
Community Eligibility Provision

Policy Reference:

Background Information:

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) provides an alternative approach for offering school meals to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools in low income areas instead of collecting individual applications for free and reduced price meals.

Some of the benefits of CEP are as follows:

- 1) More children receive nutritious meals during the school day. Early-adopting States have experienced increased school meals participation.
- 2) Access to free, nutritious meals for all students also removes the stigma associated with only providing free and reduced-price meals to low-income students.
- 3) Creative meal service models are easier to implement. The CEP can facilitate the adoption of creative approaches to meal service such as breakfast in the classroom and “grab and go” kiosks.
- 4) The CEP reduces administrative costs and paperwork. There would no longer be the need to conduct verification procedures in schools where CEP is implemented.
- 5) CEP eliminates student-level meal charges. The CEP makes meal counting and claiming easier and eliminates the need for schools to collect meal payments from students or to follow up on unpaid meal charges.
- 6) Eases the financial burden for families who are denied meal benefits because they are on the borderline of qualifying for free-reduced meals.

Purpose:

The CEP allows schools that predominantly serve low-income children to offer free, nutritious school meals to all students through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The CEP uses information from other programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Temporary Assistance Program for Needy Families (TANF), to determine the level of Federal funding for the school meal programs. The CEP reduces the administrative burden for schools and allows them to offer free meals to all children.

The CEP has been phased in over the past three years. It is currently operating in 11 States, 600 LEAs, and 4,000 schools. The CEP will be available nationwide beginning July 1, 2014.

For additional information:

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Website: www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/community-eligibility-provision

Recommended Action:

Allow CEP in the following schools:

Horry County Education Center
Homewood Elementary
Pee Dee Elementary
South Conway Elementary
Socastee Elementary
Loris Elementary
Myrtle Beach Elementary
Myrtle Beach Primary
Palmetto Bays Elementary

Estimated Project Cost: None

Recurring Non-recurring
Funding Sources:

N/A