

## **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Quick Fact Sheet**

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a universal meal plan under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) permitting eligible districts and schools to provide meal service to all students at no charge regardless of economic status (*Section 104a of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act*).

To be eligible to participate, a district, a school, or a group of schools from the same district must have a **directly certified** identified student percentage of at least 40% as of April 1 of the prior year. Each school does not have to meet the 40% threshold individually if the entire district or a group of schools within a district participates and meets the 40% requirement; in this case, the average of directly certified identified student percentage must be at least 40%.

$$\text{Identified Student Percentage} = \frac{\text{Number of Identified Students}}{\text{Number of Enrolled Students}} \times 100$$

The requirements of CEP for participating districts/schools are: 1) serve free meals (breakfast and lunch) to all students in participating schools; 2) maintain a count of reimbursable meals served to students daily; 3) cover the costs of providing free meals to all students that exceed the Federal reimbursement locally (with non-Federal funds); and 4) comply with all program requirements.

The program cycle is four years. Once enrolled, there is no need to recalculate eligibility during the four year cycle; however, participating districts/schools may establish a most current identified student percentage by April 1 of the prior school year.

### **Tennessee Process for Enrolling and Implementing CEP**

The list of **eligible and nearly eligible schools** is posted on the department website annually. Districts/schools wanting to enroll in CEP must do so by the annual school nutrition deadline and through the regular annual NSLP application via the Tennessee Meals, Accounting and Claiming (TMAC) website. <https://tmac.cnpus.com/tmac/Splash.aspx>

Schools enrolled in the CEP program are required to use the State Household Information Survey to collect the socioeconomic data that was previously collected through the FPRL application. The form and a sample letter for parents are available on the department website. Schools are encouraged to use school letterhead and to customize the sample letter in a manner that will resonate with the parents/guardians of its students.

Additional information on community eligibility provision is available on the department website. <http://www.tn.gov/education/article/community-eligibility-provision-cep>