

CACFP—Stay Connected Quarterly Webinar

(April 30, 2025)

Topic: Reverse Panel Discussion- Summary of Participant Input

Question 1: How do you keep your team updated on new or revised Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) regulations?

Participants reported a range of consistent communication strategies for staying current with CACFP updates. Several attendees noted that monthly team meetings are their primary method for sharing updates. Others highlighted the use of email communication, with one attendee adding that she forwards relevant updates and seeks clarification when needed before disseminating information. Webinars, roundtables, and direct training were mentioned by several attendees. One participant noted a dedicated Bright Track training week for their staff during the month of August. Another attendee shared that they use both in-person and virtual trainings, while another mentioned using resources from the National CACFP Sponsors Association and relying on shared drives and tracking spreadsheets.

Common methods included:

- Regular monthly or weekly team meetings
- Forwarding California Department of Social Services (CDSS)/U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) emails and bulletins
- Management updates to staff, often including links or references
- Webinars, roundtables, and conference discussions
- Use of memos, shared drives, and tracking spreadsheets
- Following up by referencing specific CACFP communications in internal emails
- Annual trainings

Question 2: What steps do you take to ensure compliance with fiscal regulations in your program?

To remain in compliance with the CACFP, attendees reported maintaining updated policies and procedures, conducting ongoing internal monitoring, and actively participating in trainings. Regular budget meetings and collaboration with fiscal officers was a practice shared by multiple participants. Many attendees use email alerts and bulletins to stay aware of regulatory changes. Emphasis was placed on having strong systems for documentation and oversight, including periodic checks, internal review of documentation, and consistent communication with their finance teams. Some agencies

also expressed interest in more individualized support, such as annual one-on-one check-ins with CDSS to clarify guidance.

Common practices included:

- Maintaining and annually updating written policies and procedures
- Participating in webinars, roundtables, and trainings
- Holding regular fiscal or budget meetings with financial teams
- Ongoing internal monitoring, sometimes with more than one staff member reviewing the documentation
- Ensuring strong communication between accounting, quality control, and program staff
- Retaining emails, bulletins, and guidance documents for future reference

Question 3: How do you prepare your fiscal documentation and records for an Administrative Review (AR)?

Responses highlighted a mix of traditional and digital systems for organizing fiscal documentation in advance of an AR. Some agencies use labeled binders or banker boxes, while others rely on digital folders with Portable Document Format (PDF) uploads. Records are commonly categorized by budget type or funding stream, and agencies follow standard AR checklists to ensure completeness. It appears that collaboration across departments, particularly between fiscal, administrative, and monitoring staff, is considered key to successful preparation. The goal for many is to ensure documents are readily accessible, logically arranged, and easily retrievable.

Preparation approaches included:

- Organizing documentation in labeled banker boxes or binders
- Scanning and saving records as PDFs by budget category
- Storing files in shared digital folders (Y-Drive, O-Drive, SharePoint)
- Using QuickBooks or spreadsheet systems for reconciliation
- Collaborating across departments (e.g., fiscal, monitoring, kitchen, and administration)
- Using AR checklists and following CDSS-provided guidelines

Question 4: Are there any other strategies you and your team use for tracking, reviewing, or preparing fiscal documentation for CACFP?

Although fewer responses were received for this question, the strategies shared focused on communication at the site level and continuous learning. Strategies included regular site meetings, use of shareable drives and Excel spreadsheets, and

development of internal task lists. Some attendees reported annual self-audits, ongoing training, and strong communication protocols across departments. Some also track reimbursable expenses separately, conducting pre-submission reviews, and comparing past AR guidance to current requirements to stay aligned with fiscal expectations. While some are still refining their systems, many expressed a focus on streamlining documentation practices for improved readiness.

Reported strategies included:

- Maintaining documentation in shared drives and spreadsheets
- Creating task lists with assignments and deadlines
- Conducting internal audits or annual reviews
- Hosting regular team check-ins to assess documentation needs
- Using Excel tools to track food costs and CACFP reimbursements
- Performing self-assessments or monitoring visits internally
- Ensuring revenue and expenditures are tracked by contract number

Question 5: How are you and your team preparing for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 implementation of the Program Integrity: Final Rule?

Operators are preparing for the Program Integrity: Final Rule through ongoing training, attendance at webinars, and internal discussions. Many agencies are reviewing the latest guidance and incorporating new documentation standards into their practices. Some are building systems to ensure documentation is organized, complete, and readily available during the AR. Overall, preparation efforts appear to reflect a proactive approach focused on training, collaboration, and planning for compliance ahead of the upcoming implementation period.

Steps being taken included:

- Attending CDSS and CACFP-sponsored trainings and webinars
- Reviewing official documents and preparing internal documentation systems
- Developing hands-on staff trainings, virtual sessions, and survey-based learning
- Strengthening audit readiness through organized documentation practices
- Holding internal discussions and planning sessions to interpret new requirements
- Participating in peer conversations during webinars or roundtable events