# CACFP Input Workgroup

**9:30 a.m. – 10:30 p.m.**
**March 19, 2021**
*Meeting Notes*

**Welcome/Roll Call**

**Members**: Blake Stanford, Laura-Zelda Villarreal, Ricardo Espinosa, Saul Fernandez, Sehr Qazi, Tiffiney Freeman, Victor Salazar

**TDA Staff**: Angela Olige, Lena Wilson, Gwendolyn McDade, Suzanne Carson, Kelli Wise, Krystle Haney, Helenka L. Ostrum, Eli George, Beth Thorson, Christina Little-Manley, Melinda Nguyen, Jon Huss, Teresa Cornett, Kassandra Burnias, Brooke Smith, Deana Lackey, Veronica Herrera

**Agenda****

1. **Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) Updates**

   a. **Policy Updates:** TDA is continuing to consolidate the CACFP handbooks and is beginning to assess Program forms and resources posted on the SquareMeals.org website. TDA will provide more information on these efforts at the next meeting and encouraged members to provide input as TDA moves forward with these efforts.

   b. **Compliance Updates**

      i. **Administrative Review Specialists (ARS):** TDA is in the process of transitioning newly trained ARS to full time reviewers, and recently onboarded four new trainees.

      ii. **TX-UNPS Enhanced Document Upload:** Based on extensive discussions during the 2019/2020 CACFP Input Workgroup, TDA is designing a new TX-UNPS feature that will allow the upload of larger documents. This enhancement is expected to facilitate the upload process by making it faster and easier for CACFP CEs. This enhancement should be completed during the current program year.

iii. **CACFP Management Evaluation (ME):** USDA recently completed the onsite portion of its CACFP ME. The primary focus of the ME was on day care homes (DCH) with an emphasis on the serious deficiency (SD) process. As a preliminary result of the ME, TDA will be asking for more information on sponsoring organizations' SD process for their DCH providers and the required notification to TDA when CEs are engaged in an SD process.

iv. **Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Funds:** TDA recently provided information on the use of PPP funds in the latest release of the CACFP Insight regarding the correct use of those funds. CEs are encouraged to reach out to their ESCs or TDA for technical assistance or to answer questions about the proper use of federal funding sources.

v. **Virtual Reviews:** Per USDA flexibilities, TDA will continue to conduct virtual, offsite reviews until the nationwide waivers expire at the end of September 2021. TDA noted that it expects additional guidance from USDA this Spring.

b. **Training Updates:** TDA highlighted updates to the training webpage including date stamps that indicate if a training was updated or added in the past 90 days. TDA recently updated the interactive trainings for the adult day care meal pattern and childcare meal pattern to include information on the ounce equivalent requirements that goes into effect on October 1, 2021. Coming soon are updates to the infant meal pattern training. CEs were encouraged to visit TDA's training webpage on SquareMeals.org and provide input at the next meeting.

c. **Nutrition Updates:** TDA provided an update on the National CACFP Week which took place March 14 -20 and asked Workgroup members whether they had participated and used any of the resources provided by TDA at TDA's SquareMeals.org website. Workgroup members suggested providing release form templates to address concerns of images and other digital media showing children.

d. **Website Updates:** Based on feedback received from the COVID-19 Response Subcommittee, TDA made several enhancements to the SquareMeals.org website and COVID-19 related pages. TDA highlighted these changes in a presentation and encouraged all Workgroup members to continue to provide suggestions for improvements to the SquareMeals.org web pages.

## 2. Member Suggested Topics

a. **Streamlining At-risk Reviews for NSLP Operators:** TDA discussed a PY 2019 pilot that streamlined reviews that were conducted at six schools that operated both the National School Lunch Program and the at-risk program. The pilot had mixed results; however, because of the pilot, TDA made some adjustments to its practices to reduce duplication of effort between the two program reviews. TDA understands there is value in a combined review of the CE and will continue to investigate streamlining efforts and will work with more schools in the future. TDA offered to share contact information for the schools where the 2019 pilot was implemented if any Workgroup members are interested in that perspective.

b. **CACFP Taxable Income Protocol:** TDA provided a summary of this document and clarified that it is updated on an as needed basis and not annually. The most recent update was in PY 2017 and is posted on SquareMeals.org.

c. **Helping Centers and the Public During the Pandemic and Weather-related Issues:** In advance of the meeting, TDA surveyed Workgroup members for their experiences and encouraged them to email any ideas that could be discussed at a later meeting. TDA shared the "Food Aid for Texas Families" posted on SquareMeals.org that provides information about food assistance available to Texas families including SNAP and WIC. Members were encouraged to share any best practices or ideas on how to help children and families in their centers and communities.

## 3. Subcommittee/Ad hoc Groups

a. **Procurement Guidance:** This subcommittee is continuing to review procurement related policy and procedures including looking at the small purchase threshold. The group is also looking at the CACFP Handbooks to determine what, if any, clarification needs to be made to applicability of purchasing procedures for institutions and facilities. Lastly, the group is evaluating the definition of "aggregate" versus single purchase transactions.

b. **COVID-19 Response:** At its February meeting, subcommittee members continued to provide feedback on the COVID-19 CACFP Resources page on SquareMeals.org. As a result, additional improvements were made to the SquareMeals.org webpage including a COVID-19 banner on all pages. The subcommittee also discussed participation in CACFP Week and the Spring Farm Fresh Challenge during COVID-19. The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for late April and will discuss challenges CEs and sites are facing a CACFP flexibilities are currently set to expire at the end of June.

## 4. Angela Olige, Assistant Commissioner Remarks

Ms. Olige joined the meeting to thank members and acknowledge their commitment to CACFP and the Input Workgroup. Ms. Olige made herself available for any questions regarding ongoing operations during COVID-19. Members provided input that membership terms on the Input Workgroup should be increased from one year to two to provide more impactful collaboration and participation. Members also suggested ways to facilitate easier open dialogue between Workgroup members. As a direct result of this discussion, TDA made the adjustment to a two-year term before members were required to reapply for membership. TDA also eliminated term limits on membership which was set at two years.

## 5. 2021/2022 CACFP Input Workgroup Applications

Workgroup members were reminded that applications for the 2021/2022 CACFP Input Workgroup are open through April 23 and sought member input for additional ideas for outreach and promotion of the group.

## 6. Closing Comments

TDA thanked Input Workgroup members for their participation in the meeting and encouraged members to continue to provide input and to remain active and engaged in the group.

**Next Meeting**: May 21, 2021

**TDA requested suggested agenda topics from the Input Workgroup members on February 3 and 24, 2021.


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