

Spotlight On: Farm to CACFP in New York State

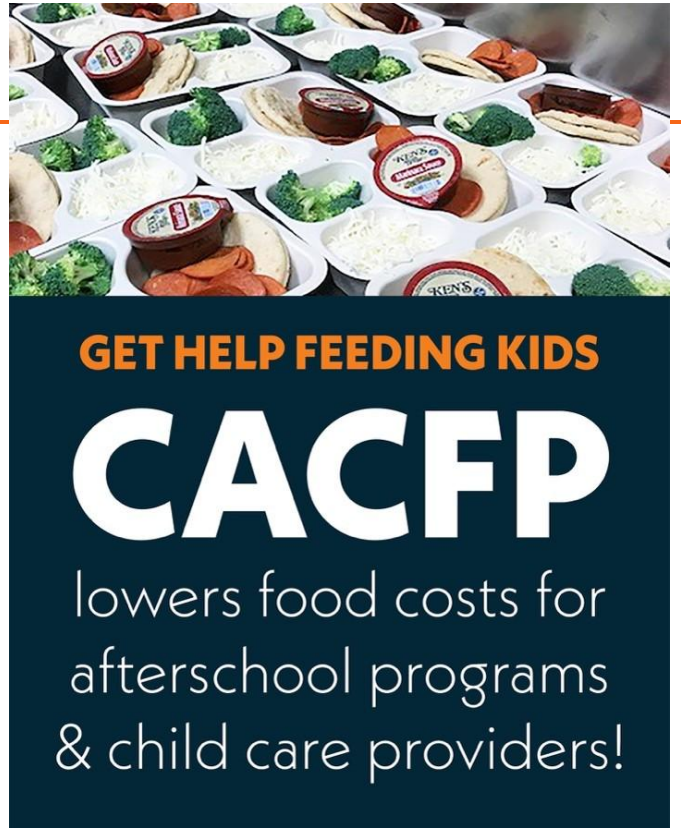
October 20, 2026

HUNGER SOLUTIONS NEW YORK
UNITING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS TO END HUNGER

NYS Farm to Early Care and Education Network

Today's Agenda

- Child Hunger in NYS
- CACFP
- Farm to CACFP/ECE
- Panel Discussion
- Additional Resources



Hunger Solutions New York is a statewide anti-hunger organization.



We increase **awareness** of, **support** for, and **participation** in federal nutrition assistance programs.

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Community Eligibility Program (CEP)
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Summer-EBT

How Do We Help?

- **Technical Assistance**
  - Connect with us! We work one-on-one to provide assistance, answer questions, connect you with peers, administering state agencies, and other supports.

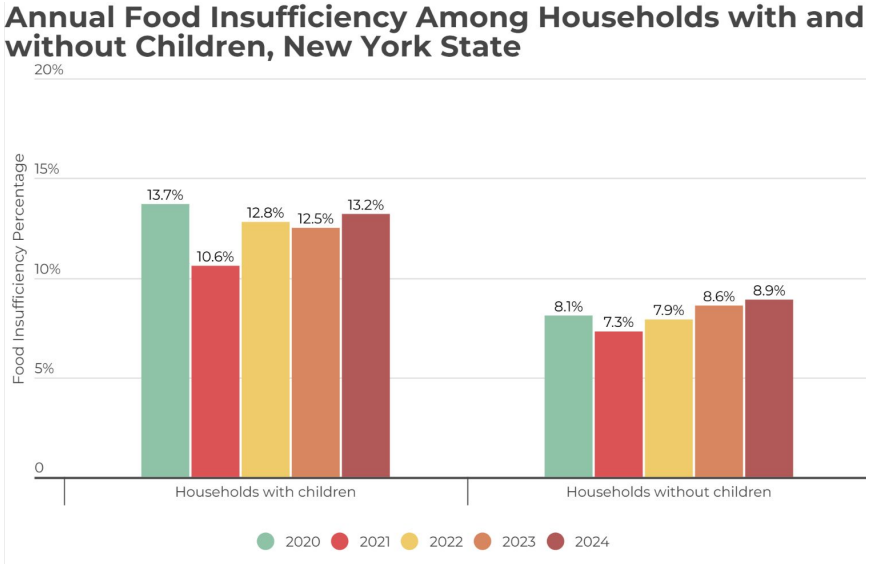
- **Resources**
  - We offer resources, information, and best practices to help reach more programs, providers, and children with nutrition.

