

OSPI School Meal Programs Reference Sheet

Community Eligibility Provision

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a non-pricing meal service option that allows schools with high numbers of low-income children to serve free breakfast and lunch to all students. CEP is available to public, private, and tribal schools.

Requirements

- ✓ Local Education Agencies (LEAs) or schools must have an identified student percentage of at least 25% (based on data from April 1 of the school year prior to implementing CEP).
- ✓ Identified Student Percentage (ISP):

$$\text{ISP} = (\# \text{ of Identified Students} / \text{Total \# of Enrolled Students}) \times 100$$

- Identified Students:
 - Students directly certified for Basic Food, TANF, and foster children that are included on the direct certification list from EDS.
 - Students that are directly certified for FDPIR, that are included on a list from the FDPIR office.
 - Migrant or homeless students that are on lists received from the Migrant Student Coordinator or Homeless Liaison.
 - Students participating in Head Start, Even Start, and ECEAP that are included in a list from the program administrator.
 - **Note:** Students who are categorically eligible based on information, such as a case number, submitted on a free and reduced-price meal application are NOT included.
- Enrolled Students:
 - Students who are enrolled and attending school AND have access to at least one meal service daily under NSLP or SBP.
- ✓ The reimbursement rate for both lunch and breakfast is determined by multiplying the Identified Student Percentage (ISP) by 1.6.
 - The resulting number is the percent of meals reimbursed at the “free” rate, with the remainder being reimbursed at the “paid” rate.
- ✓ CEP is approved for a four-year cycle, so participating schools will have the same free and paid claiming percentages for four years.



Benefits of CEP

- ✓ All students receive meals at no charge.
- ✓ All students receive the benefits of nutritious school meals.
- ✓ Eliminates unpaid meal charges.
- ✓ Minimizes stigma.
- ✓ Eliminates the verification process.

Grace Year

For CEP schools in the fourth year of their cycle with an ISP of less than the required 25% but at least 15% as of April 1, they may choose to continue CEP on a grace period:

- ✓ A grace year may be approved for one year (a fifth year).
 - This gives the LEA an opportunity to try restoring the ISP without having to immediately revert to standard counting and claiming.
- ✓ Claiming percentages change for the grace year.
 - The claiming percentages are based on the ISP representative of April 1.
 - These claiming percentages may be lower than claiming percentages from the four-year CEP cycle.

If the school regains an ISP of 25% as of April 1 of the grace year, a new four-year cycle may be approved beginning the year following the grace year. LEAs may use the end of the cycle to evaluate CEP and regroup schools and/or bring on new schools.

Reference

- [7 CFR 245.9\(f\)](#)
- [SP 09-2024: Community Eligibility Provision: Guidance and Updated Q&As](#)
- [USDA Community Eligibility Provision: Planning and Implementation Guidance](#)

Resources

- [OSPI CEP and Provision 2 webpage](#)
- [USDA Community Eligibility Provision](#)

Acronym Reference

- ECEAP – Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program
- FDPIR – Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- ISP – Identified Student Percentage
- LEA – Local Education Agency
- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- SBP – School Breakfast Program
- TANF – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture