

Implementing the Community Eligibility Provision



Health and Nutrition Services
Arizona Department of Education





Disclaimer

This training was developed by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Health and Nutrition Services Division (HNS). The content in this training is intended for professionals operating one or more USDA Child Nutrition Programs in Arizona under the direction of ADE. The information in this training is subject to change. Attendees are encouraged to access professional development materials directly from the training library to prevent use of outdated content.

Intended Audience

This Online Course is intended for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) who have applied to operate Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

Objectives

At the end of this training, attendees should be able to:

- provide an overview of CEP;
- understand CEP operating requirements along with counting and claiming procedures;
- be aware of NSLP requirements that remain throughout the CEP operation; and
- be prepared for the potential participation increase that may occur while operating CEP.

TRAINING HOURS

Information to include when documenting this training for Professional Standards:

Training Title: Implementing the Community Eligibility Provision

Key Area: 3000 - Administration

Learning Code: 3130

Length: 30 minutes

**Community Eligibility
Provision (CEP)**
Planning & Implementation Guidance



USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
February 2024

The instruction within this Online Course is based on guidance from [USDA's CEP Planning and Implementation Guidance](#) and [SP 09-2024 Community Eligibility Provision: Guidance and Updated Q&As](#)

It is recommended to review the USDA's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Planning & Implementation Guidance, as well as the latest memos in addition to reviewing this course for complete guidance on CEP.

Definitions

Identified Students

Students with access to at least one meal service through the NSLP or School Breakfast Program (SBP) and who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Directly Certified through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Distribution on Indian Reservation (FDPIR), or Medicaid Free (DC-M), as well as, any enrolled extended household members
- Directly Certified Foster, Homeless, Migrant
- Certified Homeless or Migrant based on a school liaison list
- Enrollment in a Federal Head Start Program
- Certified Runaway
- Certified non-applicant approved by local officials or foster children certified by means other than an application are also included
- Foster child certified by means other than an application
- [Calculating the Identified Student Percentage Worksheet](#)

Definitions

Identified Student Percentage

Identified students divided by total enrollment. This is used to determine the claiming percentage (the amount of meals that will be reimbursed at the free rate).

Non-Pricing

When an LEA provides meals to students at no cost to the household regardless of their eligibility status.

Title 1 Funds

Federal monies funded to assist schools with technical assistance, service, and support to help ensure every child has access to an excellent education.

Enrolled Students

Students who are enrolled in and attending schools that participate in CEP and have access to at least one meal service (SBP or NSLP) daily. Includes all students with access to the SBP or NSLP, and not just those students participating in the programs.

Non-Profit Food Service Account

The restricted account in which all the revenue from all food service operations conducted by the SFA principally for the benefit of school children is retained and used only for the operation or improvement of the nonprofit school food service.

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CEP Overview

SECTION 1



The History of CEP

The CEP is a provision that is part of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. CEP was introduced in several states in 2011-2012 and was made available to all states in the 2014-2015 school year.

CEP allows the nation's highest-poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without the burden of collecting household applications.

This alternative saves LEAs time and money by streamlining paperwork and administrative requirements while increasing access of nutritious school meals to low-income children.



Key Differences in Operation

When an LEA participates in CEP:

- all enrolled students at participating sites receive breakfast and lunch at no charge to the household;
- school meal applications and verification activities are eliminated; and
- tracking meal counts by category of free, reduced, and paid is eliminated.

It is important to note that although CEP offers many alternative administrative and student-level perks, there are still NSLP requirements that LEAs must comply with in order to receive Federal reimbursement.

Benefits of CEP

For many schools and districts, CEP implementation has resulted in numerous improvements while providing easy access to nutritious school meals to low-income areas. These successes include:

- Increasing student participation in school meal programs
- Easing the administrative burden
- Improving program efficiency
- Eliminating stigma
- Eliminating unpaid meal balances and additional reimbursement dollars
- Improving the school learning environment

Operating Procedures

SECTION 2



Operating a Successful CEP Program

To run a successful program while operating CEP, it is critical that all counting and claiming procedures are followed.

If non-reimbursable meals are being counted and claimed or meals are not compliant with the meal pattern, this can result in Administrative Review findings and can lead to fiscal action.

LEAS must comply with all program requirements that remain intact throughout the CEP four-year cycle and for any extended cycle years.

LEAs operating the CEP are encouraged to connect with their assigned HNS Specialist as questions or concerns arise.