- **Advocacy**
  - We work with partners to help advocate for investments and inform improvements in child nutrition programs.

Hunger in New York State

More than 1 in 5 children in New York experience food insecurity.

- Hunger is at the **highest point in 5 years.**
- **Hunger is 1.5x higher** in NY households with children vs those without.
- The **federal nutrition programs** are increasingly vital to safeguard families from hunger.



Source: New York Health Foundation, 2025

The Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):

- Available to eligible childcare centers, family day care home providers, and afterschool programs.
- Helps close the nutrition gap for children in care settings.
- Helps offset the costs of food served to children in care.



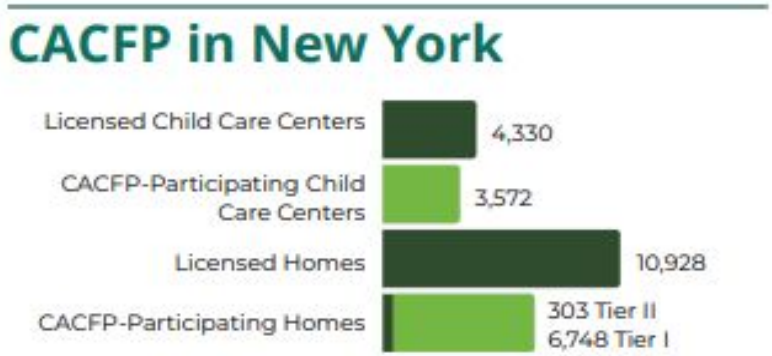
The Child and Adult Care Food Program

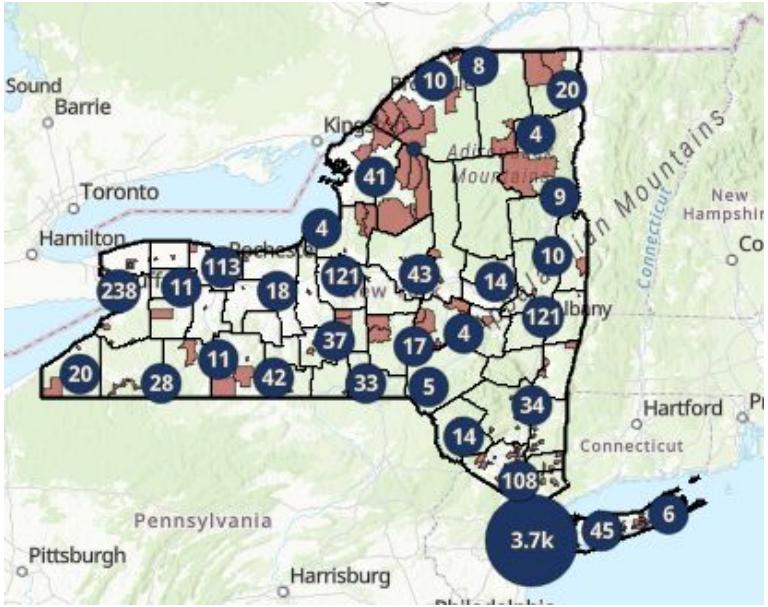
The Child and Adult Care Food Program:

- **Reimbursement** to programs for serving healthy meals and snacks to children in care.
- **Funded** through the United States Department of Agriculture.
- **Administered** by the NYS Department of Health.
- **Underutilized** across NYS and the nation.



CACFP in New York State





Source: National CACFP Association, 2026, Child Care Aware of America & NYSDOH, 2025

Reimbursement Process

- **Serve** meals/snacks compliant with CACFP meal patterns.
- **Track** how many meals are served.
- **Request** reimbursement on a monthly basis.
- Reimbursement rates **vary** depending on program type.
- Reimbursement rates are **updated annually and determined by USDA.**

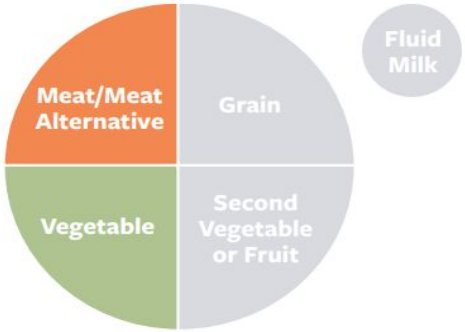


Meal Patterns

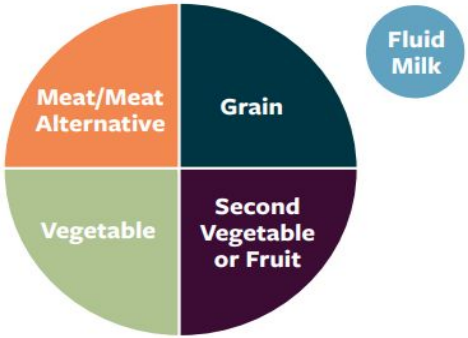
Meals served must be compliant with CACFP meal patterns.

