



Community Eligibility Continues to Grow in the 2016–2017 School Year

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The findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of FRAC alone.

About FRAC

The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) is the leading national organization working for more effective public and private policies to eradicate domestic hunger and undernutrition. For more information about FRAC, or to sign up for FRAC's *Weekly News Digest* and monthly *Meals Matter: School Breakfast Newsletter*, visit frac.org.



Introduction

In the 2016–2017 school year, the third year of nationwide availability, the number of high-needs schools participating in the Community Eligibility Provision continues to grow. More than 9.7 million children in 20,721 schools and 3,538 school districts are participating and have access to breakfast and lunch at no charge each school day through community eligibility.¹ This represents an increase of 2,500 schools and 1.2 million children over the 2015–2016 school year.

The Community Eligibility Provision allows high-needs schools and districts with high concentrations of low-income students to offer free meals to all students and eliminates the need for household school meal applications. A key piece of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, community eligibility was phased in a few states at a time before it was made available to schools nationwide in the 2014–2015 school year. Schools that participate in the program often see increased participation in school meals programs and reduced paperwork burden, allowing school nutrition staff to focus more directly on offering healthy, appealing meals.² Moreover, offering meals at no charge to all students eliminates stigma that school meal programs are only for low-income children and facilitates implementation of “breakfast after the bell” service models, such as breakfast in the classroom, that further boost participation.

Since its introduction, community eligibility has been a popular option for high-needs schools due to the many benefits for the school nutrition program and the entire school community. In just three years, the program has reached more than half — or 55 percent — of all eligible schools. As more school districts learn about the program, an increasing number have been adopting community eligibility each year. In the 2014–2015 school year, the first year of national scope, more than 14,000 schools participated, with 4,000 more schools signing on in the 2015–2016 school year, and 2,500 more in the 2016–2017 school year.

Still, there are many eligible schools that are not participating, even though they stand to benefit from this option. Take-up rates vary substantially across the states. Several factors, including challenges associated with the loss of traditional school meal application data and low rates of direct certification, which is the foundation of community eligibility, have hindered widespread adoption in some states and school districts. However, the more than 20,000 schools currently participating validate that the provision is working and initial barriers can be overcome with strong state, district, and school-level leadership, hands-on technical assistance from national, state, and local stakeholders, and peer-to-peer learning among districts.

This report provides a status report on community eligibility implementation nationally and across the states and the District of Columbia in the 2016–2017 school year based on three measures. FRAC has analyzed data provided by each state, via the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to determine the number of eligible and participating school districts and schools and the share of eligible districts and schools adopting community eligibility. FRAC also has looked at the number and share of schools participating based on their poverty level. As a companion to this report, FRAC has compiled all data collected in a [database of eligible and participating schools](#) that can be searched by state and school district, which can be found on FRAC’s website.

¹This report uses the term school district to refer to Local Education Agencies (LEA). LEAs include both large school districts with hundreds of schools as well as charter schools, which are often their own LEAs of one school.

² Logan, C. W., Connor, P., Harvill, E. L., Harkness, J., Nisar, H., Checkoway, A., Peck, L. R., Shivji, A., Bein, E., Levin, M., & Enver, A. (2014). *Community Eligibility Provision Evaluation*. Available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/CEPEvaluation.pdf>. Accessed on March 15, 2017.

How Community Eligibility Works:

Community eligibility schools are high-needs schools that offer breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge and use significant administrative savings to offset any additional costs of serving free meals. Instead of collecting school meal applications, community eligibility schools are reimbursed for a percentage of the meals served using a formula based on the percentage of students participating in specific means-tested programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Among the many benefits for schools and families are:

- Schools no longer collect, process or verify school meal applications, saving significant time and administrative burden.
- Schools do not need to track each meal served by fee category (free, reduced-price, paid), and instead provide total meal counts.
- School nutrition staff do not need to collect fees from students, allowing students to move through the line faster and more children to be served.
- Offering meals at no charge to all students eliminates stigma from any perception that the school meal programs are “just for the low-income children,” increasing participation among all students.
- Schools no longer have to deal with unpaid meal debt for reduced price and paid students at the end of the school year or follow up with families when students do not have money to pay for lunch.

