

# Welcome!

We'll get started soon. While we wait for other attendees to join, please answer this question in the chat box:

**From what city and state are you attending today's webinar?**



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# Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) 101

March 19, 2024

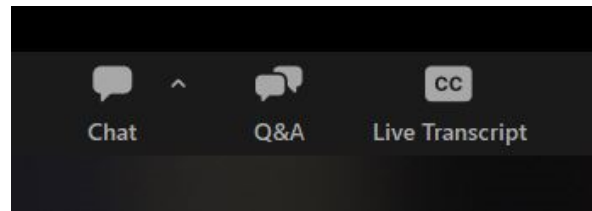






## Things to Know as We Begin

- The slide deck will be shared via email after the webinar along with the recording.
- To engage with other attendees, please use the [chat box](#).
- If you have questions for the speaker, please enter those into the [Q&A box](#).
- Closed captioning is available.





# Agenda

- Introduction
- What Are Special Provisions for School Meals?
- What Is CEP?
- CEP Math
- (Very) Brief History of CEP Policy
- CEP Annual Calendar
- Next Steps & Resources
- Q&A

# Introduction



# Introduction



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Senior Program Manager

No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices

# **What Are Special Provisions for School Meals?**

# What Are Special Provisions?

**Special provisions** in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP) reduce the paperwork burden required for students and their households, schools, and districts to participate in school meal programs.



**Students/households**  
submit free and reduced-price (FRP)  
meal applications less often  
(or not at all)



**Schools/districts**  
reduce application distribution, intake,  
and processing

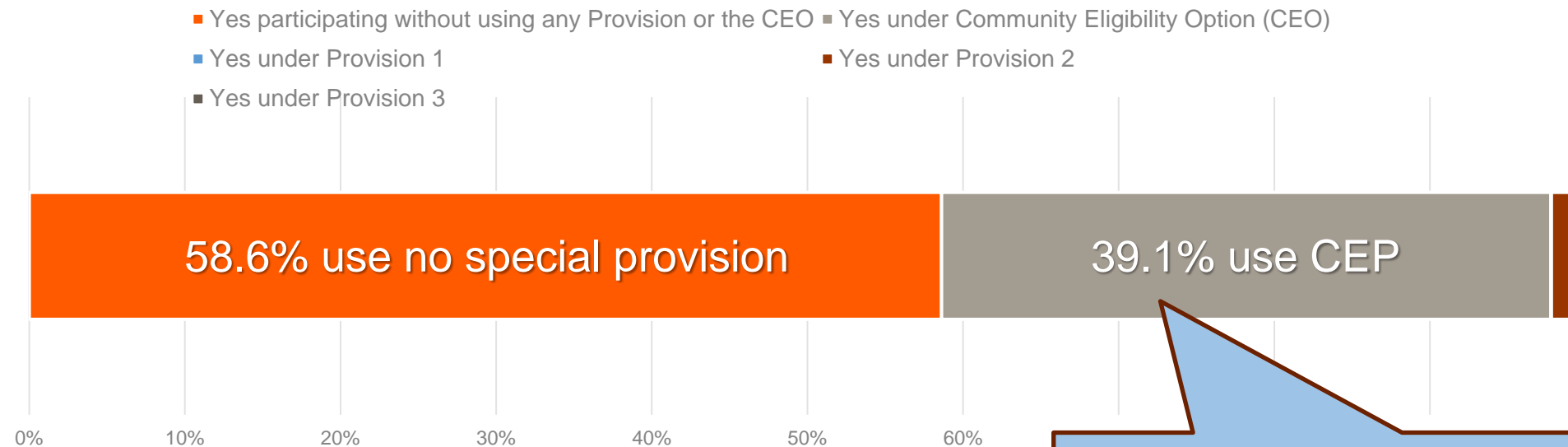


# The Four Special Provisions

|  | Provision 1  | Provision 2  | Provision 3  | Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>How does the provision reduce paperwork burden?</b> | Certification for free meals extended without annual application for two years; applications not required for students eligible for free meals | FR certifications during a base year extended for three additional years; FR applications not collected during non-base years  | Federal cash/commodity assistance held steady for four years from last year of FR eligibility determination; FR applications are not collected   | Certification performed through <b>direct certification</b> only; FR applications are not collected; eligibility lasts for up to five years  |
| <b>How do schools become eligible?</b>                 | At least 80% of students must be eligible for FR meals   | No eligibility requirement   | No eligibility requirement   | At least 25% of students must be directly certified for free meals   |
| <b>Must all students receive meals at no charge?</b>   | No   | Yes  | Yes  | Yes  |
| <b>How do meal reimbursements work?</b>                | Same as traditional meal counting and claiming   | Proportion of FR and paid meals served monthly during base year or for the entire base year applied in future years; difference between federal reimbursements and operational costs must be paid for with non-federal funds | Proportion of FR and paid meals served per month during base year applied in future years; cash/commodity support adjusted for enrollment and inflation; difference between federal reimbursements and operational costs must be paid for with non-federal funds | Proportion of <b>identified students</b> multiplied by 1.6 to determine percent of meals reimbursed at free rate; remainder reimbursed at paid rate; difference between federal reimbursements and operational costs must be paid for with non-federal funds |

