

# Improve CACFP and Food Access in ECE Settings

A VECAA Legislative Agenda  
Initiative led by Hunger Free  
Vermont  
March 11, 2026

*Please provide funding  
to allow more Family  
Child Care Home  
Providers to provide  
meals and snacks to  
children*



## Improve CACFP & Food Access in ECE Settings

Under federal program guidelines, a family child care home can only participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) if they have an agreement with an eligible sponsoring organization. Due to financial restraints, many sponsoring organizations have been forced to drop the program. The three remaining organizations are facing critical financial challenges that limit their ability to continue operating as CACFP sponsors. The Alliance supports Hunger Free Vermont's request for \$182,000 in base funding in the FY27 Budget for Vermont's CACFP sponsor organizations so that they can continue to operate, more child care providers can participate in CACFP, and more young children can have access to nutritious meals.

Only

50%

of family child care homes  
in Vermont participate in  
**CACFP.**



## Our Request:

\$182,000 to be appropriated in the Agency of Education - Child Nutrition budget in FY27 to be distributed among the Vermont Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) sponsor organizations as an incentive to participate as a sponsor of the CACFP for Family Child Care Home providers.



## What is the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)?

The CACFP is the federal child nutrition program that early childhood education programs can participate in to receive cash reimbursement for eligible meals and snacks served to the children in their care. The Agency of Education administers the CACFP on the state level, and the USDA administers the program at the federal level.

The CACFP is the most equitable way for all children in child care and early childhood education settings to access developmentally appropriate nutrition in order to be set up to be able to access learning alongside their peers.



# How does funding for the CACFP and CACFP Sponsoring Organizations work?

Under this program, the Sponsoring Organizations act as a 'fiscal intermediary' for funds between the state agency and the sponsored family child care homes.

Sponsoring Organizations are responsible for:

- Providing support to meal program personnel
- Monitoring meal program operations
- Conducting meal program reviews as required by federal program regulations
- Acting as "fiscal intermediary" for food service funds between the state agency and sponsored family child care programs



# Why is funding for CACFP sponsoring organizations critical?

Under federal program guidelines, a Family Child Care Home (FCCH) can only participate in the CACFP under an agreement with an eligible sponsoring organization.

As of last fiscal year, there were only 3 remaining sponsoring organizations covering all 181 FCCH providers participating in the CACFP across the state of Vermont:

- BROC Community Action
- Capstone Community Action
- The Winston Prouty Center for Child Development

At this time, the administrative payments that CACFP sponsoring organizations receive do not adequately cover the cost of being a sponsoring organization.



# Last Year's Win

In FY26, the Legislature appropriated \$150K in one-time funding for CACFP Sponsor Organizations. This appropriation was critical to ensuring that the remaining sponsoring organizations were able to continue their operations and remain sponsors of the CACFP.

While this funding was an extremely important stop-gap, it did not solve the problem long-term, nor allow space for other organizations to become sponsors of the CACFP, which is necessary in order to support onboarding of other FCCHs into the CACFP.

Another organization did reach out, interested in the potential state funding allowing them to become a CACFP sponsor,

*“...if Addison County needed someone to do that for home providers, I would be happy to have that conversation about what it might look like. And if there was funding to access, we might be able to pull it off”*



## The current funding gap impacts children's access to nutrition in child care:

As of last FY, only 181 of 407 (or 44%) FCCHs in Vermont were participating in the CACFP. Without a sponsor organization FCCHs are unable to participate in the CACFP.

With a small state investment of \$182,000, sponsoring organizations will have **increased capacity** to support onboarding new FCCHs into the CACFP while also maintaining the current level of participation.

Investing in the critical role of sponsoring organizations incentivises additional organizations to take on this role, which would further increase the capacity of each individual sponsoring organization.