NYSDOH provides training and assistance to help providers develop menus that meet meal pattern requirements.

Snacks:



Meals:



Benefits of CACFP

- Promotes the development of lifelong healthy eating habits.
- Improves nutrition security.
- Can help keep care affordable for families and providers.
- Indicator of quality care.
- Providers have access to additional trainings & support.



Photo: A Child's Place at Unity House

Get Started with CACFP!

- Prescreen for eligibility: NYSDOH CACFP Day Care Program Eligibility Tool
- Connect with a day care home sponsor
- Learn more: ChildcareMealsNY.org

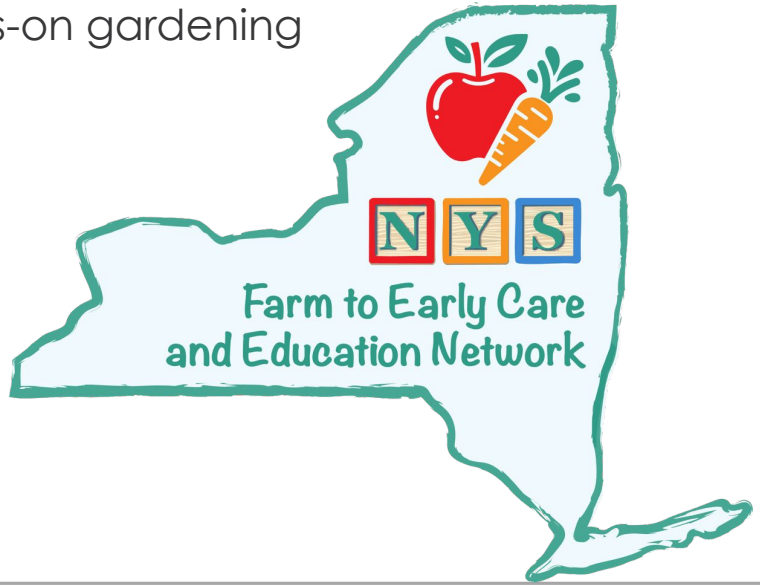


NYS Farm to Early Care & Education Network

Mission: The New York State Farm to ECE Network is on a mission to ensure that all young children, families, and early care professionals in New York State have access to nourishing, locally grown food, nutrition education, and hands-on gardening activities.

- We share practical resources and create strong, vibrant connections among early childhood educators, families, and partners across the state.

- Together, we are building a healthier future—one bite and one garden at a time.



CORE ELEMENTS OF
FARM to SCHOOL



NATIONAL FARM to SCHOOL NETWORK

LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT

- PROCURING foods for taste tests from a local farmers market
- PURCHASING local, culturally relevant foods for use in meals and snacks

GARDENING

- PLANTING, watering, and harvesting in an on-site garden
- TASTE TESTING foods grown in a garden

FOOD, NUTRITION, AND AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

- VISITING a local farm or community garden
- CONDUCTING a cooking demonstration using local food

Farm to Early Care & CACFP

- Helps children learn where food comes from.
- Supports local farmers & producers.
- May help lower the cost of food.





Farm to ECE & CACFP

- Homes & centers can engage in farm to early care activities such as:
  - Gardening
  - Composting
  - Cooking lessons
  - Taste testing

- CACFP funds may be used to help offset the cost of purchasing local foods from farmers markets, CSA shares, local producers and other procurement methods.

- Connect with NYSDOH or your sponsoring organization with specific questions.

