CEs must submit a complete application with all required documentation and, after TDA's approval, sign a Permanent Agreement with TDA before beginning Program operations.

Alternate Form – A form developed by an entity other than TDA that is used instead of a TDA form and documents all required information.

Annually – Once during each Program Year.

Appeal – The fair hearing provided upon request to:

- a) A contracting organization that has been given notice by the TDA of any action or proposed action that will affect the contracting entity's participation or reimbursement under the Program; and
- b) A principal or individual responsible for a contracting organization's serious deficiency after the responsible principal or responsible individual has been given a notice of intent to disqualify them from the Program.

At-risk Afterschool Care Center (or At-risk site) – An eligible organization that participates in the CACFP as a contracting organization or sponsored site and provides structured, after-school child care and organized enrichment activities in addition to CACP meals.

CACFP – The Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Center (or Site) – A child care center, At-risk afterschool care center, outside-school-hours care center, adult day care center, or emergency shelter. Centers/site may independently contract with TDA or operate under a sponsoring organization contracting with TDA.

Child Care Center – Any public or private nonprofit center, or any eligible for-profit center that is licensed or approved to provide nonresidential child care services to enrolled children, primarily of preschool age. This includes day care centers, settlement houses, neighborhood centers, Head Start centers, and organizations providing day care services for children with disabilities. Child care centers may participate in the Program as independent centers or as sponsored sites.

Children – Includes:

- a) Persons age 12 and under;
- b) Persons age 15 and under who are children of migrant workers;
- c) *Persons with disabilities*, as defined in this section;
- d) For emergency shelters, persons age 18 and under; and
- e) For at-risk afterschool care centers, persons age 18 and under at the start of the school year.

Claiming Percentage – The ratio of the number of enrolled participants in each eligibility category (free, reduced-price, or paid) to the total of enrolled participants in the center or site. TDA reimburses centers/sites based on claiming percentages.

Contract – A binding agreement where there is an “exchange of legal consideration” (i.e., legally enforceable).

Contracting Entity (CEs) – A sponsoring organization or independent center that enters into an agreement with TDA to assume final administrative and financial responsibility for Program operations. This includes School Food Authorities (SFAs), non-profit organizations, Head Start programs, and governmental entities. CE's may also include for-profit independent centers meeting for-profit eligibility requirements and for-profit organizations sponsoring affiliated sites.

Day Care Home Provider (Provider) – A private home, licensed or registered by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or by an alternate licensing authority, that operates an organized nonresidential child care program for enrolled children. Day care home providers must operate under the sponsorship of a contracting entity.

Days – Calendar days, unless otherwise specified.

Disabled Participant – Any participant who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment. The CACFP, when viewed in its entirety, must be accessible to and usable by disabled participants, including persons with impaired vision or hearing

Disqualified – The status of an organization, a responsible principal, or a responsible individual that was declared seriously deficient and placed on the National Disqualified List.

Durable (Nonexpendable) Materials and Supplies – All equipment valued under \$10,000 with a useful life of more than one year. Costs for durable materials and supplies, *not meeting the definition of equipment*, used for Program purposes are allowable. Computers under \$10,000 are considered durable supplies per federal regulation.

Edit Check – A monthly claims validation process that sponsors must complete before submitting claims to TDA. Sponsors compare submitted data to other available information to identify potential errors or inconsistencies. When edit checks reveal issues with sites'/providers' meal data, sponsors must investigate and resolve any problems before submitting their claims.

Egregious – A consistent flagrant or glaring violation of CACFP requirements

Eligible Area (Low-income Area) – An attendance zone served by an elementary, middle, or high school where at least 50 percent of enrolled children are certified eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

Emergency Shelter – A public or private nonprofit organization or its site whose primary purpose is to provide temporary shelter to homeless families with children. In most cases, an eligible shelter is one that combines overnight facilities with day programs, such as congregate meal services, for homeless children and their parents or guardians.

Enrolled Child – A child whose parent or guardian has submitted a signed document that indicates that the child is enrolled for child care.

Enrolled Adult Participant – An “Adult Participant” (excluding institutionalized individuals) for whom a signed document has been submitted indicating that the adult is enrolled for day care.