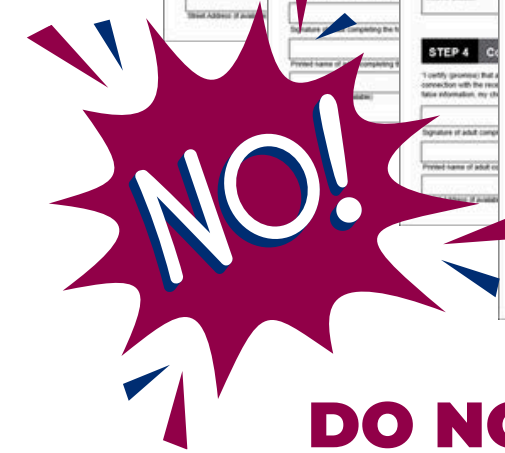
Meal Charging and Eligibility

Schools that have elected CEP will offer all enrolled students reimbursable meals at no cost to the household.

LEAs will be reimbursed based on the **total** daily meal counts and will no longer count students by free, reduced, and paid eligibility.



While an LEA or site is operating CEP, it is **prohibited** to distribute household applications to families if their child is attending a school that is operating under CEP.



DO NOT DISTRIBUTE/COLLECT HOUSEHOLD APPLICATIONS!



Meal Service

Schools participating in CEP must provide all students with access to breakfast and lunch every school day.

During meal service, schools must keep accurate meal counts and maintain a point-of-service system that ensures Federal reimbursements are claimed only once for each student who receives a **reimbursable meal**. Schools may not claim reimbursement for additional meals served to students or meals that do not meet the meal pattern requirements.

If serving adult meals, use method #2 for non-pricing when filling out the [Adult Meal Pricing Tool](#).

Counting & Claiming

To meet the counting and claiming requirements while on CEP, LEAs must:

- ✓ count only the **total** meals served daily;
- ✓ **not** collect school meal applications from households; and
- ✓ use non-Federal funds to cover any operating costs that exceed Federal reimbursement, such as costs for providing meals to all students at no cost.



Transfer Students

CLAIMING MEALS

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) can offer meals at no charge for a maximum of 30 operating days, or until a new eligibility assessment is completed, whichever occurs first, for students transitioning from Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools or other special provision schools to non-provision schools.

Schools have the flexibility to implement this option and are encouraged to do so to ensure that students transferring between schools do not face interruptions in their meal benefits. Meals provided in these situations can be claimed at the Federal free rate.

Visiting Students

CLAIMING MEALS

CEP schools cannot accept payment from visiting students, as their meals count towards the total meal reimbursement. ADE advises non-CEP schools hosting visiting students from CEP schools to provide meals at no cost to ensure uninterrupted service. These meals should be claimed based on CEP school percentages, and the CEP school must reimburse the non-provisioning school for any claimed meals at the paid rate. Non-provisioning schools must also include these meals in their reimbursement claims according to the appropriate percentages.

Point of Service (POS)

COLLECTING MEAL COUNTS

Similar to regular NSLP requirements, accurate counts of reimbursable meals served to students at each meal service must be taken on a daily basis.

Serving lines must be adequately supervised to ensure that all meals claimed for reimbursement are meeting the meal pattern and are only claimed for one meal per student per meal service.

Refer to ADE’s [Meal Counting Dos and Dont’s](#) Webinar for more guidance on counting and claiming.

POS DURING REGULAR NSLP	POS DURING CEP
Only reimbursable meals meeting the meal pattern can be claimed for reimbursement.	Only reimbursable meals meeting the meal pattern can be claimed for reimbursement.
Meals will be counted by category of free, reduced, or paid based on each student’s eligibility determination.	Only the total meals served will be counted.



Alternative Breakfast Service

CEP sites can implement Alternate Service Models for breakfast to enhance student access and participation. Options include Grab and Go Breakfast, Second Chance Breakfast, and Breakfast in the Classroom. The ADE has provided a School Breakfast toolkit detailing each model, budgeting, evaluations, timelines, checklists, marketing tools, sample menus, and equipment lists.

Access the toolkits via ADE Toolkits under Guidance Manuals, with additional guidance on page 35 of the [CEP Planning and Implementation Guidance Manual](#).

Submitting Claims in CNPWeb

Claims can be submitted starting the first day after the claim month and up to 60 calendar days after the end of the claim month. In CNPWeb, SFAs operating CEP are only prompted to enter the total reimbursable meals served.