# The Four Special Provisions

## Use of Special Provisions in NSLP Schools, SY 22-23 (NCES)



*If you're going to use a special provision, it's probably CEO*

# What Is CEP?

## What Is CEP?

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)  
streamlines school meal operations by allowing schools/districts with  
a minimum percentage of **identified students**  
to provide **no-cost meals to all students**  
as well as **forgo the collection of free and reduced-price applications.**



# What Is CEP?

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)  
streamlines school meal operations by allowing schools/districts with  
a minimum percentage of **identified students**  
to provide **no-cost meals to all students**  
as well as **forgo the collection of free and reduced-price applications.**

*direct certification*  
(SNAP, TANF,  
FDPIR, Medicaid)

*categorical eligibility*  
(homeless, runaway,  
migrant, foster,  
Head Start)

cannot collect paid  
and reduced-price  
meal co-pays

cannot collect  
free/reduced-price  
school meal  
applications

## What Is CEP?

- A school/group of schools/district must have an **identified student percentage (ISP)** of at least 25% to adopt CEP
- Meal counting and claiming is streamlined
  - No co-pays → no tracking meals by category; only counts  
no co-pay collection = no school meal debt!
  - Reimbursement determined by ISP and number of meals served
- Alternatives for FRP percentages included in CEP guidance
- CEP operates on a four-year cycle
- Schools/districts operating CEP must check ISPs at least once per year

# CEP Math

# How Does CEP Work?

$$\frac{\text{direct certification enrollment} + \text{categorical eligibility enrollment}}{\text{total enrollment}} \times \text{multiplier} = \% \text{ meals reimbursed at federal free rate}$$

(remainder reimbursed at federal paid rate)

**identified student percentage (ISP)**

**1.6**

**% for other child nutrition programs and school funding**

| If your ISP is... | ...then your percentage of meals reimbursed at the free rate is... | ...and your percentage of meals reimbursed at the paid rate is... |
|-------------------|--|---|
| 25%               | 40%  | 60%   |
| 40%               | 64%  | 36%   |
| ≥ 62.5%           | 100%   | 0%  |



# **(Very) Brief History of CEP Policy**

## Legislative History

- Authorized December 2010 by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Phased roll-out / pilot in 10 states + DC
- 2014: study found that, for every 10 students directly certified, an additional 6 students were FRP-eligible by application → 1.6 multiplier
- Available nationwide starting in SY 2014-2015

# CEP Final Rule – September 26, 2023

| Provision<br>(current citation)   | Previous Minimum ISP  | New Minimum ISP<br>(effective 10/26/2023)   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Minimum ISP for Eligibility</b><br><a href="#">(7 CFR 245.9(f)(3)(i))</a>  | LEAs, schools, and groups of schools must have ISPs <b>40% or higher</b>  | LEAs, schools, and groups of schools must have ISPs <b>25% or higher</b>  |
| <b>Grace Year Eligibility</b><br><a href="#">(7 CFR 245.9(f)(4)(ix))</a>  | LEAs, schools, and groups of schools participating in CEP must have ISPs <b>30-40%</b> in year 4 of the CEP cycle to elect CEP for a fifth year ( $30\% \leq \text{ISP} < 40\%$ ) | LEAs, schools, and groups of schools participating in CEP must have ISPs <b>15-25%</b> in year 4 of the CEP cycle to elect CEP for a fifth year ( $15\% \leq \text{ISP} < 25\%$ ) |
| <b>Identification, Notification, and Publication of <u>Eligible</u> LEAs and Schools</b><br><a href="#">(7 CFR 245.9(f)(5), (6), (7))</a>       | LEAs or schools with ISPs <b>40% or higher.</b>   | LEAs or schools with ISPs <b>25% or higher.</b>   |
| <b>Identification, Notification and Publication of <u>Nearly Eligible</u> LEAs and Schools</b><br><a href="#">(7 CFR 245.9(f)(5), (6), (7))</a> | LEAs and schools with ISPs <b>30-40%</b> ( $30\% \leq \text{ISP} < 40\%$ )  | LEAs and schools with ISPs <b>15-25%</b> ( $15\% \leq \text{ISP} < 25\%$ )  |



## What Can (or Can't) USDA Do?

### Can

- ? Lower or eliminate ISP threshold
- ? Adjust ISP multiplier between 1.3-1.6

### Cannot

- ⊗ Raise multiplier beyond 1.6
- ⊗ Allow statewide CEP
- ⊗ Implement Healthy School Meals for All



# CEP Annual Calendar

## CEP Annual Calendar

| Date     | What's Happening?   |
|----------|---|
| April 1  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Counts of identified and enrolled students as of April 1 are used for CEP eligibility determinations.</li></ul>   |
| April 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>State agencies</b> must provide district-wide CEP eligibility to LEAs.</li><li>• <b>LEAs</b> must provide school-level eligibility data to state agencies.</li></ul> |
| May 1    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>State agencies</b> must post CEP eligibility lists online.</li><li>• <b>State agencies</b> must send the link to CEP eligibility lists to USDA FNS.</li></ul>        |
| June 30  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>LEAs</b> must notify state agencies of intent to participate in CEP.</li></ul>   |



Ask  
your  
state  
agency!