Expansion Funds – Financial assistance TDA makes available to sponsors of day care homes who have already used start-up funds or are ineligible for start-up funds (because they already sponsor more than 50 providers) to help them recruit new providers in low-income or rural areas.

Expendable Materials and Supplies – All materials and supplies, except nonexpendable equipment, with a useful life of less than one year. Costs for expendable materials and supplies are allowable only when items are purchased and completely used within 90 days (3 months) of purchase, *or*, for items providing more than three months of usability, if they are first used within one month of purchase.

Family – A group of related or unrelated individuals who live together as one economic unit. Residents of an institution or boarding house are not included.

FDPIR Household – Any individual or group of individuals that is currently certified to receive assistance as a household under the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations. Households receiving FDPIR assistance are categorically eligible for free meals in the CACFP.

Financial Viability (and Financial Management) – Performance standard indicating that a new or renewing contracting entity has the financial resources to meet all Program requirements. This includes financial resources for daily operations, payment for employees and supplies during temporary interruptions in Program payments, and the ability to pay debts when fiscal claims have been assessed against it.

Firm Fixed-Price Contract – A contract with a price that is set at the time the contract begins and remains guaranteed for a specific period. The contract may include an economic cost adjustment provision tied to a standard index (such as inflation rates). Contracting entities must use firm fixed-price contracts when procuring through competitive sealed bids.

Fiscal Year – A period of 12 calendar months that constitutes as a contracting organization’s accounting year.

Food Item – A specific food offered within the meal components comprising the reimbursable meal. For example, separate ½ cup servings of broccoli and carrots are two food items that comprise the vegetable component.

Food Service Management Company – An organization, other than a public or private nonprofit school, typically a for-profit vendor, with which a contracting organization may contract to prepare and, unless otherwise provided for, deliver meals (with or without milk) for use in the CACFP. Independent centers and sponsors of sites/providers contracting with an FSMC must follow CACFP procurement guidelines. Unaffiliated sites and providers are not required to follow federal procurement regulations when contracting with an FSMC.

For-profit Center/Site – A site/center that provides nonresidential care to participants and does not qualify for tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

Foster Child – An individual who is placed by an authorized placement agency or by judgment, decree, or other order of any court of competent jurisdiction and is distinct from a “child” of the household.

Frontloading – Conducting a majority of monitoring reviews early in the Program Year and recommended by TDA. Frontloading reviews allows sponsors the flexibility to revise the review averaging plan if necessary.

Functionally Impaired Adult – Chronically impaired disabled persons 18 years of age or older, including victims of Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders with neurological and organic brain dysfunction, who are physically or mentally impaired to the extent that their capacity for independence and their ability to carry out activities of daily living is markedly limited. Activities of daily living include, but are not limited to, adaptive activities such as cleaning, shopping, cooking, taking public transportation, maintaining a residence, caring appropriately for one’s grooming or hygiene, using telephones and directories, or using a post office. Marked limitations refer to the severity of impairment, and not the number of limited activities, and occur when the degree of limitation is such as to seriously interfere with the ability to function independently.

Governing Body – The elected or appointed members of an organization who jointly oversee the organization’s activities, sometimes referred to as the Board of Directors or Executive Board. For for-profit organizations not required to have a Board of Directors, the governing body may consist of the owner(s) of the organization. CEs must submit documentation demonstrating that their independent governing board acknowledges the responsibilities and liabilities related to Program participation

Group Living Arrangement – Private residences housing one or more individuals who are primarily responsible for their own care while maintaining community presence, though they may receive on-site monitoring. These communities may or may not receive federal, state, or local subsidies.

Head Start Participant – A child currently receiving assistance under a federally-funded Head Start Program who is categorically eligible for free meals in the CACFP by virtue of meeting Head Start’s low-income criteria.

Household – See “Family.”

Household Contact – A contact made by a sponsoring organization or TDA to an adult member of a household with a participant in a child care center or day care home, in order to verify the attendance and enrollment of the child and the specific meal service(s) which the child routinely receives while in care.

Income Standards – The family size and income standards prescribed annually by USDA for determining eligibility for free and reduced-price meals according to the National School Lunch Act.