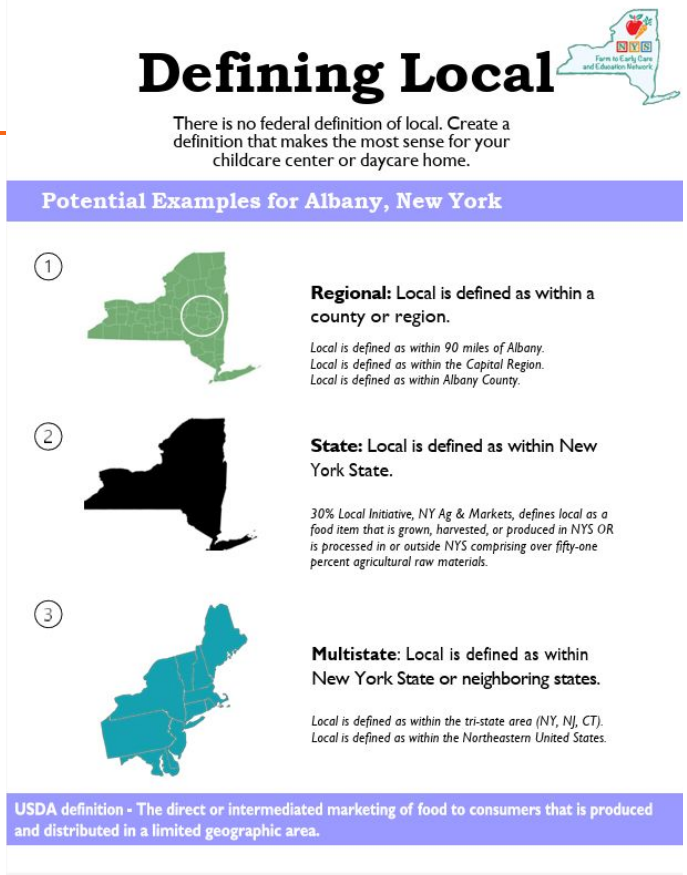


Photo: Jessica's Daycare

Farm to ECE & CACFP

- CACFP providers can determine a definition of local that makes the most sense for their area and resources available.

- Featured Resource: **NYS Farm to ECE Network - Defining Local Guide**



Getting Started with Farm to CACFP

- Start small!
- Choose a snack to transition to locally grown items.
- Connect with local producers.
- Check out your local farmers market.
- Connect with community organizations that may be able to offer assistance.
- Connect with your peers!



Resource: Farm to ECE Overview

"There's something really special about watching them enjoy meals made with ingredients they helped grow!"



Involving the kids in every step helps them feel connected to what they eat



This year's goal is to add even more vegetables to the garden



Produce from the garden is incorporated into meals

Learn more about Farm to CACFP: [Little Feet Big Steps Daycare]







Learn more about Farm to CACFP: Jessica's Daycare

Panel Discussion

- NYS Farm to ECE Network

- Child Care Council of Nassau

- Greater Opportunities of Broome & Chenango

- Jessica's Daycare

- Little Feet Big Steps Daycare



Next Steps

- Learn more about CACFP: Visit ChildcareMealsNY.org
- Take the Farm to ECE Self Assessment
- Connect with the NYS Farm to ECE Network



Photo: The Academy for Young Scholars

Join us!

Monthly meetings 4th Wednesdays, 11-12pm on Zoom:
https://nemours-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/elvJWQ5fTZ2Hu2_v5OxG0w



Additional Resources for Farm to CACFP

- NY Farm to ECE Network: Defining Local Guide for NYS Childcare Sites
- Locate Farms/Producers: USDA Local Food Portal and Local Harvest
- Food and Health Network SCNY: One-page guide for planning taste tests
- Find your local Cornell Cooperative Extension
- National Farm to School Network
- FRAC - Leveraging CACFP for Farm to ECE
- USDA - Factsheet, Grow it, try it, like it!
- ASPHN - Fruit & Veggie Snack Menu Planning Tool

Menu Planning & Other Resources

- NYSDOH - How to Apply
- NYSDOH - CACFP Prescreening Tool
- NYSDOH - CACFP crediting handbook
- USDA Food Buying Guide
- Child Nutrition Recipe Box: USDA Standardized Recipes
- USDA Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Child Care Centers

Federal Nutrition Program Resources

- **WIC**: Help spread the word about WIC. Families and caregivers can visit WICHelpNY.org to see if they are eligible!
- **SNAP**: Statewide SNAP Navigators offer **free & confidential** services to connect New Yorkers with SNAP. To locate assistance in your area, visit FoodHelpNY.org.
- **Summer Meals**: Families can visit SummerMealsNY.org to find summer meal sites, outreach materials and more.

Stay Connected!

Kevin Davidson
Farm to ECE Coordinator
(607)-692-7669
kdavidson@rhnscny.org

Kayla Snyder
CACFP Outreach & Engagement Specialist
518-436-8757 x 106
Kayla.Snyder@HungerSolutionsNY.org

Visit us Online:

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