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BROC Community Action

CACFP Sponsor of Day Care Homes for Rutland, Bennington and Addison Counties

First, thank you Chair Bongartz and committee members for your time today and for approving last year's appropriation of $150,000. That funding was critical in stabilizing our program during a year where we faced a $41,000 administrative shortfall—a gap we typically subsidize through grants. Your support lifted a significant financial burden, allowing funds that would have subsidized CACFP to instead strengthen direct service programs.

Without that appropriation, we would have faced difficult decisions about continuing to sponsor the CACFP—a move that would have devastated not only the day care home providers, but also the children and families they serve. Currently only 3 CACFP Sponsoring Organizations remain to cover the entire state, all operating with one staff member whose responsibilities include not just program administrative duties but also conducting three onsite visits at each of the 203 participating registered childcare program every year. Essentially that leaves three people to conduct 609 onsite visits each year. This is an immense burden, and additional administrative funding would allow sponsoring organizations to hire more staff to alleviate this burden.

For childcare home operators the impact of losing access to the CACFP would be devastating. For BROC Community Action specifically, that would equate to the loss of 142,641 meals served to children in Rutland, Bennington and Addison counties, and $265,805.00 in reimbursement funds not paid out to childcare providers. Many operators have stated that without CACFP, they would either close their programs or require families to provide food for their children, creating an unimaginable burden for families already under financial strain. Keeping CACFP sponsors in Vermont is essential to combating hunger and supporting vulnerable communities while providing critical financial support to our childcare providers.

Provider Testimonials

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) voices from Vermont child care providers

These testimonials highlight how CACFP reimbursement, nutrition standards, and provider support help Vermont child care programs serve healthy meals and snacks while keeping care affordable for families.

> "I have been operating a registered daycare for 24 years. I have been on the CACFP program the whole time. The funding and educational tools I have gained over the year are very important to my program. This has helped me make healthy meals for my children through the years in the daycare. I truly appreciate it."
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> **B. Blanchard, Rutland Town**

> "The CACFP allows me to consistently provide high-quality, nutritious meals and snacks that help with the children's learning and development without having to pass rising food costs onto parents. For small, in-home providers like me this is a huge help. If access to the CACFP were eliminated, the effect would be devastating, forcing providers to either compromise on the quality of food, drastically increase childcare costs or close their program entirely."
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> **A. Lafoe, West Rutland**

> "CACFP supports my program immensely by providing the funds to purchase the healthy foods and snacks served to children in my care. The children help prepare our meals. The smiles with pride on their faces as they eat these meals are priceless. Thank you for supporting the CACFP."
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> **D. Rice, Bennington**

> "I love the CACFP! It helps me bring well rounded food to the children in my care. It gives parents ideas for their own food choices at home. It helps me to pay for these food choices too. I also love the sharing of articles and recipes!"
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> **B. Hallock, Ferrisburgh**

"Being a part of the CACFP helps childcare providers like me serve healthy, balanced meals and snacks to the children in our care. Through this program, the meals I provide must follow USDA nutrition guidelines, which means kids receive foods that support their growth and development. The CACFP also helps offset the cost of food, allowing me to continue offering nutritious meals and snacks every day without increasing costs for families. It's one more way I make sure the children here are cared for with both their learning and their health in mind." **B. Bushee, Bennington**

"I have been a daycare provider for twenty-six years and I am so proud to have BROC and the CACFP be a part of my daycare program. The CACFP helps ensure that healthy, nutritious meals are easier to provide to the children in my care. Food prices went crazy and the funds I receive from the CACFP take a huge amount of the financial burden away. Poverty levels in my area are high and the nutritious meals I provide are sometimes the only high-quality food the children receive in their week. I am thankful to Amy and her team for all the work they do to ensure these high-quality meals get to the children in our area."

K. Butler, North Bennington

"The CACFP is an incredible program. It helps home providers so much by helping to cover the cost of meals and snacks we serve the children in our care. The way the economy is right now, it is a tremendous help to providers. Thank you so much for speaking out about this program on our behalf."

R. Houle, Leicester

"I have been a state registered childcare provider for 40 years, and a participant in the CACFP for the majority of those years. This program, through its meal reimbursements has enabled me to provide healthy, nutritious meals and snacks to children of all ages. Through training and other resources, the CACFP provides, it has helped me turn picky eaters into kids who are excited to try new foods and even participate in growing our own vegetable garden at the childcare. In present times, when food costs seem to be rising on a weekly basis, this program has made it possible for me to keep up with the rising costs and continue to provide a variety of foods to kids whose families may be experiencing food insecurity at

home. The resources and menu planning ideas are an added bonus to being a participant in the CACFP."

E. King, Rutland

"It is such a gratifying feeling knowing that these children are receiving healthy, fulfilling, abundant meals in our childcare. Especially since for many of the children I care for, this is the only opportunity they have to receive this type of sustenance. Every little bit we can do to provide support for these children is so meaningful. Going without this consistent supply would be absolutely devastating for some children. Thank you for your compassion in continuing to do the right thing."

M. Leach, Middlebury

"The food program is important to me and my program because it holds me accountable and provides the very best nutrition that I can to the kids I care for. It creates conversation about food and teaches the kids the value of a balanced plate, something that I hope will stick with them for the rest of their lives! Not to mention all the amazing recipes and newsletters we receive." **B. Hayes, Brandon**