



COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION (CEP) MEAL CLAIMING 101

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) ensures that all students can participate in school breakfast and lunch at no cost. It also changes how a school nutrition department can count and claim meals and operate point-of-service.

This resource explains how meals are counted and claimed at schools using CEP and provides tips for point-of-service.

How to Properly Claim Meals in CEP Schools

Meals are claimed at a rate determined by a school's Identified Student Percentage (ISP) using a basic formula:

- Meals claimed at the free rate = ISP multiplied by 1.6
- Meals claimed at the paid rate = $100\% - (\text{ISP} \times 1.6)$

Example: School A has an ISP of 58%.

- Meals claimed at the free rate = 58% multiplied by 1.6 = **92.8%**
- Meals claimed at the paid rate = $100\% - (\text{ISP} \times 1.6) = \mathbf{7.2\%}$

*So, if School A serves 250 meals, **232 (92.8%)** meals are reimbursed at the free rate, and **18 (7.2%)** meals are reimbursed at the paid rate.*

A few reminders:

- The ISP is the same for breakfast and lunch.
- The ISP does not change throughout the year.
- There is no reduced-price category for reimbursement through CEP.
- Only the total number of meals served needs to be collected. No names or PIN numbers are needed.
- Meals served still need to be counted at the end of the line. The actual number of students with reimbursable meals is counted not trays, entrees, number of students in a classroom, etc.
- A daily edit check still needs to be done to ensure the number of meals served does not exceed the student enrollment adjusted for the enrollment factor.

Tips for Point-of-Service

- Use tally reimbursement to speed up lunch and breakfast lines. Consider using paper or clickers to track the number of meals served quickly.
- Consider opening a second service line. Because meals are provided at no cost, many districts see a boost in participation. Avoid slow service lines, and increase the time for students to eat by adding a service line.
- Only one breakfast and one lunch per day per student are allowed at no charge. Second meals must be paid at the adult meal price. Consider posting a sign in the cafeteria that says, “One meal per student per day. Second meal \$[insert price].” That way, unless the staff member is certain it is a second meal, they can avoid asking the student.

Questions? Need additional support?

Check out bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/CEP for more resources, or email bestpractices@strength.org to get in touch.

Don't forget to share this resource with a friend or co-worker!