Resources and FAQ for CEP

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## Links and resources

* [SNAP Application](https://pais.dhs.hawaii.gov/PAIS/#!/)
* [Food.Love.Ohana press kit](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YOM_yqypheC5hox7pCdKeDm-GwolbsPK/view?usp=sharing)
* [Recording of 4/27 meeting](https://www.dropbox.com/s/dgr01mwtzx4l4ta/CEP%20Webinar_NoQAshort.mp4?dl=0)
* [Slides from 4/27](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xokywoQqwM4NJfhCVwTNilYL2Emt_NXo/view?usp=sharing)

### Regional SNAP Outreach providers

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Region** | **Organization** | **Contact** |
| Hawaii Island  | The Food Basket | **Hilo**: Kat Bumatay: kat@hawaiifoodbasket.org**Kona**: Duane Pajimola: duane@hawaiifoodbasket.org |
| O’ahu (island-wide) | Helping Hands HawaiiLanakila Pacific | Cheyona Lopez: clopez@helpinghandshawaii.orgJames Li: jli@lanakilapacific.org  |
| O’ahu (Waianae Coast; Nanakuli to Makaha) | Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center Hale Naau Pono | Barbie-Lei Burgess: barbie@wccmhc.org  |
| Maui County | Project Vision Hawai’i | Latonya Smith: latonya.smith@projectvisionhawaii.org  |
| Kaua’i  | Child and Family Services | Dory Farias: DFARIAS@cfs-hawaii.org Natalie Jenson: njenson@cfs-hawaii.org  |
| **Statewide** | **Aloha United Way** | **211 (use for prescreenings)** |

### Regional Food Access Coordinators

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Region** | **Organization** | **Contact** |
| Hawaii Island | County of Hawaii | Sarah Freeman: Sarah.Freeman@hawaiicounty.gov  |
| Maui County | Hawaii Public Health Institute | Lauren Nelson: laurennelson@hiphi.org  |
| O’ahu | City and County of Honolulu | Dexter Kishida: dexter.kishida@honolulu.gov  |
| Kauai | Malama Kauai | Megan Fox: megan@malamakauai.org  |

## CEP eligibility

**Q: How is CEP eligibility determined?**

**A:**  Your school will need to have enough students “directly certified for free school meals” by being enrolled in SNAP or TANF, or by being in another “identified” category (such as foster care, unstable housing, Head Start). Due to financial feasibility constraints, HIDOE’s cutoff for CEP eligibility is presently about 49% direct certification. ***The easiest way to increase your direct certification rate is by helping families enroll in SNAP.***

**Q: Do free/reduced price applications determine CEP eligibility?**

**A:** No. The number of students that have submitted free/reduced price applications will not affect your CEP eligibility. However, the number of students eligible for FREE meals (but not reduced meals) is generally a good indicator of the number of students who could potentially be eligible for SNAP participation.

**Q: What is my school’s current Directly Certified percentage?**

**A:** You can check your DC percentage in [this database](https://frac.org/community-eligibility-database/). For questions or to request additional information about your school, email SFSB@k12.hi.us

## Existing CEP schools

**Q: My school is currently on CEP. What is required of me to ensure we remain eligible?**

**A:** The easiest way to become a CEP school or retain CEP eligibility is to maximize your direct certification rate, by helping families remain in or enroll in SNAP. If you’re unsure what your direct certification rate is, please see [this database](https://frac.org/community-eligibility-database/).

**Q: Are we allowed to go back to regular free/RP/paid, or is CEP a 4-year commitment?**

**A:** CEP is normally a 4 year commitment, and schools are often “pooled” to ensure maximum eligibility. Once a CEP pool of schools is established, any change to the schools in the pool during the following 4 years would require the resetting of the direct certification percentage for all other schools that would be remaining in the pool at that time.

