



Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Frequently Asked Questions

What does CEP stand for?

CEP stands for Community Eligibility Provision.

What is CEP?

CEP is a USDA program that allows low-income schools to offer meals to all students at no cost and without requiring applications from families. CEP schools are reimbursed for meals based on the percentage of students eligible for free meals due to participating in certain programs, such as SNAP and TANF.

Who pays for Community Eligibility Provision?

The USDA reimburses CEP schools for all school meals during the 4-year period.

How do schools qualify for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)?

Schools qualify for CEP based on the schools identified student percentage (ISP). An ISP is determined by calculating the number of students who are directly certified to receive free meals on the basis of their receipt of CalFresh, California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or Medi-Cal benefits, and the extension of those benefits to students within the same household. The calculation also includes students who are certified as homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, and income-eligible for Head Start. CEP schools can provide the program for up to 4-years before needing to re-apply.

What meals are offered at no cost at CEP schools?

Both breakfast and lunch are offered every school day at no charge to every student at CEP-qualified schools. We encourage every student to take advantage of these meals and ensure that they are fueled for learning and growing every day.

If I have a child at a CEP school and another child at a non-CEP school, do I need to fill out a Free and Reduced Price Meals application for the student at the non-CEP school?

Yes. Any child at a non-CEP school, whose family may qualify for free or reduced price meals must still apply.

Do students at CEP schools still need to enter numbers or use the finger reader since everyone eats for free?

Yes. This allows for accountability in case a student has any allergies. It also helps us to accurately track the number of meals served.

Will middle schools still sell snacks?

Middle schools can still sell snacks. The schools will not, however, allow students to charge snacks. They will either need to have money in their account or pay for the snacks at the time of service.

Do teachers at CEP schools get to eat for free?

No, the CEP program only covers students. Teachers and other staff will need to pay the adult meal price.