

Community Eligibility Provision Facts

The Community Eligibility Provision Facts provides information on reimbursement rates, application process, identified student percentage, no cost meals, and qualifying schools.

Facts

- The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a new alternate meal counting and collection procedure Provision that was made available to all schools nationwide beginning in School Year (SY) 2014–15.
- The CEP reduces application burdens to once every four years.
- Schools on the CEP will never collect meal eligibility applications, complete the Verification Process, or categorize the meals as free, reduced-price, or paid when serving the meals.
- Breakfast **and** lunch must be served at no cost to all students in schools that are on the CEP.
- CEP schools must have a minimum identified student percentage (ISP) of 40 percent, based on enrollment, to participate in the CEP.
- Identified students are those who are directly certified for meals at no cost on the basis of their participation in CalFresh, CalWORKs, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, and Medi-Cal free, and the extension of these benefits go to students within the same household. Also included are students certified as homeless, migrant, foster, runaway, or participating in the Head Start program.
- The ISP is determined by dividing the number of identified students, as of April 1 of the SY prior to starting the CEP, by the number of enrolled students as of the same date, and multiplying the quotient by 100.
- Schools may qualify individually or as a group to reach the ISP threshold of 40 percent.
- The reimbursement rate for both lunch and breakfast is determined by multiplying the ISP by a factor of 1.6. The resulting number is the percent of meals reimbursed at the free reimbursement rate, with the remaining meals reimbursed at the paid rate. No meals are reimbursed at the reduced-price rate while schools participate in the CEP. For example, a school with an ISP of 50 percent would be reimbursed at the free rate of 80 percent of the breakfasts and lunches it served ($50 \text{ percent} \times 1.6 = 80 \text{ percent}$) and the remaining 20 percent would be reimbursed at the paid rate.
- Schools, or a group of schools, with an ISP of 62.5 percent or higher may be eligible to be reimbursed at the free meal rate for **all** meals served.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is allowed to change the multiplier factor each SY to a number between 1.3 and 1.6, resulting in different multipliers for different schools. However, the multiplier will be determined in year one and will remain the same for the four-year cycle.
- Participating schools are guaranteed to receive the same or higher reimbursement rate for each year of the four-year cycle, based on the ISP each April 1.
- If the ISP **increases** as of April 1 in any year of the four-year cycle, an LEA may apply to use the higher ISP to calculate reimbursement claims for the following school year.
- If the ISP **decreases** in any year of the four-year cycle, the reimbursement rate for the following school year will be paid based on the ISP determined in year one.

- If the ISP decreases at a school to lower than 40 percent but is at least 30 percent in year four, the school can qualify for a grace year and continue with the CEP for a fifth year. Reimbursements in the grace year will be paid based on the ISP rate as of April 1 of year four.
- The USDA has developed a worksheet to estimate the monthly federal reimbursement to be received when participating in the CEP. Each school and/or District needs to determine if the costs are outweighed by the benefits. A copy of the worksheet is available on the California Department of Education [CEP Web page](#).
- Schools on the CEP may establish a Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) base year for LCFF purposes. Schools using this option to establish a new LCFF base year only must collect income data for all eligible students at least once every four years, and collect income data for every newly enrolled student in the intervening years. For further information regarding an LCFF base year, see the [LCFF Frequently Asked Questions Web page](#).
- Sample Alternative Data Collection Forms are available to be used to calculate the school's LCFF and eligibility for other programs. The cost of collecting and processing the alternate form cannot be paid out of the school food service account and no reference can be made to the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs on the alternative form. Sample forms are posted on the CDE Frequently Asked Questions Web page noted above.

Benefits

- All students receive two healthy meals at no charge. Students that have access to better nutrition tend to perform better academically, have better health, and maintain better school attendance.
- Paperwork for schools and families is dramatically reduced. Schools participating in the CEP no longer have to collect and certify applications or complete the annual Verification Process.
- Meal lines will move more quickly, because meal counting and claiming is simplified. Staff will not have to categorize each meal served as free, reduced-price, or paid.

Contact Information

If you have questions about the CEP, contact your School Nutrition Program County Specialist. A list of specialist names with contact information is available in the Child Nutrition Information Payment System Download Forms section entitled "Caseload". You may also contact the Nutrition Services Division at 800-952-5609.

Questions: Nutrition Services Division | 800-952-5609

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