## Title 1 Eligibility

**Q: Do I need to continue collecting free/reduced applications to continue my Title 1 status?**

**A: *Current*** CEP schools are not required to distribute or collect USDA free/reduced applications. Title I eligibility for next school year is based on a metric known as the **“poverty percentage,”** which must be at least 47.20%. For current CEP schools, you can use the number of directly certified students in place of the free and reduced price enrolled students (see calculation below).

If you are ***not currently*** a CEP school, your Title 1 eligibility will be determined by the number of students who qualify for free/reduced meals.

**Q: Is there a specific formula we can calculate for title 1 eligibility (“poverty percentage”)?**

**A:** A school’s **poverty percentage** is determined by the following formula:

*Poverty percentage = [Total Lunch count] / [official enrollment count] X100*

For existing CEP schools, the **Total Lunch count** is a determined as follows:

*Total lunch count = [Number of directly certified students\*] X 1.6*

For all other schools, the **Total Lunch count** is determined by the number of students qualifying for free and reduced meals.

*(\*see explanation of direct certification above under “CEP eligibility”)*

## SNAP Outreach and Enrollment

**Q: How do families enroll in SNAP?**

**A:** The [application for SNAP](https://pais.dhs.hawaii.gov/PAIS/#!/) is online!

**Q: What if I have a student whose parents are not citizens of the United States?**

**A:** They may still be eligible if the student was born in the U.S! U.S. citizens and nationals (including American Samoa and Guam) and green card holders who have been in the US for at least 5 years are eligible for SNAP. Unfortunately at this time, COFA nationals (from Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau) are not eligible, but their US-born children may be. ***For help with pre-screening for eligibility, or language assistance, you can have parents dial 211 to talk with a pre-screening specialist.***

**Q: How can I get the word out about SNAP to our families?**

**A:** There are a number of tools and resources that are available to help. Please see the [Food. Love. Ohana press kit](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YOM_yqypheC5hox7pCdKeDm-GwolbsPK/view?usp=sharing), which includes graphics and social media captions that you can use on your digital platforms, or print for distribution to your families.

**Q: What if families need more assistance or translation services?**

**A:** The [online SNAP application](https://pais.dhs.hawaii.gov/PAIS/#!/) has language access in 17 languages, but ***we highly recommend that you reach out to your region’s SNAP Outreach coordinator, who may be able to help with other outreach materials -*** [***see contact info above***](#_tc9qmsc9d2xl)***.***

Your local SNAP Outreach coordinator is trained in walking families through the SNAP application process step by step, and can usually provide assistance for families who need additional support and resources.

You can also have families call 211 for language assistance and pre-screening.

##

## Benefits to CEP Schools

**Q: What other benefits do CEP schools receive?**

* Helps increase the number of students participating in the meal program overall, and can decrease the stigma associated with receiving free meals
* Reduces paperwork and administrative burden of collecting free/reduced price applications every year
* Eliminates the need to pay off unpaid student meal debt at the end of the year
* All students at CEP schools will be eligible to receive P-EBT benefits in the event of future school closures. See: <https://pais-pebt.dhs.hawaii.gov/>
* CEP will also qualify students for the new [FCC emergency broadband benefit](https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit), which will provide discounts on broadband service and computer purchases

**Q: Would CEP status increase the number of cafeteria staff our school gets? (since it would likely lead to more meals being served?)**

**A:** The formula for determining cafeteria staffing is the same for CEP schools and non-CEP schools and is based on the number of meals served. If meal volume increases, it’s possible that staffing would likewise need to be increased based on the formula.

## Timeline

**Q: When is the cutoff date for new SNAP applications to be counted for next school year?**

**A:** May 17, 2021 is the deadline for when the DHS can receive SNAP applications in order to make the CEP cutoff. ***Applications received after this date may not be approved in time for the DOE to include them in the CEP eligibility determination process.*** Although they may not be counted toward next year’s CEP count, families can still enroll in SNAP at any time.

**Q: When will we find out whether or not our school made the CEP threshold cutoff?**

**A:** Sometime in July, before the first day of school. Once the SNAP enrollment data is received from DHS, the DOE will need time to group schools in order to maximize the number eligible, and submit this to the USDA for approval.