

OSPI School Meal Programs Reference Sheet

Child Nutrition Eligibility & Education Benefit Application

The Child Nutrition Eligibility & Education Benefit (CNEEB) Application merges the free and reduced-price meal application and family income survey. Through submission of the CNEEB Application, households may qualify for:

- Free and reduced-price meal benefits,
- Summer EBT benefits (if enrolled in a NSLP/SBP school),
- Reduced fees for other programs and activities, and/or
- Help secure other educational funding for the LEA.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is required to distribute the CNEEB Application?

All Local Education Agencies (LEAs) operating the NSLP/SBP, including those operating CEP or Provision 2 district-wide, are required to distribute the CNEEB Application beginning in school year 2026-27.

Resource: Child Nutrition Eligibility & Education Benefit Application- [English/Spanish](#)

2. When should the CNEEB Application be distributed?

The CNEEB Application and a Letter to Households must be distributed to all households at the beginning of the school year, after July 1, and to all households who transfer in mid-school year.

Resources:

- [Letter to Households – Public](#)
- [Letter to Households – Private/RCCI](#)
- [Letter to Households – Non-Pricing](#)

3. Are LEAs required to use the state prototype application or can they use their own application/income form?

All LEAs are required to use the state prototype application. Previous versions of the application and Family Income Survey do not meet the requirements of a Summer EBT Application; therefore, previous versions of the form would be unable to determine eligibility for Summer EBT benefits.

4. What are the differences between the CNEEB Application and the free and reduced-price meal application?

There are three main differences that must be updated on a LEA's application distributed to households:



1. Opening Paragraph: *This application may qualify you for: meal benefits, Summer EBT benefits (if enrolled in a NSLP/SBP school), reduced fees for other programs and activities, and/or help secure funding for your school district. If your child(ren) are enrolled in a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2 school, completing this application will not impact your eligibility to receive meals at no cost.*
2. Social Security Number (SSN) must be optional for CEP and Provision 2 non-base year schools, as this information is not required to receive Summer EBT benefits.
3. Attestation Statement: *I certify that all information on this application is true, that all income is reported, and that my household does not receive Summer EBT benefits through a different State or Indian Tribal Organization (if applicable).*

5. Who should process and distribute the CNEEB Application in CEP and Provision 2 schools?

In CEP and Provision 2 non-base year schools, LEAs may use non-food service staff to complete this work or fund food service staff completing tasks related to the CNEEB Application with a funding source outside of the non-profit school food service staff. Staff time for processing and distributing the CNEEB Application cannot be coded to the non-profit school food service account as it is not used for the purposes of the NSLP/SBP.

6. Is a Social Security Number required for the application to be considered complete?

In standard counting & claiming schools, applications determine eligibility for both free and reduced-price school meals and Summer EBT benefits. Households are required to provide the last four digits of an adult household member's Social Security Number or indicate that they do not have a Social Security Number for a free and reduced-price meal application to be considered complete. Applications missing this information are considered incomplete and may not be processed until this information is obtained.

In CEP or Provision 2 non-base year schools, applications determine eligibility for Summer EBT benefits only. Households are not required to provide the last four digits of the Social Security Number or indicate that they do not have a Social Security Number. Applications missing this information could be processed as complete and the household could be determined eligible for Summer EBT benefits.

7. When should the application be processed?

Applications must be processed within 10 working days of submission.

8. What is the effective date of eligibility?

The effective date of eligibility is the date the application was approved and entered into the district's system, unless otherwise approved for a Flexibility in the Effective Date of Eligibility by OSPI.

9. How should qualifying applications be coded in CEDARS?

CNEEB Applications should be coded as a meal application according to Appendix X in CEDARS for students enrolled in a school operating the NSLP/SBP. Applications submitted for students that do

not have access to meals under NSLP/SBP should be coded as '25 – Family Income Survey.' If a household does not qualify or did not return an application, the code should be left blank.

Resource: [CEDARS Appendices](#)

10. Are households required to be notified of the results of the application?

LEAs must provide written notification of household eligibility. Households with children who are approved or denied for Child Nutrition Program benefits must be notified through mail or email.

Sample letter templates are available on the [Meal Application & Verification webpage](#).

11. Is the “Consent to Share Eligibility” form required to share CNEEB Application information?

“Consent to Share” forms are required to share eligibility information with programs not authorized under the National School Lunch Act (NSLA). Any student that has been directly certified for free or reduced-price school meals or has a qualifying CNEEB Application on file that meets the eligibility guidelines for free or reduced-price meals should be provided with a “Consent to Share” form as they are eligible for fee removals through House Bill 1660.

Resources: [Confidentiality Requirements of Common Programs](#)
[Consent to Share Eligibility Template](#)

12. Is the CNEEB Application subject to verification?

Verification continues to be required for standard counting & claiming schools and Provision 2 base year schools. Verification must be conducted annually by November 15.

Verification is not required for CEP and Provision 2 non-base year schools. Applications submitted for these schools may be subject to verification by DSHS for Summer EBT benefits though.

All LEAs, including those operating CEP or Provision 2 district-wide, must continue to submit the Verification Summary Report annually by February 1.

Resource: [Verification Reference Sheet](#)

13. Can schools not operating NSLP/SBP distribute the CNEEB Application?

Yes. Schools not operating NSLP/SBP may distribute the CNEEB Application to collect eligibility information for reduced fees and other educational funding. Applications should be coded as '25 – Family Income Survey' in CEDARS and will not be eligible for Summer EBT benefits.

Resources

- [USDA Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#)

Acronym Reference

- CEDARS – Comprehensive Education Data and Research System
- CEP – Community Eligibility Provision
- CNEEB – Child Nutrition Eligibility & Education Benefit Application
- CNS – Child Nutrition Services
- EBT – Electronic Benefit Transfer
- FDP – Food Distribution Program
- LEA – Local Education Agency
- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- RCCI – Residential Child Care Institution
- SBP – School Breakfast Program
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture