

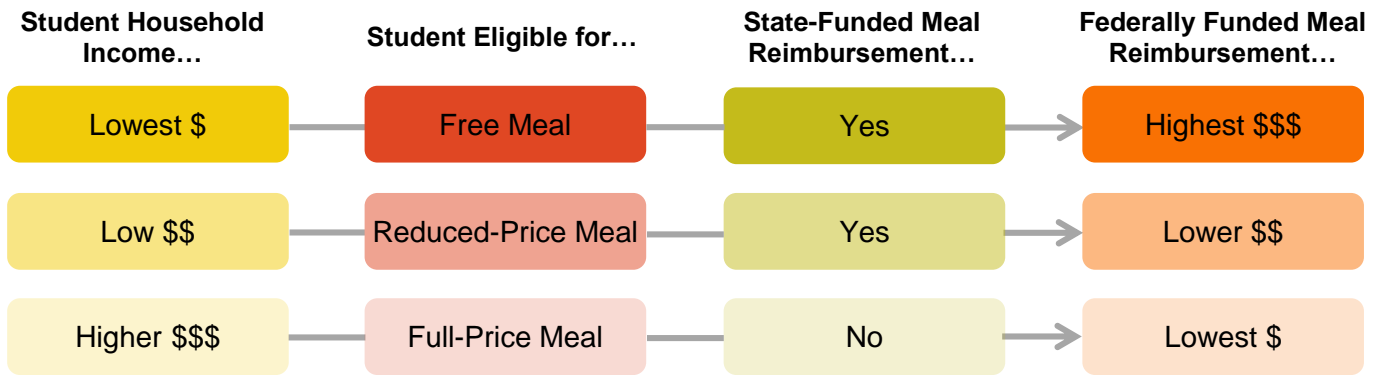
# Community Eligibility Provision: Factsheet

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## School Meal Basics


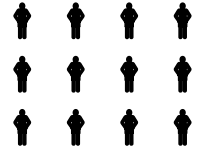


- All public schools can operate the federal school lunch and school breakfast programs.
- Low-income students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals.
- Participating schools receive a federally funded reimbursement for each meal served. Schools receive the highest reimbursement for meals served to the lowest-income students.
- California schools receive a state-funded reimbursement for meals served to lower-income students. The federal reimbursement is several times larger than the state -- both are vital to the school meal programs.



## The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a new, federally authorized option that enables high-poverty schools to serve breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge without collecting school meal applications. CEP will be available to California schools in 2014-15.

### CEP Basics

 High-Poverty Schools	 All students access meals at no charge	 Set formula for meal reimbursements	 No school meal applications
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### Which Schools Are Eligible for CEP?

CEP is designed to benefit high-poverty schools. For the purposes of CEP, a high-poverty school is one where at least 40% of the student body is certified, without the use of school meal applications, to receive free meals. Students who are certified without school meal applications are known as “identified students.” This includes, but is not limited to, students who are directly certified. Schools in the same district can be grouped to meet the 40% threshold for identified students. An example:

School	Total Students	Identified Students	Percentage of Identified Students	Eligible for CEP?
School A	100	60	60%	Yes
School B	100	35	School B: 35% School B & School A: 47.5%	Only if grouped with School A.

### How Are Students Certified Without School Meal Applications?

Students living in households that participate in CalFresh or CalWORKs can be certified for free school meals through a data matching process known as direct certification, which does not require the use of school meal applications. Other low-income students, such as those who are homeless or in foster care, can be certified with documentation from a program official (e.g., director of a homeless shelter) instead of a school meal application. School meal applications cannot be used with CEP.

### How Are CEP Schools Reimbursed for Meals?

With CEP, all students in participating schools have access to breakfast and lunch at no charge. A formula is used to determine the federal reimbursement for meals served to students:

- % of Identified Students x 1.6 = % of Meals Reimbursed at the “Free” (Highest) Rate
- All other meals are reimbursed at the “paid” (lowest) rate of reimbursement
- For example, if 60% of students meet the “identified” criteria, 96% of meals will be reimbursed at the “free” (highest) rate of per-meal federal reimbursement (60% x 1.6 = 96%)

### Benefits of CEP

CEP benefits low-income students and high-poverty schools by improving access to school meals and increasing efficiency. With CEP...

- ➔ All students in high-poverty schools can access breakfast and lunch at no charge.
- ➔ The stigma associated with free/reduced-price meals is mitigated.
- ➔ More low-income students are served through innovative programs like Classroom Breakfast that operate best when all students can be served at no charge.
- ➔ Struggling families face fewer unnecessary barriers to accessing the support they need.
- ➔ Schools and school districts increase efficiency and decrease administrative burden.

### CEP in California

CEP has been successfully implemented in 10 states and Washington, DC. California will be allowed to implement CEP in the 2014-15 school year. Many schools in California serve enough low-income students to qualify for CEP. However, any school using meal applications to collect information about students' household income, for the purposes of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) or the school meal program, will be ineligible for the benefits of CEP.

### Additional Resources

Community Eligibility Provision, California Department of Education:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/cep.asp>

Community Eligibility: Making High-Poverty School Hunger Free, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Food Research and Action Center:

<http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=4026>

Community Eligibility Helps Low-Income Students and Schools, Food Research and Action Center:

[http://frac.org/pdf/community\\_eligibility\\_helps\\_low\\_income\\_students\\_schools.pdf](http://frac.org/pdf/community_eligibility_helps_low_income_students_schools.pdf)