

THE AT-RISK AFTERSCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM



Introduction

Serving meals at your afterschool program is good for the children you serve and your program's bottom line. Whether your program is interested in providing a snack or a full meal, the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-Risk Meal Program can help!

Healthy Habits for Children

Help fight hunger in your community. For some children, the snack they receive during their afterschool program is the last food they will receive that day. Funding provided through the At-Risk Program will help ensure that all the children in your program leave feeling well-fed. In NJ, 1 in 10 households experience food hardship.

Encourage positive behavior and participation. Children are often hungry by the time they arrive at their afterschool program. Well-nourished children have more energy for focusing on homework, engaging with peers, and participating in physical and enrichment activities.

Create a healthy afterschool environment. Providing free, nutritious meals and snacks to all the children in your program can actually replace junk foods in their diets. In NJ, 1 in 3 youth aged 10-17 are overweight or obese.

Enhance Programming and Reach

Increase enrollment. By participating in the At-Risk Program, you will be able to advertise that your program serves free meals to all, which may attract new children. In DC, programs implementing the At-Risk Meal program experienced an increase in enrollment of 7%.

Invest more in programming. If part of your program's budget currently pays for snacks, the reimbursement received through the At-Risk Program may allow you to put those funds toward enrichment opportunities or activities.

The At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program offers federal funding to reimburse afterschool programs serving a snack and/or supper to children in low-income areas. This program is administered at the federal level by the [US Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#) and at the state level by the [NJ Department of Agriculture \(NJDA\)](#) Division of Food and Nutrition, through the CACFP.



For more information about the At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program, please contact NJSACC's Program Coordinator for afterschool meals by calling 908-789-0259 or emailing vista@njsacc.org.

To determine area eligibility and receive application materials, contact your regional Child Nutrition Specialist at NJDA by calling 609-984-1250.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for the At-Risk Meal Program, your afterschool program must meet the following conditions:

- Be located within a school attendance boundary where at least 50% of the students receive free or reduced priced lunch.
- Be operated by a school, non-profit, or local government agency. For-profit centers may also be eligible.
- Provide regularly scheduled activities in a structured and supervised environment and include education or enrichment activities.
- Serve children 18 years or younger at the beginning of the school year.
- Accept all children within capacity.
- Provide meals and/or snacks to all children, free of charge.

For a full description of eligibility requirements, please consult the [At-Risk Afterschool Meals Handbook](#).

Meal Service

Meals and snacks served at eligible afterschool programs may receive reimbursement through the At-Risk Meal Program if the following conditions are met:

- Meals and snacks are served during the regular school year. This includes after-school, holidays, weekends, and vacations. Programs operating during summer months

may benefit from the [Summer Food Service Program](#).

- There is a gap of at least 2 hours if both a snack and a meal are provided.
- State or local health/sanitation, fire/safety standards, certificate of occupancy, and attendance zone verification letters are provided (licensed child care centers may provide a copy of the license and a health/sanitation letter).

Meals may be served hot or cold and must include all 5 of the components below.

- 1 serving of milk
- 2 servings of fruits and/or vegetables
- 1 serving of grains
- 1 serving of protein

Snacks must include any 2 of these components.

For the 2012-2013 school year, eligible snacks will be reimbursed \$0.78 per child per day and meals will be reimbursed \$2.86 per child per day. Reimbursement rates are adjusted annually.

Record Keeping

Afterschool programs participating in the At-Risk Meal Program must keep accurate records in order to receive reimbursements. This includes daily attendance, records for the number of meals and/or snacks served, and menus.

Successful Models in the Garden State

Vended Meals

The Get SET After School Program is located in the East Ward of Trenton, at the Westminster Community Life Center. Get SET became a sponsor for the At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program in 2011 and now provides supper to its students. Get SET contracts with an outside vendor who delivers fresh meals daily. Get SET does need to contribute a small amount of additional funds, which they are willing to do because of the benefits the meal program has brought to the children participating in the afterschool program.

Self-Prepared Meals

The DASH Afterschool Program, run by the Impact 21 Community Development Corporation in Rahway, has been providing suppers through the At-Risk Meal Program since March of 2012. Prior to that, the program had been serving snacks out of its own operating budget. By becoming a sponsor, however, they are able to provide more food to their students while saving program funds. Impact 21 prepares the meals in their on-site commercial kitchen, with input from their staff nutritionist.