How Schools can Participate:

Any district, group of schools in a district, or school with 40 percent or more “identified students” can choose to participate. Schools that cross this threshold to qualify for community eligibility typically have free and reduced-price percentages under traditional rules of 65–70 percent or higher.

Identified students are a subset of those eligible for free and reduced-price school meals based on poverty shown by participation in other programs. This is a smaller group than the total of children who would be certified to receive free or reduced-price school meals through a school meal application. Identified students are comprised of students certified for free school meals without an application. This includes:

- children directly certified for free school meals through data matching because their households receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) benefits, and in some states, Medicaid benefits; and
- children who are certified for free meals without an application because they are homeless, migrant, runaway, enrolled in Head Start, or in foster care.

How Schools are Reimbursed:

In community eligibility schools, although all meals are offered at no charge to all students, federal reimbursements are based on the proportion of low-income children in the school. The identified student percentage is multiplied by 1.6 to calculate the percentage of meals reimbursed at the federal free rate, and the remainder are reimbursed at the lower paid rate. The 1.6 multiplier was determined by Congress to reflect the ratio of six students certified for free or reduced-price meals with an application for every 10 students certified for free meals without an application. This serves as a proxy for the percentage of students that would be eligible for free and reduced-price meals if the school districts had collected school meal applications. For example, a school with 50 percent identified students would be reimbursed for 80 percent of the meals eaten at the free reimbursement rate ($50 \times 1.6 = 80$), and 20 percent at the paid rate.

Key Findings for the 2016–2017 School Year

School District Participation

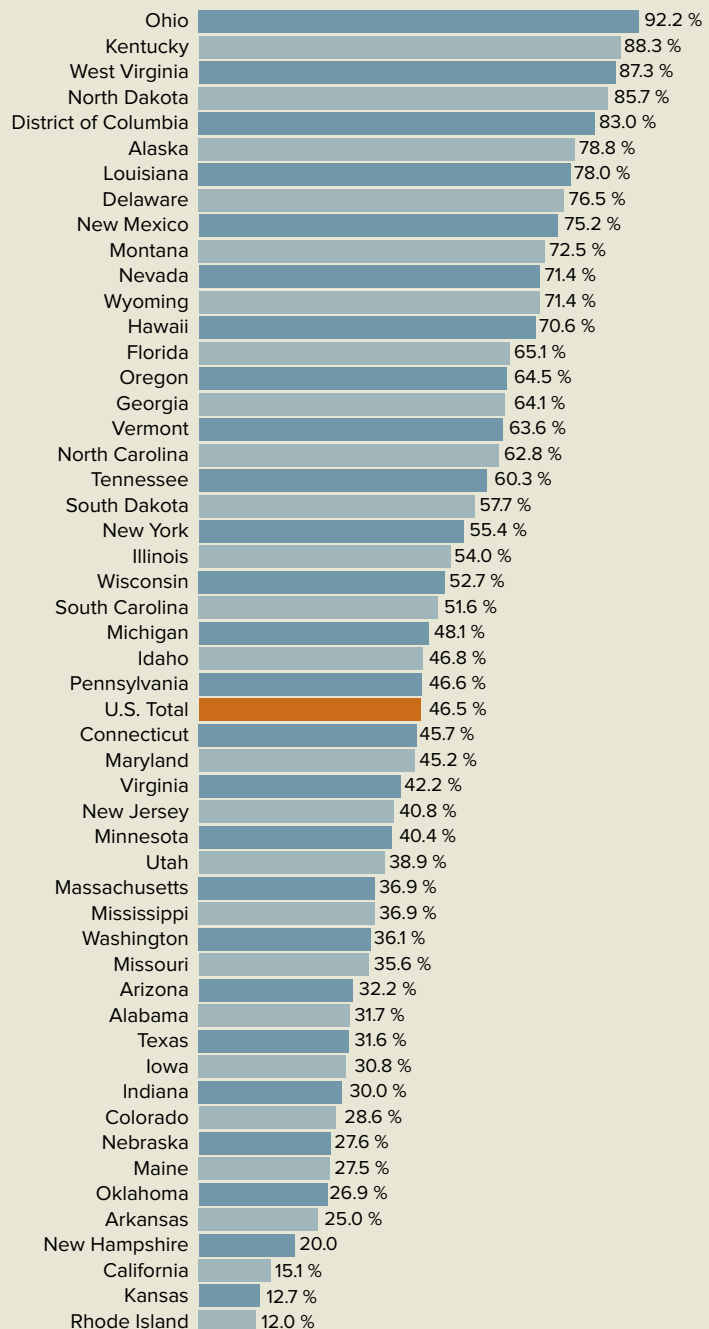
Nationally, 3,538 school districts — 47 percent of those eligible — are now participating in the Community Eligibility Provision in one or more schools.³ This is an increase of 560 school districts since the 2015–2016 school year, when 2,978 school districts participated.

