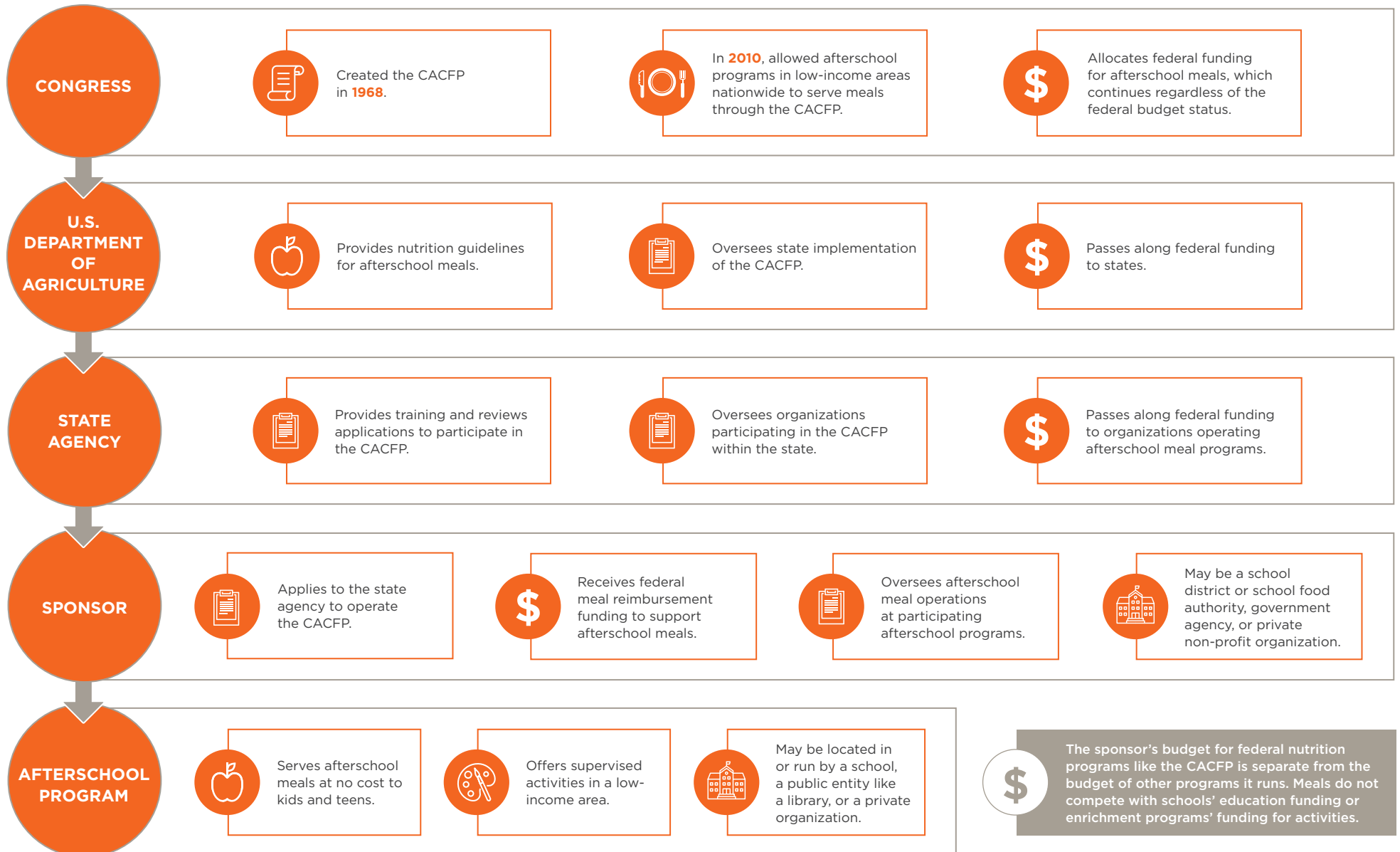


HOW AFTERSCHOOL MEALS REACH KIDS



Afterschool meals are essential for millions of children across the nation. They provide the energy kids need to do homework and enjoy sports and other afterschool activities.

The At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), also known as the Afterschool Meals Program, makes this possible. Here's the path that the funding takes from Congress to kids' plates.





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



WHAT DOES THE “AT-RISK” PART OF THE NAME MEAN?

The “At-Risk” in “At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of the CACFP” refers to the goal of supporting programs that keep kids in low-income neighborhoods safe and engaged after the school day ends or on weekends and breaks during the school year. To qualify as being in an “at-risk” area, the afterschool program must be located in the attendance area of a public school where at least half of the students receive free or reduced-price meals.



DO THE KIDS HAVE TO BE AT-RISK?

No, “at-risk” does not refer to the kids who benefit from the meals and activities. In fact, programs serving meals through the CACFP’s At-Risk component do not have to collect enrollment records or family income information.

DO KIDS OR FAMILIES PAY ANYTHING?

No, all meals must be served at no charge, but programs may charge a reasonable fee for activities or afterschool care.



WHAT IS AN AFTERSCHOOL MEAL?

An “afterschool meal” typically means five items served together: a protein item, grain item, vegetable, fruit, and milk. This is sometimes called a supper. It can take many forms, from a hot, hearty meat-and-potatoes meal to lighter fare with cold items. Afterschool programs have the option to serve the full meal together or allow children to select the items they want.

WHO SETS THE FUNDING LEVELS?

Based on laws passed by Congress, the USDA sets specific reimbursement payment rates for each afterschool meal served. The 2021-2022 federal reimbursement rate is \$3.92 per supper meal, including the value of USDA foods.

CAN PROGRAMS SERVE SNACKS?

Yes, afterschool programs may serve a snack instead of or in addition to a meal. Each snack must have two of the five supper items and garners \$1.00 in federal reimbursement funding.

IS THERE A LIMIT ON FEDERAL FUNDING?

No, there is no cap on how much money states can receive. Federal funding is provided to participating sponsors and programs for all meals and snacks served to eligible children that meet USDA requirements.

WHERE DO THE MEALS COME FROM?

Sponsors may prepare meals, either in a central kitchen or at each program location. Or, sponsors may contract with an external company to prepare and deliver the meals. Or, sponsors may pass along federal funding to afterschool programs so that each program can choose how to prepare or obtain meals.

DO PROGRAMS HAVE TO WORK WITH A SPONSORING ORGANIZATION?

No. Afterschool programs that meet the requirements to participate in the CACFP independently may choose to work directly with the state agency, which offers more control over their operations and funding. However, many afterschool programs are already affiliated with an organization that acts as their sponsor, like schools within the school district, or recreation centers run by the municipal parks and recreation department. Other afterschool programs may still benefit from the experience and resources of an unaffiliated sponsoring organization, like a food bank or community services agency.

WHAT IF A LOCATION ISN’T AREA-ELIGIBLE?

The NSLP Afterschool Snack Program and CACFP Outside-School-Hours-Care component may still be options for afterschool programs that aren’t area-eligible.