



Food and
Nutrition
Service

Park Office
Center

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SUBJECT: Community Eligibility Provision: Planning and Implementation Guidance

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

Attached is the first edition of *Community Eligibility Provision: Planning and Implementation Guidance*. The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a meal service option for schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) in high-poverty areas. CEP allows eligible schools to provide breakfast and lunch to all students free of charge without the burden of collecting and processing school meal applications. Schools that have adopted CEP are reimbursed using a formula based on the percentage of enrolled students participating in other Federal assistance programs.

CEP was phased in over three years, beginning in July 2011. Today, CEP is available nationwide and is reaching over 8 million students at schools in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Guam. Schools implementing CEP have reported great success, citing eased administrative burden, more efficient meal service operations, and increased program participation. Most importantly, students attending CEP schools can count on two nutritious meals every school day, helping low-income families to stretch limited food budgets while reducing hunger among our nation's children.

The attached manual consolidates existing CEP guidance and best practices. By issuing this manual, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) hopes to streamline CEP implementation and encourage CEP adoption among the schools and districts that stand to benefit most from the provision. Throughout this manual, readers will also hear from school superintendents, principals, food service staff, and parents who have experienced the benefits of CEP within their communities. This manual will be updated annually to reflect any future guidance and to address any requested clarifications.

Regional Directors

State Directors

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State agencies are reminded to distribute this memorandum and the attached manual to Program operators immediately. LEAs, school food authorities, and other Program operators should direct any questions concerning this manual to their State agency. State agencies with questions should contact the appropriate FNS Regional Office.

Original Signed

Angela Kline

Director

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Child Nutrition Programs

Attachments