The median state’s take-up rate in 2016-2017 for eligible school districts is 46.8 percent; however, school district take-up rates across the states vary significantly, from 20 percent or lower in California, Kansas, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, to over 80 percent in the District of Columbia, Kentucky, North Dakota, Ohio, and West Virginia.

Several states have seen significant increases in the 2016–2017 school year. New York experienced the largest growth in the number of school districts participating, increasing by 57 school districts. Not far behind, Arizona, Florida, Ohio, and Oklahoma have added more than 40 school districts each. In fact, all but four states have increased the number of districts implementing community eligibility in the 2016–2017 school year. Only Iowa, Kansas, Tennessee, and Michigan have seen fewer school districts participate since the prior school year. These states decreased by one, two, three, and 12 school districts, respectively.

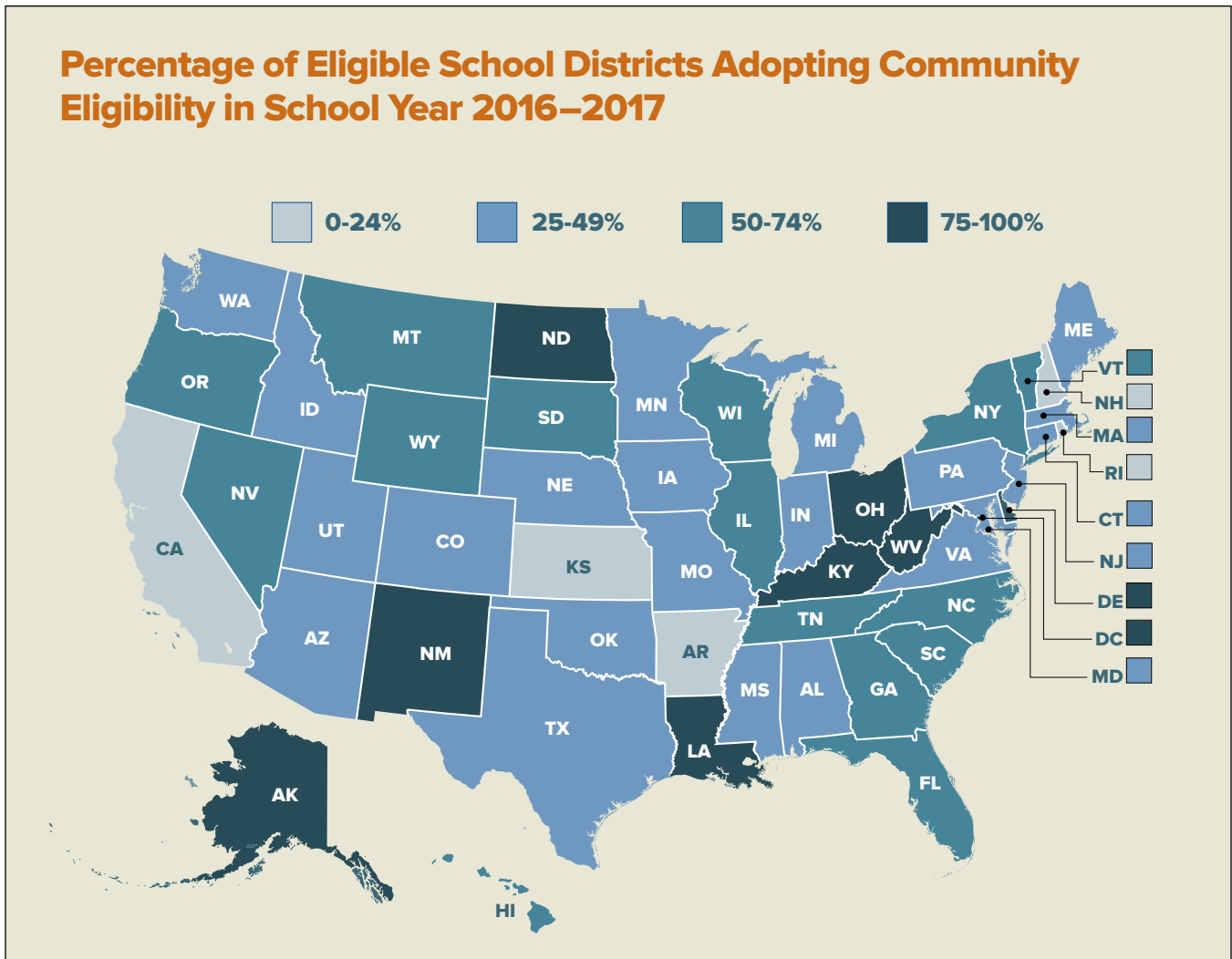
Several of the initial pilot states that have been offering community eligibility since before the 2014–2015 national rollout have shown continued strong growth in the

