

Community Eligibility:

FEEDING ALL STUDENTS FOR FREE

More students eat. More money for schools.

WHAT IS CEP?

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a federal option that allows high-poverty schools to provide free meals—both breakfast and lunch—to all students.

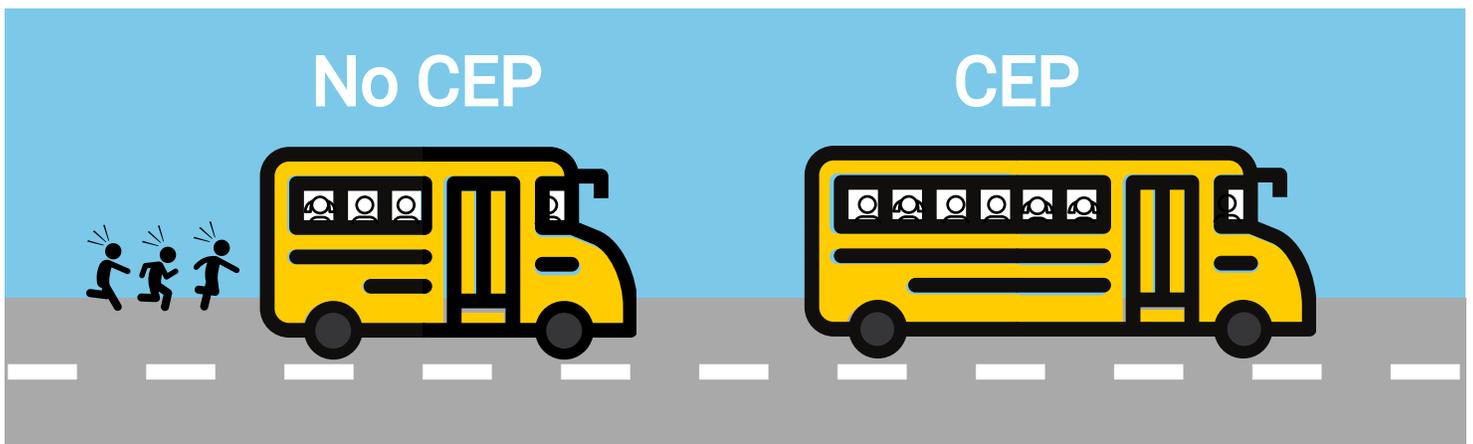
The COVID-19 public health emergency is coming to an end and so are the rules that make it possible for schools to feed all students. However, CEP allows schools to feed kids for free.

Community eligibility allows schools and school districts to meet students' nutritional needs. Before the public health emergency ends, schools should adopt CEP to feed all students for free.

IMPORTANT DATES

CEP Requirements	Annual Deadline
Effect CEP for SY2022-2023	June 30

Unless the United States Department of Agriculture extends flexibilities, schools will be back to regular rules next fall including processing meal applications and charging for meals.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Once a school enrolls in CEP, all students eat at no cost to them and benefit from more advantages:



Reduced stigma & greater equity – students do not have to worry about being judged by their peers because of how they receive school meals. Students who have access to better nutrition tend to perform better academically.

Efficiency – CEP simplifies the way students receive school meals. With CEP, schools do not have to spend time chasing school meal applications or handling meal payments accounts, whether reduced-price or free. This is a huge advantage for schools affected by staffing issues and supply chain shortages.



Stability – schools are guaranteed a rate of funding for CEP for four years that can be increased if the amount of directly certified students goes up, but cannot be reduced.

Increased revenue – more children eating school meals means more revenue which can be used to pay staff, buy equipment, and improve the quality of the food served.



YOUR SCHOOL MAY QUALIFY

Any public, private, or charter school that offers the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program qualifies for CEP if at least 40% of their students at a campus or district have been identified through the “direct certification” process. Direct Certification is a federally mandated process that schools must use to certify children who are eligible for free meals.

Students qualify for direct certification if they are:

- enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- receive Medicaid benefits or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance;
- are migrant or housing displaced;
- are in foster care;
- and/or are enrolled in Head Start or state-sponsored pre-kindergarten.



DIRECT CERTIFICATION IN ACTION

Direct certification helps Texas districts better serve their students while also boosting their school budgets. The higher percentage of directly certified students, the more money schools can claim in reimbursements.

Let's say 350 students attend a particular school. Of those students, 200 (57%) are "identified" through direct certification. This school is eligible for CEP.

The multiplier that determines the amount of federal reimbursement a school receives is currently 1.6. The higher the percentage of directly certified students, the higher the meal reimbursement. In our example with 57% directly identified students, the school would be reimbursed for 91% of the school meals it serves (57 x 1.6).

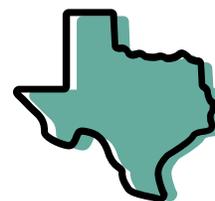
Let's look at this chart for a better breakdown.

Identified Student Rate = 57%	Reimbursement Calculation
Multiplied by factor of 1.6 = $57\% \times 1.6 = 91\%$	Total daily meals served: 700
Free claiming percentage = 91%	Meals reimbursed at free rate: $700 \times 91\% = 637$
Paid claiming percentage = $100\% - 91\% = 9\%$	Meals reimbursed at paid rate: $700 \times 9\% = 63$

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Food Research & Action Center – <https://frac.org/>

Texas Department of Agriculture – <https://www.texasagriculture.gov/>



Children go to school to learn the fundamentals needed to live up to their fullest potential and be successful as adults, but they can't learn when they're hungry.
At Every Texan we work to ensure no child in Texas goes hungry.