- When the SFA enters a claim there will only be fields available for the data that is necessary as shown in the picture to the right.
- The “Free Meals Served” field and the “Paid Meals Served” field will auto-fill when the necessary data is entered.
- CNPWeb will automatically calculate this claim data by using the site’s ISP found at the bottom of the claim.
- Refer to the [Step-by-Step Instruction: How to Submit a Claim in CNPWeb for Sites Operating the Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\)](#) training for more guidance on claiming CEP meals.

Lunch - High Rate	
Number of Days Served:	15
Free Meals Served:	1218
Reduced-Price Meals Served:	0
Paid Meals Served:	505
Total Meals Served:	1723
Participants Enrolled:	146
CEP Percentages	
Breakfast CEP Percentage:	44.19 %
Lunch CEP Percentage:	44.19 %



Example

CALCULATING REIMBURSEMENT

CNPWeb will automatically calculate claims for CEP schools based on the total number of meals served. You may also use [USDAs CEP Slider Tool](#) to estimate free and paid claiming percentages under the CEP.

- The percentage of total meals reimbursed at the **free** rate is determined by multiplying the ISP by **1.6**.
- The remainder of the meals served and claimed are reimbursed at the **paid** rate.

The example to the right demonstrates how claiming percentages are calculated.

SAMPLE SCENARIO: ABC ELEMENTARY

ABC Elementary has an ISP of **45%**.

- $45\% \times 1.6 = 72\%$

This means that 72% of the meals will be reimbursed at the free rate. The remaining 28% of meals will be reimbursed at the paid rate.

High-Rate and Severe Need

An SFA operating under the CEP model district-wide as a group qualifies for high-rate reimbursement if the free claiming percentage ($\text{ISP} \times 1.6$) from the second preceding year is 60 percent or higher. For a new SFA participating in CEP district-wide, there is no need to wait for the first three months of claims to assess eligibility for the two-cent differential. The new SFA can use its free claiming percentage ($\text{ISP} \times 1.6$) to establish eligibility.

If a school implemented CEP during the second preceding school year, the approved ISP of the individual school must be used to determine eligibility for severe need reimbursements. Consequently, the individual school's ISP from the second preceding year, when multiplied by 1.6, must be at least 40 percent to qualify for severe need reimbursement in the SBP. For a new school opting for CEP, the individual school's ISP can also be utilized to determine eligibility for severe need without waiting for the first three months of claims.

Maintain a Non-Profit Food Service Account

LEAs with a low ISP may receive Federal reimbursement that is **less than** the cost of providing free meals to all students under CEP. In this case, LEAs must use **non-federal funding sources** to cover all other operational costs.

Use the [CEP Monthly Federal Reimbursement Estimator](#) to estimate the level of Federal reimbursement received under the CEP.

WHAT ARE NON-FEDERAL SOURCES?

Non-Federal sources include any funds other than Federal reimbursement available to the nonprofit school food service account. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- any profits from a la carte, catering, or adult meal sales;
- cash donations; and
- in-kind contribution funds from outside sources, such as volunteer services.



Maintain a Non-Profit Food Service Account

EXCESS CASH

ADE is responsible for overseeing the net cash resources within the food service fund. Regulations stipulate that the net cash resources—representing all funds accrued or available in the nonprofit school food service account at any given time—should not surpass three months' average expenditures.

If Federal reimbursement received under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) results in the Local Education Agency (LEA) holding cash resources that exceed the permissible limit of three months' average expenditures, LEAs are required to submit a plan outlining how these excess funds will be utilized to enhance the nonprofit school food service program.

Daily Edit Checks

Participation in CEP does not change the requirement to conduct edit checks. Daily Edit Checks are **required** to ensure that schools are not claiming more total meals than total enrolled students. Since claims will only ask for the total meals, the Daily Edit Checks are now simplified to include only the following fields:

- Total students
- Total meals served
- Days served
- Attendance factor

Refer to the [Step-by-Step Instruction: How to Complete Daily Edit Checks](#) training for more guidance on completing edit checks.