Independent Center – A child care center, emergency shelter, at-risk afterschool care center, outside-school-hours care center, or adult day care center that enters into an agreement with TDA to assume final administrative and financial responsibility for Program operations.

Independent Governing Board of Directors – In the case of a nonprofit organization; or in the case of a for-profit organization required to have a board of directors, a governing board which meets regularly and has the authority to hire and fire the Organization’s executive director.

Infant cereal – A dry cereal formulated for and generally recognized as a cereal for infants. Iron-fortified infant cereal containing no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce and meeting all other CACFP requirements is the only grain that may count towards a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, or supper in the infant meal pattern.

Infant formula – Any iron-fortified formula intended for dietary use solely as a food for normal healthy infants, not including formulas specifically formulated for infants with inborn errors of metabolism or digestive or absorptive problems. Infant formula, as served, must be in a liquid state at the recommended dilution. Sites/providers must offer at least one type of iron-fortified infant formula and may claim reimbursement for iron-fortified formulas that meet the definition of infant formula and are not considered FDA exempt.

Internal Controls – The policies, procedures, and organizational structure of a contracting organization designed to reasonably assure that:

- a) The Program achieves its intended result;
- b) Program resources are used in a manner that protects against fraud, abuse, and mismanagement, and in accordance with law, regulations, and guidance; and
- c) Timely and reliable Program information is obtained, maintained, reported, and used for decision-making.

Key Activities – Essential CACFP activities, as defined by TDA and this handbook, performed to meet the requirements of the Program. All contracting organizations, including independent centers, must provide training for new and existing contracting entity and site/provider staff, including contractors (e.g., vendors), *before* they begin performing any CACFP key activities.

Lactose Intolerance – The inability to digest or absorb lactose, a type of sugar found in milk and dairy products. Sites/providers must make meal modifications for participants with disabilities that restrict their diet, including lactose intolerance and food allergies. TDA will reimburse modified meals that do not meet standard meal pattern requirements if sites/providers obtain a medical statement meeting the requirements of this handbook.

Licensed Healthcare Professional – An individual who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under State law. In Texas, this includes licensed physicians (MD or DO) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) or Physician Assistants (PAs) with written protocols from supervising physicians.

Major Life Activity – Includes, but not limited to, caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, working, and major bodily functions such as functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, cardiovascular, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

Meal Component – One of the food categories that comprises a reimbursable meal.

CACFP sites/providers must always offer all the meal components that comprise a reimbursable meal in at least the minimum required amounts. The meal components in the CACFP are fluid milk, vegetables, fruits, grains, and meats/meat alternates.

Meals – Food that is served to enrolled participants at a center and which meets Program requirements. However, children participating in at-risk afterschool care centers, emergency shelters, or outside-school-hours care centers do not have to be enrolled.

Medicaid – Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

Medicaid Recipient – An adult participant who receives assistance under Title XIX of the Social Security Act, the Grant to States for Medical Assistance Programs - Medicaid.

Milk – Pasteurized fluid types of unflavored or flavored whole milk, low-fat milk, skim milk, or cultured buttermilk that meet state and local standards. Milk must contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

National Disqualified List – The list, maintained by USDA, of organizations, responsible principals, and responsible individuals disqualified from participation in the Program.

New Center – An approved center that has not begun participation in the Program either under a sponsoring organization or as an independent center.

New Day Care Home/Provider – A provider that has no previous experience in the CACFP, has had a break in service, or has transferred from one sponsor to another sponsor.

Non-Pricing Program – An organization, child care center, or adult day care center charging a general tuition fee that includes participants' meal costs.

Nonprofit Food Service – All food service operations conducted by the contracting organization principally for the benefit of enrolled children, and from which all Program reimbursement funds are used solely for the operations or improvement of such food service.

Nonresidential Site/Provider – A site/provider that does not keep the same participants for more than 24 hours on a regular basis.

Operating Expenses – Expenses incurred by a site/provider or sponsor of centers to provide meals to participants under the Program.

Outside-school-hours Care Center – A public or private nonprofit center, or a for-profit center, that is licensed or approved to provide organized nonresidential child care services to children during hours outside of school. Outside-school-hours care centers must meet all eligibility requirements, including having child care as their primary purpose, providing planned, supervised, and regularly-scheduled activities, and not restricting participation based on specific skills or interests. Outside-school-hours care centers may participate in the Program as independent centers or as sponsored sites.

