COMMUNITY NUTRITION conference

A Guide to the Visit Prior to Approval (VPA)

Mary Salinas
Quality Assurance Quality Control Coordinator

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

square meals

Our Goal for This Session

Provide new applicants helpful information about the VPA process.

- Who is responsible for conducting a VPA?
- Why is a VPA necessary?
- What can you expect during a VPA?
- Where can an applicant seek assistance before, during and after the visit?

VPA Responsibility

The Quality Assurance Quality Control (QAQC) Section of the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) Food & Nutrition Division is responsible for conducting a pre-approval visit for each program applicant as required by the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

Purpose of a VPA

QAQC Specialist will conduct a Visit Prior to Approval (VPA) to **assess** the applicant sponsor's potential for successful program operation and to **verify** information provided in the application.

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)

Guiding Regulation

7 CFR 226 (b)(1)

Application procedures for new institutions.
Each State agency must establish application procedures to determine the eligibility of new institutions under this part. At a minimum, such procedures must require that institutions submit information to the State agency in accordance with paragraph (f) of this section. For new private nonprofit and proprietary child care institutions, such procedures **must also include a pre-approval visit** by the State agency to **confirm** the information in the institution's application and to further **assess** its ability to manage the Program.

COMMUNITY
NUTRITION
conference

The purpose of the visit is to:

➢ **Assess** the potential CE's ability to successfully manage and operate CACFP activities;

➢ **Verify** the information submitted in the application and supporting documents;

➢ **Verify** the CE's ability to provide a meal service;

➢ **Verify** the resources that are dedicated to successfully managing CACFP activities; and
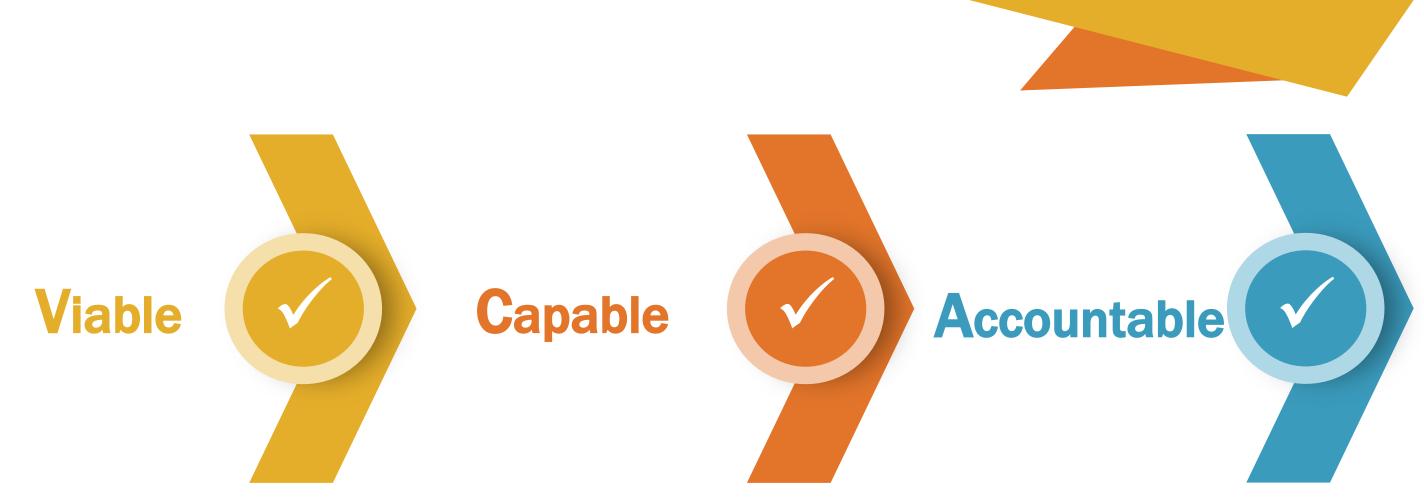
➢ Provide **Technical Assistance**

Assessment

Potential CE's ability to successfully manage and operate CACFP activities

How do we do this?

