**Department of Education &**

**Early Development**

Division of Teaching & Learning Support

Child Nutrition Programs

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Community Eligibility Provision

Questions and Answers

**Frequently Asked Questions**

Question Topic: SFA and School Level Eligibility

**Does each individual school need to meet the 40% identified student percentage, or may the 40% threshold be based on an aggregate of schools in the SFA?**

The 40% threshold may be determined school- by-school, by a group of schools within the SFA, or in the aggregate for an entire SFA. In any case, the SFA must determine whether they can operate the program given the expected level of Federal reimbursement and other non-Federal resources available to them.

**Are new schools able to elect the CEP?**

If the number of identified students and total enrollment are available before the counting and claiming of meals beings and the school meets the eligibility requirements, then the school may elect to participate in CEP.

**Can a participating SFA add a new site or group of sites to an existing CEP site or group?**

Yes. After the first year of participation, if a SFA elects to add new sites to an existing CEP site or group, the current site or group would withdraw from CEP. The new group with the new site will need to collectively apply as a new CEP group. New *Identified Student* counts and enrollments will be required for all sites within this new group. These new numbers must be from April of the previous year. Submit withdraw form for the existing site(s), as well as a new CEP agreement for the new group by June 30 of the year prior to the change.

**If a district has a district-wide *Identified Students* percentage of at least 40% but some schools do not elect the CEP, does the district still qualify?**

The identified student percentage threshold must be met by the participating schools as a unit. If the threshold is not met as an entire group with the deletion of the schools, then the group does not qualify. Individual schools and groups may still participate.

**Can schools be randomly grouped together to become eligible for the CEP?**

Yes, as long as the schools are in the same SFA, and meet the requirement for eligibility as a group.

**How is the *Identified Student* percentage determined for groups of schools electing CEP?**

The *identified student* percentage for a group of schools is calculated by taking the sum of the identified students for the group of schools divided by the total student enrollment for the group of schools.

**What schools are eligible to participate in the CEP?**

Any school that has an agreement with the Department of Education and Early Development to participate in the NSLP and/ or SBP and meets the eligibility criteria to elect the Community Eligibility Provision can participate. Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs) are unable to participate.

**Are SFAs with schools currently operating Provision 3 in a NON BASE year permitted to elect CEP?**

Provision 3 schools would be required to establish identified student percentages for the purpose of receiving reimbursement under CEP.

Question Topic: *Identified Student* Percentage Determination

**Who are the *Identified Students*?**

The *identified students* are the number approved as free eligible who are not subject to verification. This definition includes students directly certified through Food Stamps, Temporary Aid for Needy Families, and foster children. Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservation (FDPIR) participation as well as homeless on the liaison list, income-eligible Head Start, migrant youth, runaways, foster children, and non-applicants approved by local officials.

**What number should be used as the total enrollment for determining the percentage of *Identified Students*?**

The *Identified Students* percentage should reflect the percentage of students with access to the NLSP and SBP enrolled in the school as of April 1 of the prior year. The intent is to capture the most recent number of identified students available while still meeting the notification deadline of May 1 for participating SFAs and schools.

**How should we round when determining the *Identified Students* percentage?**

When determining the percentage of identified students you should NOT round. The percentage must be at least 40% to be eligible. A percentage that is 39.98% does NOT meet the threshold.

Question Topic: Non-Federal Funding Sources

**What may be counted as “funding from non-Federal sources”?**

Any funds other than Federal reimbursement available to the nonprofit school food service account may be used. Please note that the use of non-Federal funds is only necessary if the total amount of Federal reimbursement through the CEP does not cover the costs of serving free meals to all students. Examples of non-Federal sources include: Any portion of state revenue matching funds that exceeds the minimum requirement established in 7 CFR Part 210.17, profits from a la carte sales, and in-kind contribution funds from outside sources such as volunteer services or cash donation.

Question Topic: Reimbursements

**Are schools electing the CEP able to receive the extra 6 cents certification reimbursement?**

Yes. CEP schools will be reimbursed at their usual reimbursement rates, including the 6 cent certification reimbursement, if applicable.

**Are schools electing the CEP able to receive the extra 2 cents lunch reimbursement and severe need breakfast reimbursements?**

Yes. CEP schools will be reimbursed at their usual reimbursement rates, including the 2 cent lunch differential, and severe need breakfast rates, if applicable.

**Will the 1.6 multiplier change?**

The law states that the multiplier is 1.6 through SY 2013-14. After that time, FNS is permitted to change the multiplier to a number between 1.3 and 1.6. Schools electing the CEP will keep the same multiplier for an entire four-year cycle and do not have to implement changes to the multiplier until the next cycle if the CEP is elected again.

**How is breakfast reimbursed through the CEP?**

The identified student percentage for each school is used to determine reimbursements for both breakfasts and lunches. This percentage multiplied by 1.6 is then applied to both the total breakfasts and total lunches served to determine how many breakfasts and lunches are covered at the free rate. The remaining meals are reimbursed at the paid rate.

**When is a school permitted to elect out of the CEP?**

Schools may decide not to elect the CEP or to stop utilizing the CEP at any time as long as the State is notified by June 30th of the school year prior to returning to regular NSLP service. Since the new percentage of identified students must be established before April 1st of the prior year, schools will have time to decide if continuing of beginning the CEP will be advantageous for the next year. Schools electing to stop the CEP must be prepared to return to their normal counting and claiming procedures in the next school year.

**How will area eligibility percentages be determined for CEP schools?**

Since the 1.6 multiplier is intended to provide an estimate of the total number of students eligible for free and reduced price meals in the eligible schools, the product of the identified student percentage multiplied by 1.6 will be used for area eligibility purposes. These percentages can be used for determining area eligibility in the Summer Food Service Program, Seamless Summer CEO, Child and Adult Care Food Program, at-risk afterschool snacks, and afterschool snacks through NSLP.

**How are Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program award determinations made for CEP schools?**

School level CEP percentages (the school level number of identified students divided by the school level enrollment multiplied by 1.6) will need to be determined for the purposes of awarding FFVP funds. Schools in districts electing the CEP district wide or as a part of a group of schools electing the CEP with a shared identified student percentage must use the individual school CEP percentage for purposes of awarding FFVP funds.

Question Topic: Verification

**Do SFAs and schools electing the CEP conduct verification?**

No, since applications are not collected for School Nutrition Purposes, SFAs are exempt from verification for the schools electing CEP. SFAs with some but not all schools electing CEP must still conduct verification in the schools not electing the CEP. All SFAs must still complete the annual verification form.