



70 West 36th Street, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10018  
tel: 212-967-0322 fax: 212-967-0792  
[www.unhny.org](http://www.unhny.org)

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### **United Neighborhood Houses** **Proposals for CACFP Reform**

United Neighborhood Houses (UNH) is the umbrella organization of 38 settlement houses and community centers in New York City. Many UNH member agencies provide child care to low-income New York families through Head Start, center based day care, Universal Pre-Kindergarten or family child care networks, and participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

UNH members and the children whom they serve have benefited from CACFP and we hope that the program can be expanded in New York City to reach additional providers and serve more children in nutritious meals.

- **Decrease paperwork requirements.** CACFP's tiered reimbursement system creates extensive paperwork for family child care providers who do not have administrative staff and often do not speak English. Elimination of the tiered reimbursement system will allow more providers to participate in CACFP. Furthermore, providers are required to keep copies of meal counts, menus and attendance for three years after submitting reimbursement forms. This requires a significant amount of work and resources from family child care providers who do not have funding for administrative support and already work long hours with children. UNH urges United States Department of Agriculture to repeal the regulation requiring providers to keep copies of meal counts, menus and attendance for three years after submitting reimbursement forms and to eliminate the tiered reimbursement system.
- **Allow providers a three month grace period to learn CACFP regulations.** CACFP regulations are very specific and require providers to develop menus that meet stringent nutritional requirements. Many providers are penalized, early in their career, for failing to meet some requirements. UNH urges USDA to allow a three month grace period for learning CACFP regulations during which providers would be notified of non-compliant menus but not penalized.
- **Provide Family Child Care Networks Funding for training on CACFP**  
Family Child Care networks are required to have staff supervise family child care providers on their use of CACFP funds. However, they are not funded to provide this training to providers on how to comply with the often complex CACFP regulations. UNH urges USDA to provide funding for networks to train providers on CACFP compliance.
- **Inclusion of a Fourth Meal for Full-Day Child Care Programs**  
In order to meet the needs of working parents, many center based and family child care providers have children in their care for more than eight hours a day necessitating an extra meal or snack which is not covered by CACFP. UNH urges USDA to include a fourth meal for full day child care programs.

- **Geographic Reimbursement Rates.** The increase in transportation costs has contributed to rising food prices in New York City and other urban areas. In New York City, for example, the price of eggs increased 25% and the cost of milk has increased 36% between 2007 and 2008. UNH urges USDA to increase reimbursement rates in order to meet the actual costs of providing food in urban areas
- **Staff Participation in Family Style Meals.** Federal Head Start performance standards encourage family style meals where an adult participates in meals with the children in their care in order to demonstrate and teach healthy eating habits. However, under current guidelines, CACFP funds can not be used to provide reimbursement for the meals eaten by adults who participate in family style meals. UNH urges USDA to allow CACFP funds to be used in situations where an adult participates in meals with children in Head Start and other child care settings.
- **Special Dietary Needs.** Providers need to accommodate medically based dietary needs including common allergies to CACFP approved items such as dairy products. The provision of an alternative meal can cause financial hardship for the provider. UNH urges USDA to provide higher rate of reimbursement to providers whose children who have a medically documented special dietary need.
- **Promotion of Wholesome / Quality Food.** UNH supports the proposal by New York City Administration for Children's Services to allow for pilot programs to encourage healthy eating including a higher reimbursement rate for providers who incorporate whole grain products, fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy eating choices.

*For more information, please contact Gregory Brender (212) 967-0322 Ext. 330 or [gbrender@unhny.org](mailto:gbrender@unhny.org).*

**United Neighborhood Houses (UNH)** is the membership organization of New York City settlement houses and community centers. Rooted in the history and values of the settlement house movement, UNH promotes and strengthens the neighborhood-based, multi-service approach to improving the lives of New Yorkers in need and the communities in which they live. UNH's membership comprises one of the largest human service systems in New York City, with 38 agencies working at more than 400 sites to provide high quality services and activities to half million New Yorkers each year. UNH supports its members through policy development, advocacy and capacity-building activities.

*UNH Members: Arab American Family Support Center - BronxWorks - CAMBA - Center for Family Life in Sunset Park - Chinese American Planning Council - Claremont Neighborhood Centers - Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation - East Side House Settlement - Educational Alliance - Goddard Riverside Community Center - Grand Street Settlement - Greenwich House - Hamilton-Madison House - Hartley House - Henry Street Settlement - Hudson Guild - Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement House - Kingsbridge Heights Community Center - Lenox Hill Neighborhood House - Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center - Mosholu Montefiore Community - New Settlement Apartments - Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation - Project Hospitality - Queens Community House - Riverdale Neighborhood House - SCAN New York - School Settlement Association - Shorefront YM-WHA of Brighton-Manhattan Beach, Inc - Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Centers - St. Matthew's and St. Timothy's Neighborhood Center - St. Nicholas Alliance - Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center - Sunnyside Community Services - Third Street Music School Settlement - Union Settlement Association-United Community Centers - University Settlement Society*