Percentage of Eligible School Districts Adopting Community Eligibility School Year 2016–2017



³ Under federal law, states are required to publish a list of school districts that are eligible for the Community Eligibility Provision districtwide as well as a list of individual schools that are eligible by May 1 annually.

Percentage of Eligible School Districts Adopting Community Eligibility in School Year 2016–2017



number of school districts participating. The first states to offer the provision were Illinois, Kentucky, and Michigan in the 2011–2012 school year; the District of Columbia, New York, Ohio, and West Virginia came on in the 2012–2013 school year; and Florida, Georgia, Maryland, and Massachusetts were added in the 2013–2014 school year. As described above, Florida, New York, and Ohio have experienced the largest growth in the number of school districts participating among this cohort, but a number of other states have continued to produce steady growth. In the 2016–2017 school year, for example, Kentucky has added 14 school districts, resulting in 88 percent of all school districts with at least one eligible school participating.

The continued growth in these states is due in part to the fact that state agencies have had additional time

to work with districts and school nutrition directors and administrators have had the chance to hear about the many benefits of the provision from their peers. Additionally, these 10 states and the District of Columbia have had time to establish sound state policy for community eligibility schools. In particular, time has helped solve the problems created by the loss of school meal applications. Such applications have traditionally been used for a variety of purposes, including allocating federal and state education funding. When school districts switch to community eligibility — and no longer collect school meal applications — they need an alternative way to measure poverty in these schools. The pilot states were all able to develop effective policies that ensure these high-needs schools do not risk losing funding without impeding participation in community eligibility. These states served as examples

for other states when the provision rolled out nationwide in the 2014–2015 school year and helped many states to establish policies that support widespread community eligibility implementation.

