

Title I, Part A and Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Q & A

The following Q and A addresses issues surrounding the Child Nutrition Community Eligibility Program (CEP) and its relationship with other Federal and State administered programs and the state accountability system regarding poverty data.

A1. What is the Community Eligibility Provision? The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) allows schools with high numbers of low-income children to serve free breakfast and lunch to all students without collecting school meal applications. CEP is available to public, private and tribal schools.

CEP can be operated in a single school, group of schools, or district-wide. The school, group of schools, or LEA must have an identified student percentage (ISP) of at least 40% to participate in the program.

A2. What is the impact to other programs that use Child Nutrition free and reduced percentages for funding calculation purposes? Districts electing to participate in this program need to understand how their decision impacts Title I, Part A, LAP, e-rate, and other state programs that use poverty data for allocation purposes. Since schools participating in CEP are no longer allowed to collect Free and Reduced-Price Meal applications for income data, we are providing a survey for you to use in order to collect this data for other purposes. Without this income data, the loss of e-rate, LAP, and other state funding could be significant.

Title I, Part A Allocations to Buildings

B1. What is the relationship between the Community Eligibility Option and Title I, Part A funding? Participating in CEP will not affect the total amount of Title I, Part A funds that a state or district receives as Title I, Part A funds are allocated primarily based on Census Bureau poverty estimates and the cost of education in each state. However, CEP participation can affect how Title I, Part A funds are allocated to each Title I, Part A school building as districts typically use Child Nutrition Programs free and reduced-price meal percentages to distribute Title I, Part A funds among schools.



B2. What is different about how allocations are determined to individual buildings? Most of the previous requirements are the same:

- Schools are served in rank order by poverty percentage.
- Schools over 75% must be served first.
- Grade span or district average groupings may only be applied after schools above 75% are served.
 - Districts may stop serving schools at any point in the rank order.
- Per pupil allocations will still be based on the rank order of schools by poverty percentage.

The above ranking and allocation rules do not apply to districts with under 1000 students.

B3. If an LEA wishes to use CEP data to allocate Title I funds to schools, when would CEP data first be used to determine a school's eligibility and allocation?

Generally, with the exception of new or expanding charter schools, an LEA uses data from the prior year to determine its within-district allocations. As a result, with respect to a school that is a CEP school for the first time, the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) data available to its LEA would probably be from the previous year. Therefore, with respect to within-district Title I allocations, an LEA would likely first use CEP data for a school that is a second-year CEP school.

B4. How should in-district Title I, Part A school allocations be determined? The district or schools may multiply the number of students, identified by direct certification data by the statutory multiplier specified in the federal regulation, and then divide that amount by the enrollment in the school. The district or school must use the CEP reimbursement percentage (Identified Students percentage * 1.6 multiplier) for participating schools, or total enrollment, whichever is less.

B5. If a district has many CEP program schools with a 100 percent reimbursement rate, can a larger per-pupil allocation be given to the school with a greater percentage of Identified Students to determine its Title I, Part A school allocations? Yes, as long as the school district ensures that it follows Title I, Part A within-district allocation requirements. Accomplishing this will take some careful analysis on the district's part, especially for a district that has a combination of CEP participating and non- participating schools.

Example: In the case of a school district that has more than one CEP program school at the 100 percent reimbursement rate with different CEP Identified Students percentages, the district may use a higher per-pupil amount for the 100 percent school with the higher percentage of CEP Identified Students.

At the same time, however, to ensure Title I, Part A compliance, the school district must ensure that the 100 percent schools receive at least as much per pupil allocation as do CEP program participating and non-participating schools with lower poverty rates. For instance, a non-participating school with a 99 percent poverty rate could not receive more per student allocation than a participating school with a 100 percent reimbursement rate.

Example

Providing a Different Title I Per-Pupil Allocation to Two CEP Schools that Have a 100 Percent USDA Reimbursement Rate

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7	Column 8	Column 9
School	CEP School (Y/N)	Enrollment	Number of Students Directly Certified	Percentage of Identified Students in CEP School	Number of Low-Income Students for Title I School Allocation Calculation ¹	Percentage of Low-Income Students for Ranking Title I Schools	Per-Pupil Amount Used by LEA	Title I Allocation
1	Y	500	400	80%	500	100%	\$750	\$375,000
2	Y	1500	1050	70%	1500	100%	\$650	\$975,000
3	N	500	10	N/A	450 ²	90%	\$625	\$281,250
4	Y	500	250	50%	400	80%	\$625	\$250,000

¹ For a CEP school, this figure is equal to the lesser of: (a) Column 3 or (b) Column 4 multiplied by 1.6.

² Poverty data are based on household applications and direct certification data.

Figure 1 Example from CEP Non-Regulatory Guidance (2015) Page 13

B6. If a district used a grouping of schools or the whole district as a group CEP to determine U.S. Department of Agriculture claiming percentage, can this percentage be used to determine Title I, Part A school allocations? No. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act requires a district with an enrollment of at least 1,000 students to rank schools in order of poverty to determine which schools are eligible to receive Title I, Part A funds and the amount of Title I, Part A funds eligible schools receive. Accordingly, to establish this ranking there must be a poverty percentage determined for each individual school.