# Next Steps & Resources

## Next Steps

- Run the numbers!
- Consider approvals necessary to opt into CEP.
- Look into maximizing participation to draw in revenue.



Ask your state agency!

# Resources

**STEP 4** Please click/select the grey box below which will then complete a groupings analysis. Please note, the analysis may take a few minutes to be completed, especially for larger districts, which can take up to 5 minutes to complete. Once it is complete you have the option of removing a school from the analysis, grouping, then click/select the grey box again to re-run the analysis.


4. SELECT THIS BUTTON TO COMPLETE THE GROUPING ANALYSIS.

| Remove from grouping analysis? | school_name | Grouping | GROUP ISP % |       | Eligible for CEP? | 1.6 Multiplier |                |
|--------------------------------|-------------|----------|-------------|-------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                |             |          | FREE        | PAID  |                   | Applied - Free | Applied - Paid |
| INCLUDE                        |             | 1        | 48.09%      | 51.9% | YES               | 77%            | 23%            |
| INCLUDE                        |             | 5        | 34.52%      | 65.5% | YES               | 55%            | 45%            |
| INCLUDE                        |             | 2        | 30.64%      | 69.4% | YES               | 49%            | 51%            |
| INCLUDE                        |             | 4        | 62.60%      | 37.4% | YES               | 100%           | 0%             |
| INCLUDE                        |             | 4        | 62.60%      | 37.4% | YES               | 100%           | 0%             |
| INCLUDE                        |             | 6        | 38.14%      | 61.9% | YES               | 61%            | 39%            |
| INCLUDE                        |             | 5        | 34.52%      | 65.5% | YES               | 55%            | 45%            |
| INCLUDE                        |             | 4        | 62.60%      | 37.4% | YES               | 100%           | 0%             |

## No Kid Hungry CEP Calculator

- Optimize CEP grouping
- Compare current revenue against multiple CEP participation scenarios
- Adjust meal participation projections to get truest estimate of revenue under CEP

# Resources

|  |  |                        |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |
|--|--|------------------------|--------------|------------------|------|------------------------|------------------------|------|------------------------|------------------------|
|  United States Department of Agriculture  |  |                        |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |
| <b>Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Monthly Federal Reimbursement Estimator</b><br><i>Use to <u>estimate</u> the level of Federal reimbursement received under the CEP</i>      |  |                        |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |
| District Name:   |  |                        |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |
| <b>Step 1: Calculating the Identified Student Percentage</b><br>If grouping schools, use the grouping calculator to assist in determining 1.1 and 1.2.                               |  |                        |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |
| Enter the number of identified students and enrolled students that is reflective of April 1 <sup>st</sup> in 1.1 and 1.2   | <a href="#">Click to define: Identified Students</a>   |                        |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |
| 1.1) Enter the number of identified students   | 0  |                        |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |
| 1.2) Enter the TOTAL student enrollment  | 0  |                        |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |
| ISP Base Number, rounded to 4 decimal places =   | #DIV/0!  |                        |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |
| ISP Percentage of identified students =<br><i>**This percentage must be at least 25% to be eligible**</i>  | 0.00%  |                        |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |
| <b>Step 2: Federal Reimbursement Rates</b><br>Select the current reimbursement rates used for each program (without the \$0.08).<br>The additional \$0.08 is applied in the next box |  |                        |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |
|  | <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>Lunch</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>Breakfast</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Free</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0 <input type="text"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">0 <input type="text"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Paid</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0 <input type="text"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">0 <input type="text"/></td> </tr> </table> |                        | <u>Lunch</u> | <u>Breakfast</u> | Free | 0 <input type="text"/> | 0 <input type="text"/> | Paid | 0 <input type="text"/> | 0 <input type="text"/> |
|  | <u>Lunch</u>   | <u>Breakfast</u>       |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |
| Free   | 0 <input type="text"/>   | 0 <input type="text"/> |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |
| Paid   | 0 <input type="text"/>   | 0 <input type="text"/> |              |                  |      |                        |                        |      |                        |                        |

## USDA CEP Calculator

- Estimate CEP revenue for one or more schools (manual grouping required)
- Adjust meal participation projections to get truest estimate of revenue under CEP



# Q&A







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Visit our website:

[www.bestpractices.nokidhungry.org](http://www.bestpractices.nokidhungry.org)





Ask your state agency!

# Resources

- No Kid Hungry
  - CEP Calculator  
<https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/nkh-cep-calculator-2023-2024>
  - CEP website  
<https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/programs/community-eligibility-provision>
- USDA
  - CEP Calculator  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/SY23-24EstimatorCEP.xlsx>
  - USDA CEP Resource Center  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/community-eligibility-provision-resource-center>







# Your Feedback is Appreciated!

At the conclusion of this webinar, a 5-question survey will open in your browser window.

Please take a moment to complete it.





# Thank You for Attending!

Regis Whaley

No Kid Hungry | Center for Best Practices

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