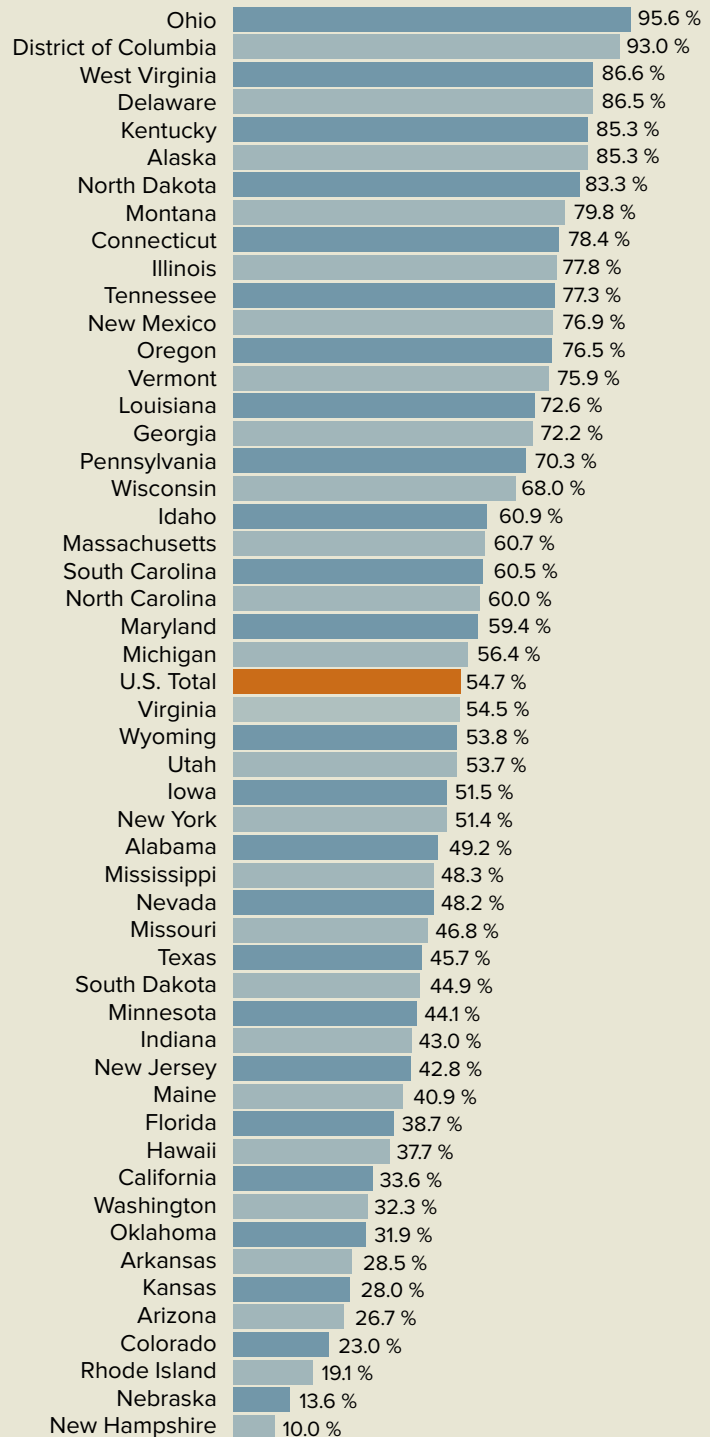
If a clear policy is not in place, however, it can cause uncertainty for school districts. In many states where school district participation rates are low, this has remained a barrier. In these states, more must be done to support schools moving to community eligibility and make certain that the perceived need for individual student income data does not create a barrier to students’ access to school meals. (See page 12 for more about best practices for eliminating school meal applications.)

School Participation

In the 2016–2017 school year, there are 20,721 schools participating in community eligibility, including schools from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Overall school participation in community eligibility increased by 13.7 percent, or 2,501 schools, since the 2015–2016 school year, continuing strong growth in the third year the provision has been available to all schools in all states. In the 2016–2017 school year, 54.7 percent of all eligible schools are participating in community eligibility nationally, with a median state take-up rate of 53.8 percent.

Among the states, the percentage of eligible schools participating varied significantly. Six states and the District of Columbia have 80 percent or more of their eligible schools participating, and 10 more states had take-up rates of over 70 percent. Four of these states — Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia — and the District of Columbia were part of the initial pilot and have continued to see high rates of participation across their states. Other top-performing states that began participating in the 2014–2015 school year, including

Percentage of Eligible Schools Adopting Community Eligibility School Year 2016–2017