➢ Review and verify what is stated in Management Plan

➢ Review Organizational Chart

➢ Review Organization's Policies and Processes

➢ Review Budget

➢ Review Financial, Payroll, and Meal Records

➢ Determine VCA –Viable, Capable, Accountable

Viable

➢ Does the applicant have an operation that can operate without support of Program funds?

➢ Does the applicant have adequate financial resources to operate CACFP on a daily basis?

➢ Are costs identified in the budget necessary, reasonable, allowable and appropriately documented ?

Capable

- ➢ Does the applicant have an adequate number of qualified staff available to ensure Program operation?

- ➢ Does the applicant have policies and procedures in place that assign Program responsibilities and duties?

- ➢ Does the applicant comply with Civil Rights requirements?

Accountable

➢ Does the organization have systems in place to ensure fiscal accountability and operation of program according to requirements?

- Board of Directors
- Fiscal Accountability
- Record Maintenance
- Meal Service Operation

Verification

Information submitted in the application and supporting documents

How do we do this?

➢ Review information stated in application

➢ Review documents prior to visit and while on-site

➢ Observe program in operation

Verification

Centers ability to provide a meal service

How do we do this?

➢ Observe the program in operation

➢ Review meal records

➢ Speak with Management and Staff

Verification

Resources are dedicated to successfully managing CACFP activities

How do we do this?

➢ Observation

➢ Review meal records

➢ Review financial records (e.g., receipts, bank statements, and payroll records)

Provide Technical Assistance

How do we do this?

- ➤ Before the VPA, representatives from the applicant's local ESC are invited to attend.

- ➤ During the VPA, the QAQC Specialist will provide Technical Assistance.

- ➤ After the VPA, the QAQC Specialist may refer applicant to the ESC for additional guidance.

NOTE: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS NOT ALL INCLUSIVE

What resources are available to applicants?

- ➤ USDA FNS Website (www.fns.usda.gov)
- ➤ TDA Handbooks (www.squaremeals.org)
- ➤ Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)
- ➤ IRS
- ➤ Local Health Authority

CAUSE FOR CONCERN

NOTE:

<u>Inconsistencies</u> between TDA's observations and the information submitted with the application and/or during the visit could result in the **<u>Denial of the Application</u>**, and/or placement in the Serious Deficiency Process.

Reference: TDA CACFP Handbooks

What happens after the visit?

Assess ✓ **Evaluate** ✓ **Determine** ✓

COMMUNITY NUTRITION conference

APPROVAL

WITHDRAWAL

DENIAL

Approval

Examples of what TDA might see:

- Records are in order.
- Organization appears to be in compliance.
- Few concerns, if any, are identified.
- QAQC may provide limited technical assistance to address something that can be corrected on site.
- May be referred to the ESC for assistance with issues that can be easily corrected.

Withdrawal

Examples of what TDA might see:

- Recordkeeping or operating concerns.
- TDA identified processes that do not comply with program requirements.
- Applicant may need additional time to make modifications to program.
- Applicant needs technical assistance to make modifications.
- Corrections or changes require additional time that would exceed the 30 day decision timeframe.

Note: Decision to withdraw can only be made by applicant

Denial

Examples of what TDA might see:

- Significant deficiencies in recordkeeping or operation are noted,
- Observations identify processes that do not comply with program requirements,
- Applicant may need additional time to make modifications to program
- Applicant needs technical assistance to make modifications,
- Corrections or changes require additional time that would exceed the 30 day decision timeframe.

Note: Applicant has appeal rights, but is also eligible to reapply after areas of concern are corrected.

How can you prepare to become a SUCCESSFUL CE?

➢ Know the CACFP requirements.

➢ Know your responsibilities as a Contracting Entity (CE)

➢ Seek **continuous** assistance from your local ESC

QUESTIONS?

COMMUNITY
NUTRITION
conference

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER