

# Community Eligibility Provision



**Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)** is a non-pricing meal option that benefits schools and students by improving student access to nutritious meals while reducing administrative requirements to qualify meal applications.

## Identified Student Percentage (ISP) Calculation

$$\text{Identified Student \%} = \frac{\text{Total Free Identified Students Directly Certified}}{\text{Total Enrolled Students}} \times 100$$

Schools can be eligible to participate in CEP individually, in a group, or district-wide, so long as the ISP for the school or group of schools is at least 25%. When combined, the ISP is calculated using the identified student and enrollment totals for all schools in the group.

## CEP Reimbursement Rates

ISP rates are multiplied by a factor of 1.6 to determine CEP reimbursement rates.

*Example:* A school has a 48% ISP Rate  $\times 1.6 = 76.80\%$

*This means that 76.8% of meals served are reimbursed at the Federal Free rate and the other 23.2% of meals are reimbursed at the Federal Paid rate. CEP does not reimburse the Federal reduced-price rate.*

Schools with an ISP equal to or greater than 62.5% (before applying the 1.6 multiplication factor) will receive 100% of meals at the Federal free rate. Established CEP claiming percentage established for a school or group of schools is applied for a period of four school years and may be increased each year if Identified Student Percentages rise.

### CEP ISP Free Direct Cert Eligibility Sources

SNAP  
TANF  
FDPIR

Homeless /Runaway  
Migrant

Foster Care

Medicaid-Free

\*Extended Eligibility\*

(\*SNAP-EE, \*TANF-EE,

\*FDPIR-EE & \*Medicaid Free-EE)



### CEP Eligibility

CEP eligibility is based on the percentage of identified students who are enrolled.

Schools, groups of schools or school districts must have an Identified Student Percentage (ISP) of at least 25% as of April 1st of the school year prior to implementing CEP. **New CEP eligibility threshold effective 04/01/2024 for SY 2024-25. Previously 40% minimum ISP.**

### Directly Certified

Students meal eligibility benefits based on documentation obtained directly from the appropriate State or local agency. Direct certification data is maintained in the DCA system.

### Identified Students

Identified students are **directly certified for Free** school meals without the use of a household application. Medicaid-Reduced cannot be included the ISP count for CEP eligibility, only Free sources.

### Accurate ISP Counts

Ensure that all Free eligible sources of students directly certified are included in the Identified Student Percent (ISP) counts.



## Maximize Direct Certification Counts in DCA

Annual April 1st CEP ISP snapshot data is collected from the Direct Certification Application (DCA) system and shown on the CEP eligibility forms in MAPS.

### 1. Potential Matches in DCA

The DCA system automatically matches data from eligible program participants to student data in AIM (Homeless and Migrant program indicators come from the AIM student data). When comparable data sets do not match exactly, school staff can review potential matches to determine if they should be linked/matched to determine if the potential matches are one in the same persons. Periodically check your district's Potential Match list and link matches to improve ISP.

### 2. Manually Directly Certify Students in DCA

Manual Direct Certifications can occur when documentation of eligibility has been confirmed from the appropriate agency. Exceptions: SNAP letters do not count as direct certification and documentation of Medicaid can only be confirmed in DCA (aside from extended eligibilities residing in the same household).

Extended Eligibility - If any child in a household is directly certified through SNAP, TANF, FDPIR or Medicaid the eligibility extends to all students in the household.

## Important CEP Dates

April 1	Schools Identified Student Percent (ISP) DCA snapshot data captured to determine CEP qualifications for the upcoming school year.
April 15	Deadline to report ISPs above 15% or correct OPI's proxy counts.
May 1	Notification of Eligible and Nearly Eligible CEP Schools Posted to OPI's Website
June 30	CEP Intent to Participate Forms due to OPI - Complete MAPS CEP Schedule of App Packet

## Reporting the Identified Student Percentage (ISP)

Identified Student Percentage (ISP) calculations must be established using the number of Free directly certified students and the number of enrolled students as of April 1st. The OPI utilizes direct certification data from the DCA system to provide districts with their school(s) ISP calculations. This data serves as a proxy for actual eligibility and may not include all Free directly certified students in a school's Identified Student Percent (ISP). Districts have until April 15th to report corrections to proxy data. Corrections resulting in a school having an ISP of at least 15% (nearly eligible) and/or those with an ISP of at least 25% (eligible) should be reported to OPI using the ISP Correction & Reporting Form. Participating CEP Schools with a higher ISP rate than previously determined may establish a new ISP and higher reimbursement rate the next four years by completing the CEP Schedule of the

## CEP School or District Grouping

The new lowered 25% (previously 40%) minimum ISP threshold beginning April 2024 for the upcoming 2024-2025 SY may be determined by an individual school, a group or multiple groups of schools within a district as well as district-wide. This allows some schools to participate that are below the 25% threshold, as long as the aggregate of the group of schools meets the threshold. The ISP for a group of schools is calculated by taking the sum of the identified students for the entire group of schools divided by the sum of the total student enrollment for the entire group of schools. Districts may group schools to maximize their ISP to determine the highest claiming percentage. Regrouping schools already participating in CEP will begin a new 4-year CEP cycle for the elected schools.

Please contact OPI, School Nutrition Programs at (406) 459-5394 or (406) 444-2501 for questions.