

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) School Food Service

Section 104a of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act provides an alternative to household applications for free and reduced price meals. Community Eligibility Provision allows schools, a group of schools, or a district with high numbers of low-income children to serve free breakfast and lunch to all students without collecting school meal applications. This potentially increases participation in school meal programs and decreases school food service administration costs.

Requirements:

- ✓ Community Eligibility is available to public, private and tribal schools
- ✓ LEAs or schools must have an identified student percentage of at least 40%, which is the percent of student enrollment listed in the Direct Certification list. (based on data from April 1st of the school year prior to implementing CEP)
- ✓ Can enter CEP or end CEP at any time with State Agency notification

Reimbursement school Lunch and other grants

- ✓ The Reimbursement amount for both lunch and breakfast is determined by multiplying the percent of Identified Students by 1.6. The resulting number is the percent of meals reimbursed at the “free” reimbursement rate, with the remainder being reimbursed at the “paid” rate.
- ✓ Participating schools use the same CEP reimbursement percent (or a higher rate if the level of direct certification increases) for 4 years.
- ✓ The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) has developed guidance to help LEAs navigate the interactions between CEP, Title I, and E Rate.

Benefits of Community Eligibility Provision:

- ✓ All students receive meals at no charge
- ✓ All students receive the benefits of nutritious school meals
- ✓ Improves student’s academic success
- ✓ Decreases hunger related illnesses and behaviors
- ✓ More USDA food to offset Food budget
- ✓ Decreases paperwork for schools with no applications to process and eliminates the verification process for School Nutrition Programs *
- ✓ Improves economies of scale and reduces labor per meal costs
- ✓ Frees up money for other educational resources
- ✓ No uncollected student bills
- ✓ Improves breakfast and lunch participation – national studies project a 25% increase in breakfast participation and a 13% increase in lunch participation
- ✓ Provides more time for student to eat and less time in line
- ✓ Improves attendance at the school, less absenteeism

To find the list of eligible districts/schools visit the DOE website

<http://www.maine.gov/doe/nutrition/resources/community-eligibility.html>

Contact Child Nutrition Office David Hartley 624-6878 david.hartley@maine.gov

*there may be other state programs that require student economic status that require use of the optional economic status form.

