





Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

SY 2026-2027




Objectives


- ▶ Overview: What is CEP?
 - ▶ Requirements for CEP Participation
 - ▶ Identified Student Percentage (ISP)
- ▶ CEP Data Collection Form
- ▶ Reimbursements under CEP
- ▶ Grouping
- ▶ The 4-Year Cycle
- ▶ Benefits of CEP

What is CEP?


- ▶ CEP = Community Eligibility Provision
- ▶ Allows schools in high poverty areas to **serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students**
 - ▶ Eliminates the burden of collecting household applications for free & reduced price meals
 - ▶ Save time and \$\$\$ by streamlining paperwork and administrative requirements
- ▶ Elected in 4-year cycles
- ▶ Eligible SFAs may elect CEP on behalf of a single school, group(s) of schools, or all schools in the SFA
- ▶ RCCIs are not eligible for CEP






 **Identified Student Percentage (ISP)**


Identified Students = *Those who are directly certified for free meals without the use of household applications*


- ▶ Includes students directly certified through:
 - ▶ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - ▶ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- ▶ Includes students certified for free meals without a household application:
 - ▶ Homeless
 - ▶ Migrant
 - ▶ Runaway
 - ▶ Foster care
 - ▶ Head Start




 **September 26, 2023 USDA FNS Final Rule:**
[Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools \(88 FR 65770\)](#)
(effective date of October 26, 2023)

- ▶ Lowered the minimum identified student percentage (ISP) threshold from 40 to 25 percent
- ▶ Changed the minimum threshold for electing a CEP grace year
- ▶ Changed the thresholds for the identification of eligible and nearly eligible SFAs and schools



 **Requirements for CEP Participation**

- ▶ **Identified Student Percentage (ISP) of at least 25%** in the school year prior to implementing CEP
- ▶ Participate in both NSLP **and** SBP
- ▶ Serve free breakfasts and lunches to all students during the 4-year cycle
- ▶ Count total breakfasts and lunches served to students daily
- ▶ Agree not to collect household applications for school meal programs
- ▶ Determine if non-Federal funds are needed to cover costs that are above the USDA reimbursement



	A.	B.	
	ON-CAMPUS STUDENTS	VIRTUAL/BLENDED PROGRAM STUDENTS	TOTAL FOR THIS SCHOOL/SITE
9. Total of Items #6 and #8	0	0	0

Identified Student Percentage (ISP) = $\frac{\text{Line \#9}}{\text{Line \#5}} \times \text{\#DN/OI} \times 100 = \text{\#DN/OI}$

Identified Student Percentage (ISP) = $\frac{\text{Identified Students}}{\text{Total Enrolled Students}} \times 100$

To be eligible for CEP:

- ▶ Identified Student Percentage \geq 25%
- ▶ ISP must be representative of the most recent April 1st*

*Identified student data should generally reflect April 1, however flexibilities are allowed to accommodate variations in State direct certification systems.

Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs

Please select a statement that describes your school from those listed below. Thank you.

Our school is interested in CEP or we are already participating.

Our school needs more information on CEP.

Our school does not qualify for CEP or we are not interested.

Prepared By: _____

Date: _____

DEADLINE: Friday, April 10, 2026
Please submit to kasey.kawamoto@k12.hi.us

Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

SFAs are responsible for maintaining ALL documentation to support the numbers entered on the CEP Data Collection Form

- ▶ Enrollment list
- ▶ Direct certification list
- ▶ Identified student information (homeless, migrant, runaway student data)
- ▶ HCNP will review this documentation:
 - ▶ For SFAs/schools that are beginning a new CEP cycle
 - ▶ During an Administrative Review
- ▶ Maintain documentation used to confirm the ISP for the entire time the SFA/ school operates CEP
 - ▶ If the SFA/school discontinues CEP, documentation must be maintained for 3 years after submission of the final claim for reimbursement under CEP
 - ▶ Documentation must be maintained beyond the 3 year period if Administrative Review findings have not been resolved

Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs


Reimbursements Under CEP

$$\% \text{ Meals Reimbursed at "free" rate} = \frac{\text{Identified Student Percentage}}{1} \times 1.6$$

$$\% \text{ Meals Reimbursed at "paid" rate} = 100\% - \% \text{ Meals Reimbursed at "free" rate}$$