Simplified Daily Edit Check Worksheet

School: _____ Enrollment: _____

Month: _____ Attendance Factor (AF): _____

☐ National School Lunch Program

☐ School Breakfast Program

BREAKFAST

Day of Month:	A	B	C	D	TOTAL COUNTS:
	Total Enrollment	AF	Total Enrollment X AF:	Total Meals Served:	
1		0.00%	0		0
2		0.00%	0		0
3		0.00%	0		0
4		0.00%	0		0
5		0.00%	0		0
6		0.00%	0		0
7		0.00%	0		0
8		0.00%	0		0
9		0.00%	0		0
10		0.00%	0		0
11		0.00%	0		0
12		0.00%	0		0
13		0.00%	0		0
14		0.00%	0		0
15		0.00%	0		0
16		0.00%	0		0
17		0.00%	0		0
18		0.00%	0		0
19		0.00%	0		0
20		0.00%	0		0
21		0.00%	0		0
22		0.00%	0		0
23		0.00%	0		0
24		0.00%	0		0
25		0.00%	0		0
26		0.00%	0		0
27		0.00%	0		0

LUNCH

Day of Month:	A	B	C	D	TOTAL COUNTS:
	Total Enrollment	AF	Total Enrollment X AF:	Total Meals Served:	
1		0.00%	0		0
2		0.00%	0		0
3		0.00%	0		0
4		0.00%	0		0
5		0.00%	0		0
6		0.00%	0		0
7		0.00%	0		0
8		0.00%	0		0
9		0.00%	0		0
10		0.00%	0		0
11		0.00%	0		0
12		0.00%	0		0
13		0.00%	0		0
14		0.00%	0		0
15		0.00%	0		0
16		0.00%	0		0
17		0.00%	0		0
18		0.00%	0		0
19		0.00%	0		0
20		0.00%	0		0
21		0.00%	0		0
22		0.00%	0		0
23		0.00%	0		0
24		0.00%	0		0
25		0.00%	0		0
26		0.00%	0		0
27		0.00%	0		0

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CEP Daily Edit Check Worksheet



E-Rate

CEP OPERATORS

E-Rate is a program that helps schools and libraries afford telecommunications and information services based on need. School districts must calculate the E-Rate discount for the entire district by assessing the number of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals against total enrollment.

Schools using the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) calculate their discount using their free claiming percentage (ISP x 1.6). This percentage remains valid for the four-year CEP cycle, allowing schools to use the original percentage if their ISP decreases. If it increases, they may opt for the higher percentage. At the start of a new four-year cycle, districts must recalculate their E-Rate discount.

- For further details, see the [Arizona Broadband Expansion Fund](#).

Afterschool Snack Program Eligibility

Data from the previous October is generally utilized to determine area eligibility for the Afterschool Care Snack Program. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and schools in their first year of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) should refer to data from the previous October to establish this eligibility.

In subsequent years, LEAs and schools must calculate area eligibility using the CEP claiming percentage ($ISP \times 1.6$). If the LEA implements CEP across the entire district or has grouped schools, the area eligibility for an individual school site must be calculated based on that specific school's ISP multiplied by 1.6, rather than using the district-wide or grouped claiming percentage.

- Area-eligible CEP schools or sites that operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Afterschool Snacks can claim all snacks at the Federal free rate.
 - CEP schools that do not qualify as area eligible will claim snacks using the same free and paid CEP claiming percentages that are applied for meal claims.

Summer Food Service Program Eligibility

SFSP sites that utilize CEP data for determining area eligibility must rely on individual school-level data instead of district-wide or group ISP data. To ascertain individual school-level eligibility, multiply the approved school-level ISP by 1.6. If the outcome is 50 percent or higher, the meal sites within the school's attendance area qualify as area eligible.

Similarly, SSO sites can employ CEP data to determine area eligibility, but they must also use individual school-level ISP data rather than district-wide or group ISP data. The process for determining individual school-level eligibility remains the same: multiply the approved school-level ISP by 1.6. If the result is 50 percent or greater, meal sites situated in the school's attendance area are deemed area eligible.

