

Research Rundown

Article:

Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools School Year 2022–2023

What did this report examine?

This report analyzed national **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) adoption** in the 2022–2023 school year, and is based on three measures:

- 1 the number of eligible and adopting school districts and schools;
- 2 the share of eligible districts and schools that have adopted community eligibility; and
- 3 the number and share of eligible schools that have adopted, based on the school's poverty level.

There are many **benefits** that CEP provides to families:

- Schools no longer collect, process, or verify school meal applications and do not count meals served by individual students, **saving time** and **reducing** administrative burdens.
- Offering meals at **no charge** to all students **increases participation** among all students and **eliminates** any **negative stigma** for school meals.
- Schools no longer have to handle unpaid school meal **debt** for reduced-price and paid students at the end of the school year, or **follow up** with families when students do not have money to pay for meals.

Key findings:

During the 2022–2023 school year, there was a significant increase in the number of schools and districts participating in CEP. Here are the top-level findings for this year:

↑ **6,419** districts have one or more schools adopting CEP. An increase of **15.8%**, from the previous school year.

↑ **82%** of eligible schools have adopted CEP.

↑ **40,235** schools have adopted CEP, an increase of **20.8%**, from the previous school year.

↑ **19.9** million children attend a school that has adopted CEP, an increase of nearly 3.7 million children, or **22.5%**, from the previous school year.

Put it into practice!

- Are you eligible for CEP? Any district, group of schools, or school with 25% or more identified student percentage (ISP) is eligible for CEP. Make sure you do your yearly identified student reporting and determine your ISP percentage to see if you qualify!
- Determine if this is a financially viable option. Use our [CEP Monthly Federal Reimbursement Estimator](#) to decide if CEP is right for you!

Reference:

Pérez, A. (2023, May 1). Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools. FRAC. Retrieved February 13, 2024, from <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/cep-report-2023.pdf>



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