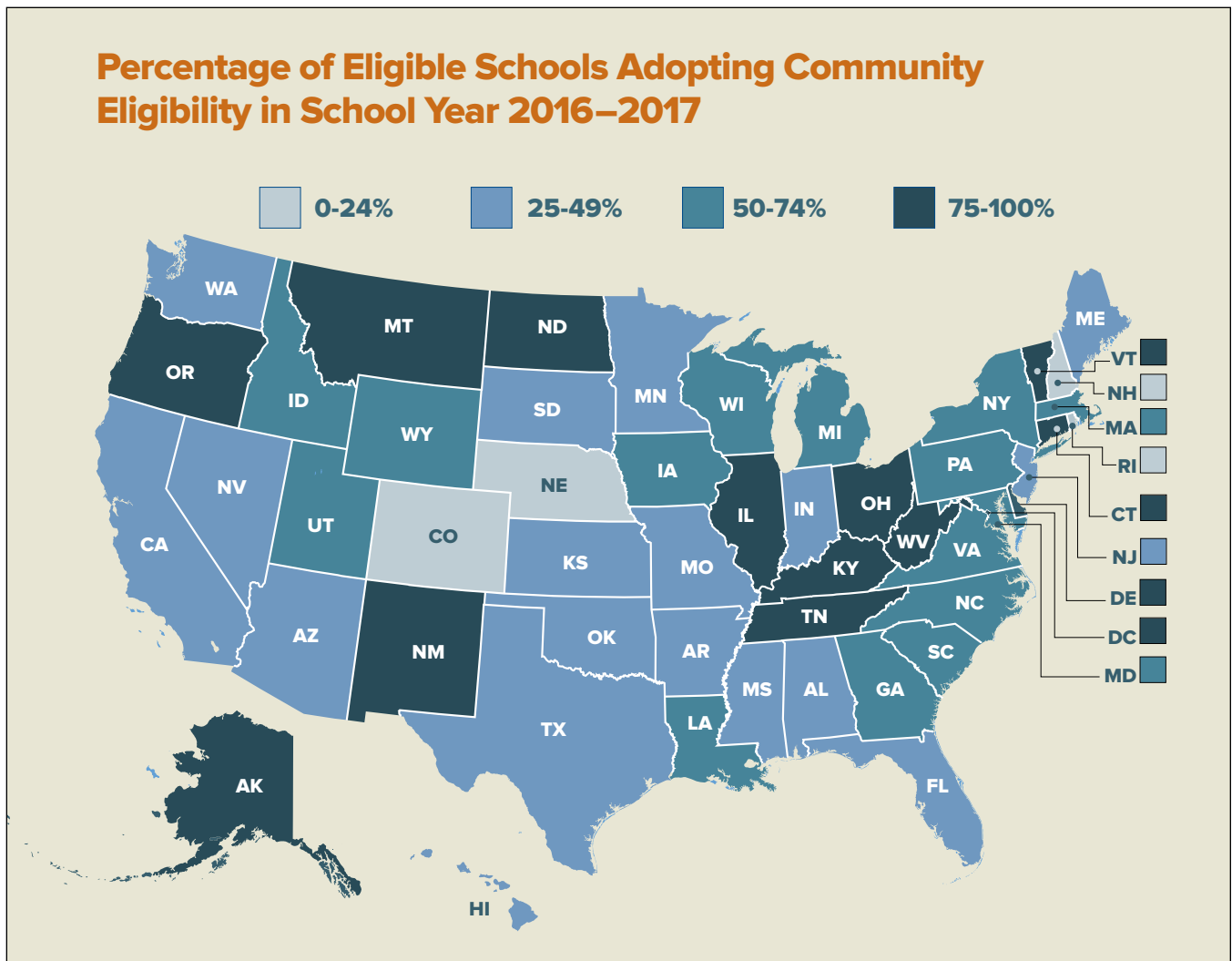


Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Montana, and North Dakota, all got off to a strong start in the first school year and have continued to add schools in the 2015–2016 and 2016–2017 school years. What many of these states have in common are strong leadership at the state level, with state agencies that embarked on broad outreach and technical assistance efforts, and clear policies for community eligibility schools to access state education funding and other state and federal programs in the absence of school meal applications.

All but three states — Alabama, Michigan, and Tennessee — have seen growth in the number of participating schools in the 2016–2017 school year. California has added the largest number of schools, with 419 more coming onto community eligibility since the 2015–2016 school year. Louisiana, New York,

Florida, and Oklahoma added 257, 210, 170, and 117 more schools, respectively. Smaller states with fewer eligible schools also have made strong progress, including Nevada, which increased by 86 schools, and Alaska, which added 37 schools.

Despite significant growth nationally and across many states, some states still have very low take-up rates compared to the national average. In nine states, less than one-third of all eligible schools are participating in community eligibility. In particular, three smaller states, Nebraska, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island have the lowest take-up rates for eligible schools, with less than 1 in 5 eligible schools participating. For some states with low school participation rates, including California and Oklahoma, the 2016–2017 school year has seen promising progress to build on in future school years.



For other states, low take-up rates are a symptom of unclear or burdensome policies in regards to state education funding (an issue that arises when schools are no longer collecting school meal applications), as well as limited outreach to, and education for, eligible school districts.