SUN Bucks

CEP OPERATORS

SUN Bucks (Summer EBT) is a federal program that provides grocery-buying benefits to low-income households with school-aged children when schools are closed for the summer. While all children are served free meals in CEP schools, not all children in CEP schools are eligible to receive Summer EBT benefits. To be eligible for SUN Bucks, the student must meet both of the following criteria:

1. Must be enrolled for at least one instructional school day at an NSLP/SBP school between July 1 - June 30.
2. Meet **at least one** of the following eligibility requirements:
 - a. Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 - b. Participation in Medicaid and meeting the [federal income eligibility guidelines](#)
 - c. Foster student
 - d. Homeless student
 - e. Migrant student
 - f. Participating in a federal Head Start Program that participates in the NSLP and/or SBP
 - g. Household income meets the requirements for free or reduced-price school meals

SUN Bucks

CEP OPERATORS

To qualify for SUN Bucks benefits, children who are not already identified as participating in an assistance program through direct certification, must be individually assessed and found eligible for free or reduced-price school meal benefits. If a child was enrolled in a CEP school operating the NSLP/SBP for at least one instructional day but does not meet the eligibility criteria through being identified as participating in an assistance program through direct certification, the household can submit a SUN Bucks application. Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility are not an acceptable source for Summer EBT qualification.

For more information, visit the [Sun Bucks Website](#).

Grace Year and Ending Mid-Cycle

- Schools with ISPs between 15% and 25% can participate in CEP for one additional grace year, with reimbursement based on the ISP as of April 1 of year four. If they reach 25% by April 1 of the grace year, they can start a new four-year cycle; otherwise, they must revert to standard counting and collect meal applications.
- LEAs can end CEP mid-year but must notify ADE immediately, give families 30 days' notice, and provide free meals during that period.

Annual CEP Requirements

SECTION 3



Annual Requirements

CEP schools are exempt from collecting/distributing household applications but they must continue to comply with all other program requirements including, but not limited to, the following:

-  **CONDUCTING CNP DIRECT CERTIFICATION**
-  **SUBMITTING ANNUAL ISP**
-  **SUMBTING THE VERIFICATION SUMMARY REPORT**
-  **MAINTAINING A NON-PROFIT FOOD SERVICE ACCOUNT**
-  **NOTIFYING HOUSEHOLDS**
-  **RETAINING RECORDS**

CNP Direct Certification

CEP schools must **run CNP Direct Certification once per year on or around April 1**. While only required on April 1, SFAs may run DC more often as needed (ie: for Title I, AzEDS reporting, SUN Bucks, or if trying to increase ISP)

This April 1 data, will be used to determine the total Identified Student count for each year.

LEAs must continue to provide direct certification eligibility notifications to households, even if the children in that household attend a CEP school. LEAs may use the [Notification for Free School Meals Direct Certification](#) template to notify households.



Submitting the ISP

Based on the direct certification data found on or around April 1, the Annual ISP must be **submitted to ADE by April 15**, regardless of CEP implementation. The ISP will be submitted electronically to ADE.

Based on the reported ISP, CEP schools will have three options to consider for their next operating year:

- **Option 1:** Keep the current ISP and remain on the current CEP cycle.
- **Option 2:** Update the ISP using April 1 figures and remain on the current CEP cycle.
- **Option 3:** Update the ISP using the April 1 figures and begin a new four year CEP cycle.



AzEDS Food Service Report

Public districts and charters that participate in the NSLP/SBP and that report student data to ADE via the district/charter student information system will be required to complete the following NEW data fields for each student:

- Record Begin Date: Enter the date free, reduced-price, or “full pay” was established; do not report free/reduced rollover statuses
- Record End Date: Enter the date of any change of eligibility status or withdrawal date
- Eligibility Source: Direct Certification, USDA Income Application, and Other Source Categorically Eligible
- Eligibility Status: Free, Reduced-Price, or Full Pay

CEP operators will report students that match in Direct Certification only. All other students will be reported as full-pay. Refer to [Guidance on Reporting Income Eligibility 1 or 2 Needs and Student School Food Service Program Association data into Arizona Education Data Standards \(AzEDS\)](#) for more guidance on reporting student data.



Verification

LEAs operating CEP will not participate or complete verification activities.

However, step 4 of the verification process, the Verification Summary Report (VSR) is still required to be submitted annually by February 1st. The information you will be required to submit on the report includes:

- Total number of students enrolled in the sites operating CEP as of October 31.
- Total number of sites operating CEP.



District-Wide or Partial District Implementation

When applying for CEP, the LEA will indicate if an individual school, a group of schools, or an entire district will be participating in the provision.

- LEAs adopting CEP district-wide will receive benefits for all schools across the district at the same combined ISP.
- If a site is added or removed from your group or district-wide ISP during a cycle, you must notify ADE and may need to re-apply. More guidance can be found on page 17 of the [CEP Planning and Implementation Guidance](#).