B7. When an LEA elects CEP in a group of schools, those schools share one USDA Free Claiming Percentage for meal reimbursement. Does each school in that group then have the same poverty percentage for Title I, Part A ranking and allocation purposes? No. Schools may be grouped for meal reimbursement reasons only. Under section 1113 of the ESEA an LEA with an enrollment of at least 1,000 students must rank schools individually for ranking and allocation purposes. Thus, if an LEA groups schools in order for them to be eligible for CEP or to maximize meal reimbursement, the LEA must still use the school percentage of directly certified students, multiplied by the 1.6 multiplier, for each individual school for Title I, Part A ranking and allocation purposes.

B8. If an LEA has traditionally established a cutoff above which Title I, Part A-eligible schools are served, does the LEA have any options if the use of Community Eligibility data increases the number of schools above the cutoff?

Yes. An LEA can raise its cutoff point. For example, if an LEA's policy was to serve all schools above 60 percent poverty, the LEA could choose to serve schools above a higher poverty percentage, e.g., 67 percent.

B9. May a private school participate in CEP? Yes, if the private school meets the eligibility criteria and participates in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program.

B10. If a private school is a Community Eligibility school, does every child in the private school automatically generate Title I, Part A funds for equitable services? No. Title I, Part A funds are generated to provide equitable services to eligible private school students on the basis of private school students from low-income families who reside in participating public school attendance areas and not on the basis of all students in a private school. Accordingly, even if a private school is a CEP school and all students in the school qualify for free meals, only those students who reside in a participating public school attendance area would generate funds with which an LEA would provide equitable services.

State Funded Programs

C1. Will I need to continue to gather low-income data if I become an LEA or School CEP certified to get LAP funds? Yes, LAP funding allocation is dependent on a district's poverty percentage. In lieu of meal applications, CEP schools will need to collect the Family Income Survey.

C2. Can we use the multiplier similar to Title I, Part A for reporting economically disadvantaged percentages for state funded programs? No, you will still need to use data from each individual family to determine the percentage of children eligible for free/reduced-priced meals for eligibility in state funded programs.

C3. How do we obtain this information without having USDA free/reduced priced meals applications? A [Family Income Survey](#) is available in ten languages to send to families with children enrolled in a CEP participating school. See next section for Q & As related to this form.

C4. What state-funded programs are be impacted by CEP? The [National Board Certified Teacher \(NBCT\) Bonus](#), and [Learning Assistance Program](#) (base and high poverty funding) are impacted by CEP.

C5. Does this poverty data need to be reported in CEDARS similar to prior years? Yes, poverty data by individual students needs to be reported in CEDARS.

Family Income Survey

D1. What is the purpose of the Family Income Survey? Although family income data is not collected through the Free and Reduced-Price Meal application in CEP schools, this data is essential for certain state funding programs, most notably the Learning Assistance Program (LAP). [The Family Income Survey](#) is used to replace the data usually collected from meal applications.

D2. Who should fill out a Family Income Survey? Surveys should be collected from all families whose students are not directly certified. LEAs can provide the survey to all families, such as through back to school packets, or target surveys to those not directly certified.

D3. Can we require a family to complete this form? No, individual districts may provide incentives for completing the forms, but cannot indicate they are required by USDA or ED.

D4. How can we encourage families to turn in the survey? We have a number of template letters, resources, and best practices to help ensure that families return the surveys. These can be found at the [OSPI CEP webpage](#) under Family Income Survey Tools.

E-rate Funding Impact

E1. What poverty data should I use to report to USAC for determining discounts on services received under the e-rate program? In general, the e-rate program uses data from the National School Lunch Program and/or CEP to determine a district's eligible discount. In some instances, districts can utilize [alternative methodologies](#). OSPI maintains the official valid [file](#), used by USAC in reviewing applications, and posts it along with other helpful e-rate program information. OSPI strongly encourages districts to utilize the data posted on the e-rate page in completing their applications.

Accountability System and Other Reporting Impact

F1. What source will be used to post poverty data to Report Card and for accountability reporting? The data, as it is reported in CEDARS, will be used to calculate percentages for the poverty subgroup for any federal report, as well as data on Report Card. This means that any student identified as qualifying for free or reduced meals through the direct certification process, through the economic survey, or by being served in a program, e.g., migrant, homeless, head start, must be reported in CEDARS in the Student Attributes and Programs File (I) to indicate they are eligible for free/reduced meals.

F2. How do I report the students as eligible for free/reduced price meals in CEDARS? This is done by creating a record for the student in your Student Information System (SIS) identifying the student as eligible for Free/Reduced Meals (CEDARS Element I06 – Program Code, valid value 19) with a Qualification Code (CEDARS Element I10 – Qualification Code) of valid value 25 – Survey – Income comparable to Free/Reduced meal eligibility – Attribute or Program Code. This information will be then be included in your next CEDARS submission. For further information, see the [CEDARS Data Manual](#).