

# CACFP Input Workgroup Accomplishments



The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) created the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Input Workgroup to gather feedback directly from contracting entities (CEs) and assess the challenges and opportunities they have at the local level. Workgroup members provide recommendations to TDA on how to enhance its administration of CACFP and help CEs discover new efficiencies for their operations.

## Terms to Know

**Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)** - State agency administering the CACFP in Texas.

**Contracting Entity (CE)** - An organization that enters into an agreement with TDA to assume final administrative and financial responsibility for CACFP operations.

**Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** - A federal nutrition program that provides aid to child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes for the provision of nutritious foods that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children and certain adults. Contracting entities receive Federal reimbursement from TDA based on eligible meals served at one or more locations.



# 2020/2021 Workgroup Members

**Annette Pena**

*Neighbors in Need of Services*

**Blake Stanford**

*Southwest Human Development Services*

**Dana Bigham**

*Victoria ISD*

**DeLynn Garza**

*BCFS Education Services*

**Gylma Garza**

*Edinburg Child Care*

**Jesus Navarro**

*McAllen Care Providers*

**Kenyatta Chandler**

*Houston ISD*

**Laura-Zelda Villarreal**

*Brownsville ISD*

**Matt Yell**

*YMCA of Wichita Falls, Texas*

**Ricardo Espinosa**

*Professional Child Care Provider Association*

**RJ Bradley**

*Kids Place Learning Center*

**Sandra Pearson**

*Harris County Department of Education*

**Sarai Ferreira**

*CitySquare*

**Saul Fernandez**

*Extreme Activities*

**Sehr Qazi**

*Healthy Plate Solutions*

**Tiffiney Freeman**

*Department of Army HQ, U.S. Army Garrison*

**Victor Salazar**

*CACFP Sponsors Association President*

## Subcommittee Goals:

Workgroup members completed a needs assessment to determine priority areas and provide TDA Input. Based on feedback, the following subcommittees were developed to address the needs identified:

### 1. Procurement Review

**Goal/Purpose:** Seek input on the procurement review process to help TDA ensure consistency and standardization across administrative review staff based on sponsor-specific circumstances (e.g., total reimbursements and vended versus self-prep meal). The focus will be on reviews of private nonprofit sponsors.

### 2. COVID-19 Response

**Goal/Purpose:** Seek input on the TDA COVID-19 response efforts to help TDA evaluate ongoing operational needs, communications tools, and trainings, and discuss longer term implications related to implementation of COVID-19 nationwide waivers including transition to “regular operations” and compliance considerations.



## Key Accomplishments:

Requestor	Workgroup Recommendation	TDA Response	Date Resolved
<b>General Committee</b>	Workgroup members suggested creation of an Ad-hoc subcommittee to address COVID-19 specific issues	An Ad-hoc COVID-19 Response Subcommittee was created to seek input on the TDA COVID-19 response efforts to help TDA evaluate ongoing operational needs, communications tools, and trainings, and discuss longer term implications related to implementation of COVID-19 nationwide waivers including transition to "regular operations" and compliance considerations.	October 2020
<b>General Committee</b>	Workgroup members requested an overview from TDA regarding its approach to Program Year (PY) 2019 and PY 2020 Administrative Reviews during the COVID-19 public health emergency.	TDA provided an overview and update on the status of Administrative Reviews including a summary of what CEs should expect from the initial phone call to the actual "virtual" reviews.	December 2020
<b>General Committee</b>	2019/2020 Workgroup members sought guidance regarding the document review process (DRP) for administrative reviews and expressed challenges experienced in the process.	TDA reevaluated the information that is required as part of the document review process (DRP) and identified several areas where the amount of information requested in the DRP may be reduced. In addition, the CACFP LIVE sessions during this Program Year focused on how to prepare for and streamline submitting DRP documents	December 2020
<b>General Committee</b>	TDA highlight the ESC-led CACFP LIVE trainings and sought the workgroup members input on virtual trainings.	Workgroup members provided useful insights on the pros of virtual trainings including reduced travel burdens and increased flexibilities and options. The con cited was the lost networking opportunities that in person training and conferences provide.	December 2020



## Key Accomplishments *(continued)*:

Requestor	Workgroup Recommendation	TDA Response	Date Resolved
<b>General Committee</b>	TDA highlight the ESC-led CACFP LIVE trainings and sought the workgroup members input on virtual trainings.	Workgroup members provided useful insights on the pros of virtual trainings including reduced travel burdens and increased flexibilities and options. The con cited was the lost networking opportunities that in person training and conferences provide.	December 2020
<b>COVID-19 Response Subcommittee</b>	Subcommittee members sought additional information on desk audits during COVID-19.	TDA shared USDA's recently released <a href="#">Off-site Monitoring Fact Sheets</a> in response to subcommittee members' interest in additional guidance on conducting desk audits. TDA also revised the <a href="#">CACFP FAQs</a> to include links to these new USDA resources.	December 2020
<b>COVID-19 Response Subcommittee</b>	Subcommittee members sought additional information how to request average daily participation increases during COVID-19.	TDA responded to this request by providing addition guidance on its review process in the <a href="#">CACFP FAQ</a> document.	December 2020
<b>COVID-19 Response Subcommittee</b>	Subcommittee members raised several unique food safety challenges presented by COVID-19 flexibilities and sought additional resources/guidance from TDA.	TDA provided food safety information and tips in the <i>CACFP Insight</i> . TDA developed a new CACFP menu templates that includes more space for additional information such as food safety. The "CACFP Blank Fall Menu Planning Template" may be found on <a href="#">SquareMeals.org</a> .	January 2021
<b>COVID-19 Response Subcommittee</b>	Subcommittee members were invited to review and provide input on the COVID-19 webpages on SquareMeals.org	TDA made several enhancements to the COVID-19 webpage including eliminating expandable sections that hid content, creating succinct tables to organize and present import documentation and guidance such as FAQs, and reorganizing content to make it easier to locate resources.	January 2021