Example: If a school has 50% Identified Students, then:

- ▶ 50% X 1.6 = 80%
(80% of breakfasts and lunches reimbursed at free rate)
- ▶ 100% – 80% = 20%
(20% of breakfast and lunches reimbursed at paid rate)




Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs

Reimbursements Under CEP

Identified Student Percentage	% Free	% Paid
25%	40%	60%
30%	48%	52%
35%	56%	44%
40%	64%	36%
45%	72%	28%
50%	80%	20%
55%	88%	12%
60%	96%	4%
62.5%	100%	0%

62.5% x 1.6 = 100%





Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs

CEP Participation

- ▶ SFAs may elect CEP for:
 - ▶ All schools in the SFA
 - ▶ An individual school
 - ▶ A group or groups of schools in the SFA
- ▶ Eligible school or group of schools must have:

$$\text{Identified Student Percentage} = \text{at least } 25\%$$

Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs

Calculating Group ISP

- ▶ Could allow schools with an ISP below 25% to participate in CEP
 - ▶ As long as the group ISP is at least 25%

$$\text{Group ISP} = \frac{\text{Total \# Identified Students for the Group}}{\text{Total Enrolled Students for the Group}} \times 100$$

DO NOT take the average ISP of all schools to calculate a group ISP

Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs


The 4 - Year Cycle

- ▶ CEP is elected in 4-year cycles
 - ▶ The original ISP is valid for 4 years
- ▶ During each year in the 4-year cycle, may select the higher of either:
 - ▶ ISP reflective of the most recent April 1
 - ▶ ISP from the year prior to the first year of CEP (original ISP)
 - ▶ In order to begin a new 4-year cycle, SFA must calculate a new ISP (using data from April 1), which must meet the 25% threshold
- ▶ Changes in student population between school years may need to recalculate ISP
- ▶ Confirm with HCNP higher ISP and procedures for beginning a new 4-year cycle

Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs

Grace Year


- ▶ SFAs / schools with an ISP of at least 15% but less than 25% as of April 1 in Year 4 of the CEP cycle may continue CEP for one grace year
- ▶ Reimbursement based on the ISP as of April 1 in Year 4 of the current CEP cycle
- ▶ If the 25% ISP threshold is met as of April 1 in the grace year, the SFA / school is eligible to begin a new 4-year CEP cycle in the following school year
 - ▶ If the 25% threshold is not met as of April 1 of the grace year, the SFA / school is not eligible for CEP in the following school year



BENEFITS OF CEP


Students	Parents
Access to free, nutritious meals for all students for at least 4 years	Less paperwork
No stigma with eligibility status	No worries about child's lunch account
Less time spent in line; more time to enjoy meal	

School Staff & Administrators
Streamlined meal service
Reduced paperwork/administrative costs
No need to track unpaid meal charges
Improved program integrity




CEP Deadlines


CEP REQUIREMENT	WHAT IS IT?	SY 2026-2027 DEADLINE
Data used to calculate ISP	SFA must calculate ISP using data as of April 1 st of prior school year	April 1, 2026
SFA Notification	SFA must submit to HCNP lists of schools that are eligible/near eligible/in 4 th year and eligible for grace year	April 11, 2026
State Agency Notification	HCNP must notify SFAs of district-wide eligibility for CEP	April 15, 2026
State Agency Publication	HCNP must submit list of district-wide and school-level lists to USDA; must post list on HCNP website	May 1, 2026
Elect CEP for SY 26-27	SFAs must notify HCNP of intent to elect CEP; submit ISP documentation SFAs must notify HCNP if they intend to discontinue CEP participation	June 30, 2026



CEP Resources

- ▶ CEP Planning and Implementation Guidance
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/cep-planning-implementation-guidance>
- ▶ USDA FNS CEP Resource Center
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/cep/resource-center>
- ▶ Food & Research Action Center (FRAC)
<https://frac.org/community-eligibility>








QUIZ


Go to: <https://forms.gle/xbCmU2tSPUQmpgpS8>

Code Phrase: identified students








Questions?



NSLP Team:
rachel.itano@k12.hi.us, kasey.kawamoto@k12.hi.us and janelle.ueda@k12.hi.us
 (808) 587-3600





In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-CASCR%20Complaint-Form-0908-1002-501-11-26-17%20Final.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
