

Community Eligibility Provision

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

The Community Eligibility Provision improves access to free school meals in eligible high poverty local educational agencies and schools and reduces the administrative burden of collecting household applications.

Eligibility Criteria

Instead of applications, schools use claiming percentages based on the number of identified students for reimbursement in the school. The local education agency or school must have an identified student percentage of at least 40 percent.

Identified Students

Identified students are students certified for free meals through means other than household applications. This includes students directly certified or categorically eligible through the following:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Extended Eligibility
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Federal Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- Foster students not on an application
- Migrant students
- Homeless or Runaway students
- Head Start/Even Start

Enrolled Students

Enrolled students are students who are enrolled in and attending schools participating in the Community Eligibility Provision and who have access to at least one meal service daily.

Identified Student Percentage

Local agencies and/or schools must have an identified student percentage of at least 40% to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision. The identified student percentage is determined by dividing the number of “identified students” by the number of “enrolled students” and multiplying by 100.

Important Dates

- April 1
Each local educational agency must collect data on the identified student percentage for each school and report this to the Office of School Nutrition
- April 15
Each local educational agency must submit a list indicating the identified student percentage for each school to the Office of School Nutrition

Office of School Nutrition must notify eligible or potentially eligible local educational agencies of their status for Community Eligibility Provision
- May 1
Office of School Nutrition must publish a list of schools and notify eligible or potentially eligible local educational agencies of the Community Eligibility Provision
- June 30
Local educational agencies choosing the Community Eligibility Provision must notify the Office of School Nutrition of their decision to implement this program for the entire district, a group of schools or individual schools



Free and Paid Claiming Percentages

The determined identified student percentage is used to calculate reimbursements for both breakfast and lunch. Local educational agencies multiply the identified student percentage by a factor of 1.6 to determine the free claiming percentage. The difference between the free claiming percentage and 100% results in the paid claiming percentage.

Four-Year Cycle

Local educational agencies or schools that are eligible and choose the Community Eligibility Provision may operate this program for four years in a row or in a four-year cycle. They can also choose to re-establish a new identified student percentage each year to help increase the free claiming percentage.

Entire District, Group of Schools or Individual School

The Community Eligibility Provision can be implemented for a district, group of schools or an individual school. For the district to qualify, the district must have an identified student percentage of at least 40 percent. For a group of schools, the identified student percentage is calculated by taking the total of the identified students for the group of schools and dividing that total by the total student enrollment for the group of schools. Again, this percentage must be at least 40 percent. An individual school can qualify if it has an identified student percentage of at least 40 percent independently.

Socio-Economic Data

Since applications are not obtained for the Community Eligibility Provision, socio-economic data related to free and reduced price eligibility is not available. Any local education agency seeking to obtain socio-economic data for individual students is required to develop, conduct and fund this effort separate from and not under the of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. For information on At-Risk Funding and the CDE Family Economic Data Survey please go to: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/auditunit_atrisk_freeandreduced

Where can I learn more?

- CDE Office of School Nutrition
www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/nutriprovisionalprograms
- Food Research and Action Center
<http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/national-school-lunch-program/community-eligibility/>
- To view all CDE fact sheets, visit: www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheetsandfaqs

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