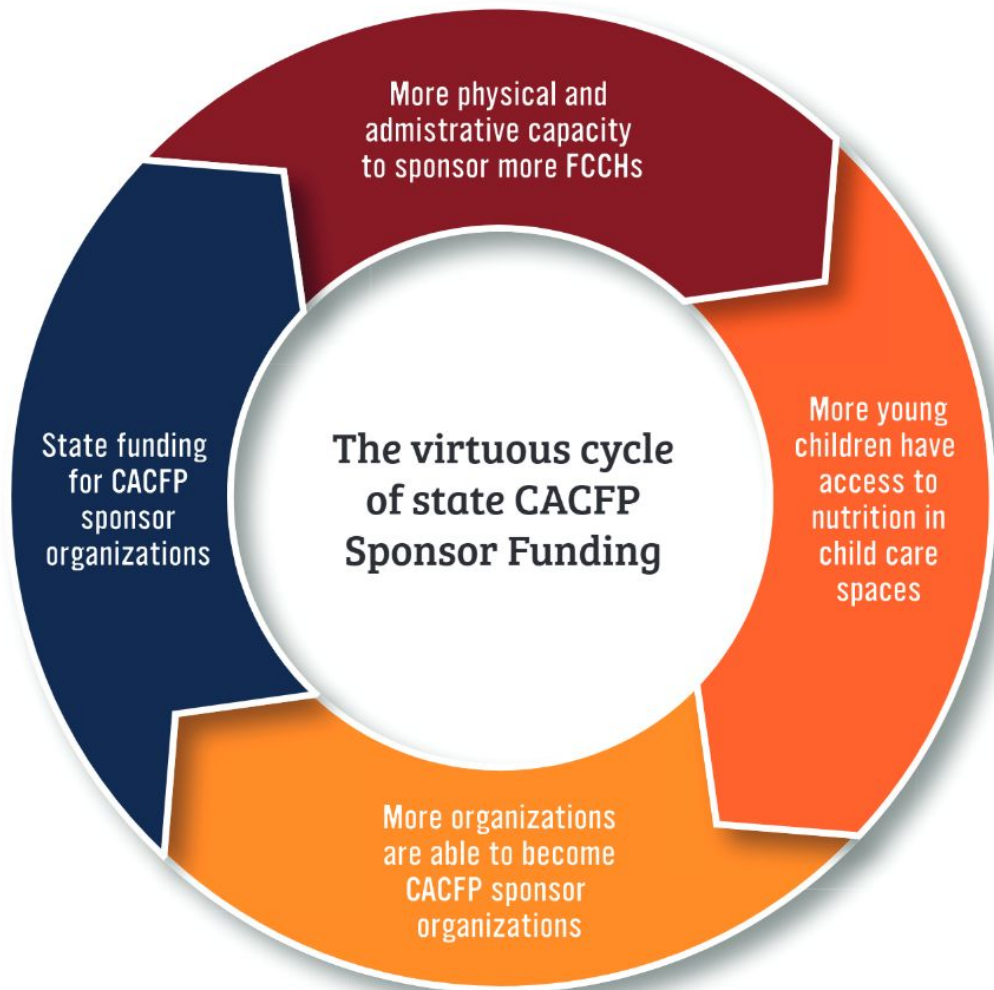
## How will this funding be addressed in following years based on this funding request?

Each following year, The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) would report to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees the amount needed for the following fiscal year, based on the number of Family Child Care Home providers served in the current fiscal year, and any expected increase in participation in the next fiscal year.

AOE would also recommend an inflationary increase in the base amount/provider based on the % change in the consumer price index for food away from home from May to May each year.



# The virtuous cycle of state CACFP Sponsor Funding:



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## Take Action!

- Thank members of the House Education Committee for their support
- Ask all legislators to support the full funding request of \$182,000 for CACFP sponsor organizations in the FY27 budget
- Request that House Appropriations members to include the funding in the budget

## List of Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

Rep. Robin Scheu, Chair  
Rep. Martha Feltus, Vice Chair  
Rep. Tiffany Bluemle, Ranking Member  
Rep. Eileen Dickinson  
Rep. John Kascenska  
Rep. Wayne Laroche  
Rep. Michael Mrowicki  
Rep. Michael Nigro  
Rep. Trevor Squirrell, Clerk  
Rep. Thomas Stevens  
Rep. David Yacovone

# Thank you!

Questions? Contact:

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