

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Incentive Reimbursement Program Question and Answers

1. What is the CEP?

CEP is a federal program through which participating schools can provide breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge. CEP schools don't collect household income applications, reducing their administrative burden. Meals are reimbursed at either the federal free or paid meal rates according to a federal formula. Essentially, the more students who are either directly certified for free meals (ex. their household qualifies for SNAP benefits) or categorically eligible for free meals (ex. students who qualify as homeless, runaway, migrant, or head start), the more meals reimbursed at the higher federal free rate. You can find more information about the CEP on [the ODE's Special Provisions webpage](#).

2. What do I need to do to be eligible for CEP?

To be eligible for CEP, each school must be participating in both NSLP and SBP. To qualify for CEP, a district, group of schools, or individual school must have at least forty percent or more "identified students".

Identified students include;

- ✓ Directly certified for SNAP, TANF or FDPIR
- ✓ Participating in Head Start, Oregon Pre-K, or Preschool Promise
- ✓ Categorically Eligible due to homeless, migrant, foster, or runaway status and verified by the liaison
- ✓ By administrative application

3. What is the CEP Incentive (CEPI) Reimbursement Program?

The Community Eligibility Program Incentive (CEPI) is part of the Student Success Act that was signed into law on May 20, 2019. The CEPI program provides CEP schools with a supplemental, state-funded meal reimbursement for each reimbursable meal they serve a student. These state meal reimbursements are in addition to the federal meal reimbursements CEP schools already receive.

The CEP Incentive Reimbursement Program is open to all public schools and public charter schools participating in the CEP. Whether your school is already participating in the CEP or is joining it for the first time in SY 2022-2023, your CEP school is eligible for the new CEP Incentive Reimbursement Program. Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs) and private schools are not eligible to participate in the CEPI. Any school that has an Identified Student Percentage (ISP) equal to or above 56.25 percent does not qualify for CEPI.

4. How does the CEP Incentive Reimbursement Program work?

With CEPI, the state will supplement the federal free reimbursement rate up to 90% and the remaining 10% will be reimbursed at the federal paid rate. The state-funded CEPI will pay

the difference between the federal paid category reimbursement rate and the federal free category reimbursement rate.

5. Are private schools eligible to participate in the CEP Incentive program?

No, while private schools may participate in CEP, they may not participate in the CEPI incentive program.

6. How can my school join the CEP Incentive Reimbursement Program?

If your school is already participating in CEP, your CNP Program manager will receive an agreement from the ODE (this is a separate agreement from the original CEP agreement). Once signed and returned to ODE, the school or school district will begin receiving the CEPI funds when meals are claimed under NSLP and SBP meal services.

If your school is a newly electing CEP, the CNP Program Manager will need to complete the data collection and submission process. Once approved, the CNP Program Manager or authorized representative of the sponsor will enter into two separate agreements: one to begin the federal CEP program and another to receive the state-funded CEPI supplemental funds. Sponsors can view the full set of instructions on the ODE [Special Provisions webpage](#).

7. If my school becomes CEP/CEPI how long does the agreement last?

When a school or school district is approved to operate under CEP/CEPI, the agreement is for four years, and the CEPI additional supplemental payments are subject to state funding limitations and the four-year CEP cycle. Should the CEPI funding amount change, the incentive reimbursement may change within a four-year cycle.

8. What if our school or school district is operating under CEP/CEPI and would like to stop?

The sponsor's school(s) may stop participating in the CEP during the four-year cycle by notifying ODE no later than June 30 of the school year prior to when they want to return to standard counting and claiming. Requirements set forth in 7 CFR 245.9(j) would apply.

9. If my school joins the CEP Incentive Reimbursement Program, how do we file our claims?

Enter your monthly meal claims in CNPweb like you usually do. There are no additional forms or paperwork required for claiming. Sponsors can view the full set of instructions on the ODE SNP Training Webpage under the [CNPweb section](#).

10. Where should we deposit our supplemental, state-funded meal reimbursements?

Public schools and public charter schools participating in either the CEP Incentive or OIEG Reimbursement Programs must deposit their supplemental, state-funded meal nonprofit school food service accounts.

11. What if we don't file our monthly meal claims?

Schools participating in either the CEP Incentive or Oregon Expanded Income Guidelines programs will not receive supplemental, state-funded meal reimbursements if they don't file their monthly meal claims, or comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's meal claiming rules and procedures. If you miss entering your claim, sponsors may apply for a one-time exception once every 36 months.