LEAs adopting CEP at some, but not all schools, are strongly encouraged to clearly communicate to families which schools will operate CEP, which schools will use standard counting and claiming, and why.

- This is particularly important for students whose school is going through a transition from one type of operation to another, or for those families who have children attending multiple schools in the district when one could attend a CEP school and one could attend a non-CEP school.

Notifying Households

LEAs participating in CEP should use their usual communication channels with media and households to notify the community that breakfast and lunch school meals will be available at no charge to all students enrolled at CEP schools.

CEP schools must submit media releases to local media and unemployment offices contemplating layoffs, along with notifying households through a parent letter at the beginning of the school year.

- A template for the [Public Media Release](#) is available on the ADE website. Since all meals are served to children at no charge, ensure appropriate changes are made to the media release such as removing meal prices per eligibility category.
- A template for the [Parent Letter for Community Eligibility \(CEP\)](#) is available to notify households of non-pricing for meals.

PRESS (MEDIA) RELEASE

SENT TO (NAMES OF NEWS/MEDIA OUTLETS AND MAJOR EMPLOYERS CONTEMPLATING LAYOFF)

[Make appropriate changes as applicable to reflect the programs operated]

[Local school food authority] will be participating in the [School Breakfast Program and/or National School Lunch Program]. As part of this program, [Local school food authority] will offer healthy meals every school day. Breakfast will cost [breakfast cost] and lunch will cost [lunch cost]. Your child(ren) may qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Reduced-price meals cost [reduced-price breakfast cost] for breakfast and [reduced-price lunch cost] for lunch.

Qualifications for children to receive free or reduced-price meals include: belonging to a household whose income is at or below the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines, belonging to a household that receives public assistance, or if the child is homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, or participates in a Head Start or Even Start pre-Kindergarten program.

Household size and income criteria are used to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits if the household does not receive assistance or the children are not in the other categories mentioned above. Children can get free or reduced-price meals if the household's gross income falls at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guideline chart.

Household Size	FREE			REDUCED-PRICE		
	Yearly Income	Monthly Income	Weekly Income	Yearly Income	Monthly Income	Weekly Income
1	\$18,954	\$1,580	\$365	\$26,973	\$2,248	\$519
2	\$25,636	\$2,137	\$493	\$36,482	\$3,041	\$702
3	\$32,318	\$2,694	\$622	\$45,991	\$3,833	\$885
4	\$39,000	\$3,250	\$750	\$55,500	\$4,625	\$1,068
5	\$45,682	\$3,807	\$879	\$65,009	\$5,418	\$1,251
6	\$52,364	\$4,364	\$1,007	\$74,518	\$6,210	\$1,434
7	\$59,046	\$4,921	\$1,136	\$84,027	\$7,003	\$1,616
8	\$65,728	\$5,478	\$1,264	\$93,536	\$7,795	\$1,799

households can fill out the application and return it to the school. If approved, the school will notify the household that their children are approved for free meals. This notification will be sent to all households with a letter informing households of the application process and what is required to complete the application. [insert locations where the applications are available, i.e., on the school's website].

Children in the household and the information provided on the application will be used to determine eligibility and verification of data. Applications may be reviewed by the school or other program officials. An application for free or reduced-price meals is not valid unless it contains complete eligibility information as required by the Department of Education. In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be denied free or reduced-price meals on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or disability.

If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household's income falls at or below the Federal Guidelines, contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Contact the school for more information.

INSERT SCHOOL DISTRICT LETTERHEAD

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. [Name of District] will be offering healthy meals to all students **at no cost** every school day in School Year 20____. Your child(ren) will receive free breakfast and lunch meals every school day without having to pay a fee or submit a household application.

Your child(ren)'s school is approved to operate [Community Eligibility Provision or Provision 2 or Provision 3]. No further action is required of you. Your child(ren) will be able to receive free meals without having to pay a fee or submit an application.

My family needs more help. Are there other programs we might apply for? To find out how to apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1-855-432-7587.

If you have other questions or need help, call [phone number].