Participants –

- a) For child care centers, day care homes, and at-risk afterschool programs, see “Children.”

b) For adult day cares, see “Adult Participant.”

Participating Center – A center that claims meals for a given month is considered to be "participating in the Program" for that claim month. This includes sponsored sites.

Personal Property – Property of any kind, except real property. Property may be tangible (having physical existence such as fax machines, printers or copiers) or intangible (having no physical existence, such as patents, inventions and copyrights).

Persons with Disabilities - Persons of any age who have one or more disabilities, as determined by the State, and who are enrolled in an organization or child care facility serving a majority of persons who are age 18 and under.

Potential Contracting Entity – A sponsoring organization or independent center applying to participate in the Program for the first time or applying to participate in the Program after a lapse in participation.

Pricing Program – An organization, child care center, or adult day care center in which a separate, identifiable charge is made for meals served to participants. Contracting entities and sites operating pricing programs must identify a process for collecting meal charges without overtly identifying participants’ eligibilities.

Principal – Any individual who holds a management position within, or is an officer of, an Organization or a sponsored center, including all members of the Organization’s board of directors or the sponsored center’s board of directors.

Procurement – An orderly process of acquiring food, meals, equipment and other goods and services, whether by lease or purchase.

Program – The Child and Adult Care Food Program, authorized by Section 17 of the National School Lunch Act, as amended.

Program Payments – Financial assistance in the form of start-up payments, expansion payments, advance payments, or reimbursement paid or payable to contracting entities for operating costs and administrative costs.

Program Year (PY) – A period of 12 calendar months beginning October 1 of any year and ending September 30 of the following year.

Provider – See *Day Care Home Provider* above.

Publicly Funded Program – Any program or grant funded by public funds, including, but not limited to, federal, state, or local government funds.

Reduced-Price Meal – A meal served under the Program to a participant from a family that meets the income standards for reduced-price school meals. Any separate charge imposed must be less than the full price of the meal, but in no case more than 40 cents for a lunch or supper, 30 cents for a breakfast, and 15 cents for a snack.

Registered Dietitian – A nationally board-certified and state-licensed nutrition professional who is trained in the knowledge and science related to how food and nutrition influence overall health and wellness.

Reimbursement – Federal financial assistance paid or payable to contracting organizations for Program costs within the rates assigned by the USDA. Reimbursement is based primarily on the number of reimbursable meals claimed by a site/provider. Day care, home sponsors receive additional Administrative Reimbursement based on the number of providers sponsored.

Renewing Contracting Entity – A sponsoring organization or independent center that is participating in the Program at the time it submits a renewal application.

Resident Child – A child who is a resident of the provider’s home. A resident child may include the provider’s own child, a foster child, or an adopted child.

Responsible Principal or Responsible Individual –

- a) A principal, whether compensated or uncompensated, who TDA or USDA determines to be responsible for a contracting entity's serious deficiency;
- b) Any other individual employed by, or under contract with, a contracting entity who TDA or USDA determines to be responsible for the serious deficiency; or
- c) An uncompensated individual who TDA or USDA determines to be responsible for a contracting entity’s serious deficiency.

Review Averaging – Conducting the same total number of annual monitoring reviews (three times the number of sponsored sites) by reviewing some sites twice a year and other sites three or more times per year. Sponsors conducting review averaging must submit an implementation description in their management plans.

Review Cycle – The period and the frequency with which sponsored sites must be reviewed.

Secondary Verification – A means of verifying information, either when the first or primary means (e.g., household contacts) of verifying the information has failed or was inconclusive, the first means of verification is not applicable, or the situation requires two or more means of verification. When conducting household contacts, secondary verification may only be used if three attempts at contacting the household fail and are documented.

Serious Deficiency – The status of a contracting organization or site/provider that has been determined to be egregiously non-compliant in one or more aspects of its operation of the Program.

Site – See *Center (or Site)* above.

Snack - A meal supplement that meets the meal pattern requirements.