## Key Accomplishments *(continued)*:

Requestor	Workgroup Recommendation	TDA Response	Date Resolved
<b>General Committee</b>	Workgroup members requested TDA discuss the ongoing issue with budget amendments in TX-UNPS.	TDA proved a status update regarding the functionality of the budget in the TX-UNPS system. Based on input from members, TDA provided additional information on the issue on the TX-UNPS bulletin board to share with all CACFP CEs. TDA reported at the May 2021 meeting that the issue has been resolved.	May 2021
<b>General Committee</b>	Workgroup members requested information on the COVID-19 Relief Bill.	TDA hosted a webinar to provide an overview of USDA's COVID-19 Emergency Cost Reimbursement Program for CACFP operators and created a dedicated webpage on the topic which is updated as additional guidance is released and as TDA implements the program.	Ongoing
<b>General Committee</b>	2019/2020 Workgroup members sought guidance regarding the DRP for administrative reviews and expressed challenges experienced in the process.	TDA announced that it is designing an enhanced document upload process in TX-UNPS. This enhancement will increase the acceptable file size and allow for the upload of multiple documents at the same time. This should be completed later this year.	March 2021
<b>General Committee</b>	Workgroup members requested TDA evaluate streamlining at-risk reviews for NSLP operators.	TDA discussed the uneven results of a 2019 pilot that conducted NSLP and CACFP reviews at the same time. TDA is continuing to investigate streamlining approaches and will to work with schools in the future.	March 2021



## Key Accomplishments *(continued)*:

Requestor	Workgroup Recommendation	TDA Response	Date Resolved
<b>General Committee</b>	Workgroup members asked about the status of the CACFP Taxable Income Protocol document.	TDA clarified that the document is updated on an as needed basis and not annually. TDA reported during the May 2021 meeting that a revised Protocol was recently posted as the "CACFP Compensation Protocol."	May 2021
<b>General Committee</b>	Workgroup members inquired about best practices or ideas on how to help children and families in their centers and communities.	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 on other available resources including SNAP and WIC.	March 2021
<b>General Committee</b>	Workgroup members suggested increasing membership terms to two years to improve continuity and participation in the group.	TDA reevaluated membership terms and announced that going forward members would serve for two years before reapplying for membership. Also, there would be no term limit restrictions.	March 2021
<b>COVID-19 Response Subcommittee</b>	Subcommittee members continued to provide feedback on the COVID-19 webpage.	TDA added a link to the COVID-19 pages in the SquareMeals.org banner to simplify navigation to the COVID-19 website and guidance.	March 2021
<b>General Committee</b>	Workgroup members provided feedback on National CACFP Week.	For next year's event, TDA will provide a photo release form to facilitate the release of National CACFP Week photographs that include images of children.	March 2021



## Key Accomplishments *(continued)*:

Requestor	Workgroup Recommendation	TDA Response	Date Resolved
<b>Procurement Review Subcommittee</b>	Subcommittee members sought additional clarification on the definition and application of the term “aggregate cost.”	TDA, in conjunction with the subcommittee members, reviewed various definitions and assessed several potential solutions before recommending adoption of the definition used in the Texas Workforce Commission’s Procurement Manual.	Ongoing
<b>Procurement Review Subcommittee</b>	Subcommittee members sought TDA’s reconsideration of the small purchase threshold.	Subcommittee members are preparing a white paper for TDA’s consideration, recommending that the small purchase threshold be raised to the current federal level of \$250,000.	Ongoing
<b>General Committee</b>	Workgroup members asked about the impact of USDA’s recently released SY 2021/2022 nationwide waivers on CACFP operations.	TDA highlighted the availability of COVID-19 Frequently Asked Question documents posted on SquareMeals.org including one specific to CACFP that was recently updated to address the most the lasted release of nationwide waivers.	May 2021

### **Learn More:**

For more information on the **CACFP Input Workgroup**, please visit [SquareMeals.org/CACFPWorkgroup](https://www.SquareMeals.org/CACFPWorkgroup)



Food and Nutrition Division  
Child and Adult Care Food Program



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
**COMMISSIONER SID MILLER**

This product was funded by USDA.  
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Updated 06/2021  
[www.SquareMeals.org](https://www.SquareMeals.org)