

# Community Eligibility Provision

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is an option for eligible schools to offer meals at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications. Under CEP, not all meals are automatically claimed at the free federal reimbursement rate. Authorized by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) and codified in regulations at [7 CFR 245.9\(f\)](#), CEP is a reimbursement alternative for eligible local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools participating in both the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). CEP eliminates the need for schools to collect household income applications by sharing eligibility data between specific Federal assistance programs, which can reduce administrative burden for both schools and families.

To be eligible for CEP, an individual school, group of schools, or LEA must meet or exceed the established, minimum identified student percentage (ISP) in the school year prior to implementing CEP. The ISP is the percentage of enrolled students who are certified for free school meals without submitting a household application, such as those directly certified through specific Federal benefits programs (e.g., the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP] and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations [FDPIR]). For CEP, students who are certified for free meals without a household application are “identified students” ([42 U.S.C. 1759a\(a\)\(1\)\(F\)\(i\)](#); [7 CFR 245.9\(f\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#)) The ISP is calculated by dividing the total number of identified students by the total number of enrolled students.

The Glenwood Community School district identified student percentage as of April 1, 2023 was 29.76%. This percentage was too low to participate in the program.

LEAs must meet the minimum ISP as of April 1 of the previous school year in order to implement CEP ([7 CFR 245.9\(f\)\(3\)\(i\)](#)). A Final Rule was released in September 2023 that lowered the minimum ISP from 40 percent to 25 percent. At this time, the State agency intends to implement the 25 percent ISP threshold beginning in SY 2024-25 so data system enhancements can be made that allow LEAs to submit claims at the correct claiming percentage.

LEAs interested in implementing CEP are required to complete a financial assessment to ensure that they have the resources to support the program at the CEP reimbursement rate specific to each site based on the ISP. Lower ISPs translates to lower reimbursement.

[CEP Final Rule Summary](#)  
[USDA Community Eligibility Provision](#)  
[Iowa CEP Resources](#)