Sponsoring Organization (Sponsor) – A *public or nonprofit private organization* that has complete administrative responsibility for the Program in:

- a) One or more day care homes;

- b) Two or more child care centers, emergency shelters, At-risk afterschool care centers, outside-school-hours care centers, or adult day care centers. These center/sites may be legally affiliated with the sponsor or unaffiliated.

Start-up Payments – Financial assistance TDA makes available to day care home sponsors with fewer than 50 sponsored day care homes to help with recruitment and administrative expenses associated with Program expansion, including outreach, recruitment, or licensing.

SSI Participant – An adult participant who receives assistance under Title XVI of the Social Security Act, the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for the Aged, Blind and Disabled Program.

State Agency – The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA).

State Agency List – The list, maintained by TDA, of organizations, responsible principals, responsible individuals, and day care home providers disqualified by TDA from participation in the Child Nutrition Programs.

State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) – The State medical assistance program under Title XXI of the Social Security Act.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Household – Any individual or group of individuals who are currently certified to receive assistance as a household under SNAP.

TANF Recipient – An individual or household receiving assistance under a State-administered Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program.

Temporarily Defer – To postpone the serious deficiency process until or unless it is determined that the serious deficiency or serious deficiencies were not fully and permanently corrected.

Termination for Cause – The termination of a contracting entity's Permanent Agreement by TDA due to the contracting organization's violation of the Agreement. Termination for cause also includes the termination of a sponsored site's agreement by the contracting entity due to the site's violation of its agreement with the sponsor.

Termination for Convenience (or Mutual Consent) – The termination of a contracting organization's Permanent Agreement by either the contracting organization or TDA due to considerations unrelated to either party's performance of Program responsibilities under the Agreement.

Tier I Day Care Home – Providers receiving a higher rate of reimbursement based on the provider's area eligibility (based on school or census data), income, or categorical eligibility. After a sponsoring organization classifies a provider as Tier I, the provider will receive Tier I reimbursements for all CACFP meals served to enrolled non-resident children, regardless of individual household incomes.

Tier II Day Care Home – Providers not classified by sponsors as Tier I will be classified as Tier II. Tier II providers may choose to receive lower Tier II reimbursement rates for meals served to all enrolled non-resident children, or to have sponsors determine the eligibility of

individual enrolled children. In this case, individual children determined as eligible by sponsors may receive Tier I rates.

Title XVI – Title XVI of the Social Security Act that authorizes the Supplemental Security Income for the Aged, Blind, and Disabled Program - SSI.

Title XIX – Title XIX of the Social Security Act that authorizes the Grants to States for Medical Assistance Programs - Medicaid.

Title XX – Title XX of the Social Security Act.

Unaffiliated Site – A site administered by an organization legally unaffiliated with a sponsor **but** is legally affiliated with the business or organization at the location of service. Unaffiliated site organizations are responsible for providing/procuring food and enrichment at the site.

Unannounced Review – An on-site review for which no prior notification is given to the contracting entity or sponsored site.

USDA – The United States Department of Agriculture.

USDA Foods – Foods donated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

9200 Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADC	Adult Day Care
ARO	Administrative Review Official
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CAP	Corrective Action Plan
CCC	Child Care Center
CFR	(U.S.) Code of Federal Regulations
CN	Child Nutrition
DAHS	Day Activity and Health Services
DFPS	(Texas) Department of Family and Protective Services
EHSP	Early Head Start Program
EIN	Employee Identification Number
ESP	Even Start Program
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FNS	USDA Food and Nutrition Service
FSMC	Food Service Management Company
FY	Fiscal Year
F&N	Food and Nutrition Division of TDA
GAAP	Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
HSP	Head Start Program

IFB	Invitation for Bid
IRS	U.S. Internal Revenue Service
ISD	Independent School District
NDL	National Disqualified List
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
PY	Program Year
RFP	Request for Proposals
SBP	School Breakfast Program
SFA	School Food Authority
SFSP	Summer Food Service Program
SMP	Special Milk Program
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
SSN	Social Security Number
TAC	Texas Administrative Code
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TDA	Texas Department of Agriculture
TEA	Texas Education Agency
TX-UNPS	Texas Unified Nutrition Programs System
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USPS	United States Postal Service
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children