

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION (CEP) FAQs

What is CEP?

Through CEP, the District can offer no-cost lunches and breakfasts to all students for up to 4 consecutive years in approved/eligible schools.

What determines an eligible school?

In order to be eligible, a school or group of schools, must have an “identified student percentage” (ISP) of over 40%.

What is an “identified student percentage”?

Identified students are students certified free eligible for school meals using methods other than a free and reduced student meal application. The identified student count is NOT a school’s free and reduced student percentage. Students are considered “identified” if they meet one of the following categories:

1. Directly certified for free meals on the basis of participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Ohio Works First (OWF);
2. Homeless and runaway students;
3. Migrant students;
4. Foster children confirmed using court documentation.

What happens when my child goes to middle school next year?

We will provide “carryover eligibility” for 30 operating days (or until a new eligibility is made). Students will receive meals at no cost at the beginning of a school year when transitioning from a CEP school to a non-CEP school.

When a student from a CEP school transfers to a non-CEP school, is the student eligible for meals at no cost for the duration of the school year?

If a student transfers from a CEP to a non-CEP school, the new school will provide meals at no cost to the student for up to 10 operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made.

If a student at a non-CEP school visits a CEP school during meal time, will the student receive lunch at no cost?

Yes. CEP schools do not accept payment from visiting students.

If a CEP student visits a non-CEP school during meal time, will the student receive meals at no cost?

Non-CEP schools that host visiting students from CEP schools will provide students a meal at no cost to avoid any disruption to the students’ meal service.

May a student attending a CEP school be charged for a non-reimbursable meal?

Yes. If a student selects a non-reimbursable meal (i.e., the student refuses to select the components required for a reimbursable meal) the school may charge the student for the food components a la carte.

I don't want my child to receive free meals. Can I insist on paying for my child's meal?

We encourage all students to participate at no cost to reduce the peer-group stigma sometimes associated with free or reduced meals. Parents or guardians that insist on paying should be encouraged to make a monetary donation to the nonprofit school food service account. Children may also opt out of receiving free meals by bringing food from home or purchasing a la carte foods.

I have students at a CEP school. Since all kids are considered free, are all of their fees waived also?

No. In order to have your fees waived, you must qualify by meeting certain income eligibility guidelines. In order to see if you qualify, you would need to fill out a free/reduced application & check yes to have your fees waived.

I have students within a single household attend both CEP and non-CEP schools. Can information from one sibling's household application be shared with a CEP school to determine another sibling's eligibility for other types of funding (e.g., fee waivers)?

Yes. However, this will likely not provide comprehensive information for the entire student population at the CEP school because it's not likely that all CEP students will have a sibling that submits a school meal application at a non-CEP school.

My child doesn't attend one of the CEP schools. How is it fair that I have to pay, but others at CEP schools don't?

Unfortunately, no other schools within the District qualify for this program. However, our hope is that CEP results in enough of a participation increase generating additional income to fund different programs & ideas at non-CEP schools (e.g., summer feeding programs, made to order options at all middle & high schools, upgraded, previously unaffordable menu options, updated equipment to speed up line time, the potential for Districtwide free breakfast).