Sincerely,

[INSERT NAME]

[INSERT TITLE]



Record Retention

All LEAs operating CEP must maintain records for the entire cycle of CEP plus an additional five years. These records include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ **ALL DIRECT CERTIFICATION LISTS**
- ✓ **EXTENDED HOUSEHOLD MEMBER DOCUMENTATION**
- ✓ **LIAISON LISTS**
- ✓ **STUDENT ENROLLMENT**
- ✓ **MEAL COUNTS**
- ✓ **DAILY EDIT CHECKS**
- ✓ **PRODUCTION RECORDS**
- ✓ **MEDIA RELEASE**
- ✓ **PARENT LETTER**

General Program Areas

Additional general program areas that **do not change** due to CEP are:

- Meal Pattern
- Professional Standards
- Local Wellness Policy
- Civil Rights Requirements
- Food Safety
- Water Availability
- School Breakfast/Summer Food Service Program Outreach
- Smart Snacks
- Monitoring
- Procurement

Title I and Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility

SECTION 4



Title 1 Funding

Title 1 funding is based on Census data for school districts that report to AzEDS through either school meal applications or Indicators 1 and 2 for charter schools.

A common misconception with Title 1 is that in order to receive funding, school meal applications must be collected to retain poverty-level data.

Refer to memos [HNS 01-2020](#) and [HNS 21-2018](#) for further guidance on Title 1 Funding while operating CEP.

If the LEA currently uses school meal application data for Title 1 reporting, they will no longer be able to do so on CEP.

- If income data needs to be collected for any other program such as Title 1, it is important to use an Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility and **not** a school meal application. Remember, the distribution of household applications is unallowable while operating CEP.



School meal applications are not required for Title 1 funding and schools will not receive less Title 1 funding because of their participation in CEP.

Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility

LEAs that choose to use an Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility for other grants or funding while operating under CEP must:

- not use the nonprofit school food service account for distributing or certifying Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility;
- add a disclaimer that the form is not a school meal application with an explanation of why collecting the information is needed;
- ensure that all references to USDA programs are removed;
- not package the form with any school meal program materials and not have any correlation between school meals and the distributed income form.

Refer to the [Using the Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility when Operating a Special Provision Option](#) Quick Guide for more guidance on alternative forms.

 Academic Achievement

Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility

The Arizona Department of Education provides the following Fiscal Year 2025 Income Guidelines for determining income eligibility for a variety of federal funding programs. This form should be utilized as an alternative means to collect income eligibility information from the student's household and organizations should retain completed forms for a period of five years.

Definition of Income: all items such as wages and salaries before any deductions, and other income, such as self-employment, welfare, social security, retirement benefits unemployment compensation, worker's compensation, aid for dependent children, alimony, child support, pensions, insurance, or annuity payments, etc.

Exclusion: the value of meals, milk, or EBT benefits to children shall NOT be considered income in the household.

Is your household at or below the current income guidelines based on the attached Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act Income Eligibility Guidelines schedule?

Yes, Income Eligibility 1 (Indicator 1 in AzEDS): ☐
Yes, Income Eligibility 2 (Indicator 2 in AzEDS): ☐
No: ☐

If your household qualifies, please complete the following information for each student:

Student's Name	Name of School	Grade

I hereby certify that all the above information is true and correct:

Parent/Guardian Signature: Date:

Arizona Department of Education Tuesday, July 2, 2024



Click [here](#) to access the Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility.

Processing Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility

If an LEA decides to collect Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility to allocate education funding, school food service staff may process these since they have expertise in collecting household income forms.

However, the cost of Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility processing may not be paid from the nonprofit school food service account and the forms may not be associated with school meals. The LEA must pay for (or reimburse the nonprofit school food service account) for the cost of processing forms.

CONTACT US

If you have a question or require additional assistance, please contact your assigned specialist or contact HNS.



602-542-8700



ContactHNS@azed.gov



www.azed.gov/hns





Congratulations

**You have completed the Online Course:
Implementing the Community Eligibility
Provision**

Information to include when documenting this
training for Professional Standards:

**Training Title:
Online Course:
Implementing the
Community Eligibility
Provision (CEP)**

**Key Area: 3000 – Administration
Learning Code: 3130
Length: 30 Minutes**

Certificate

Requesting a training certificate

Please click the button to complete a brief survey about this online training. Once the survey is complete, you will be able to print your certificate of completion from Survey Monkey.



Information to include when documenting this training for Professional Standards:

Training Title:
Implementing the
Community Eligibility
Provision

Key Area: 3000 – Administration
Learning Code: 3130
Length: 30 Minutes

Please note, attendees must document the amount of training hours indicated on the training despite the amount of time it takes to complete it.





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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, [AD-3027](#), found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. **Mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. **Fax:** (202) 690-7442; or
3. **Email:** program.intake@usda.gov.

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