Student Enrollment

The true impact of community eligibility is most evident in the number of students impacted — in the 2016–2017 school year, just over 9.7 million students have access to free breakfast and lunch at school through the Community Eligibility Provision. This is up from 8.5 million in the 2015–2016 school year and 6.7 million in the 2014–2015 school year. Texas has the most children

in community eligibility schools, with 985,000 students in participating schools. In fact, about one in every 10 students in a community eligibility school nationally is in Texas.

All but four states have seen increases in the number of students in community eligibility schools. As would be expected, the states that have added the most participating schools this year also have seen the largest enrollment increases. California has nearly doubled the number of children in community eligibility schools, adding more than 300,000 students. Louisiana and Florida have added over 100,000 additional students in participating schools, and 10 other states have increased enrollment in community eligibility schools by over 30,000 students.

School Participation by Poverty Level

While all schools that qualify for community eligibility are high needs, a school's ability to implement community eligibility successfully — and maintain financial viability — is greater when its identified student percentage is higher. For this report, FRAC examined the number of schools participating in each state based on their identified student percentages as a proxy for the level of poverty of the school.

Federal reimbursements for community eligibility schools are determined by a formula based on the percentage of students certified for free meals without an application, known as “identified students.” The identified student percentage is multiplied by 1.6 to determine the percentage of meals reimbursed at the federal free rate, while the remaining percentage of the meals is reimbursed at the much lower paid rate.⁴ The 1.6 multiplier accounts for the additional low-income students who would be certified for free and reduced-price school meals through a school meal application. Schools with higher identified student percentages receive the free reimbursement rate for more meals, while schools with lower identified student percentages receive the free rate for a smaller share of their meals served. For schools with higher identified

student percentages, this makes community eligibility a more financially viable option. Schools with an identified student percentage of 62.5 percent or higher receive the highest federal reimbursement for all meals served.

As a result, it would be expected to see many schools with identified student percentages of 60 percent and above participating in community eligibility — and that has been the case for the first few years. Again, this year the participation rate among schools with identified student percentages of 60 percent or more is significantly higher than the overall eligible school participation rate of 54.7 percent. Nationally, 74.2 percent of all schools with identified student percentages of 60 percent and above are participating in community eligibility. In 12 states, more than 90 percent of such schools are participating and 12

⁴ The federal free rate is the highest reimbursement available, and is \$3.24 per lunch and \$2.04 per breakfast for the 2016–2017 school year. The paid rate is 38 cents per lunch and 29 cents per breakfast. Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (n.d.). School Programs Meal, Snack and Milk Payments to States and School Food Authorities (Effective from: July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017). Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/SY2015-16table.pdf>. Accessed on March 15, 2017.

additional states have more than 80 percent participating. This category of highly eligible schools with identified student percentages of 60 percent and above represents 12,418 schools, or three out of five, of the 20,721 participating schools.

In states with a smaller proportion of schools with identified student percentages above 60 percent participating, this may be an indication of other barriers, such as unclear policies around state education funding for community eligibility schools. This has been hindering school participation in Oklahoma and other states. Alternatively, in the case of Florida, four of the largest school districts that include many of the schools with 60 percent or more identified students are not participating in community eligibility due to issues with federal Title I funding that can sometimes arise for especially large school districts. For similar reasons, in New York, many of the schools with identified student percentages of 60 percent and above are concentrated in New York City. Title I funding is allocated to school districts based on census data (which does not change based on community eligibility participation); however, electing community eligibility may change within-district allocations to schools. Some school districts are wary to navigate such a change. The lack of outreach and technical assistance to ensure that schools understand the many benefits of community eligibility is an additional possible reason for low participation.

In schools with lower shares of low-income students, and lower identified student percentages — above 40 percent but below 60 percent — administrative savings from eliminating school meal applications and economies of scale for food and labor costs achieved through participation increases can often cover the cost of meals served to students who would otherwise pay. Because of how community eligibility schools are reimbursed, however, schools with identified student percentages near the 40 percent threshold may need to identify non-federal resources if their federal reimbursements do not fully cover the cost of serving meals at no charge to all students. In many such schools, adopting community eligibility is still an important strategy. Some schools with lower identified student percentages, for example, have used income from catering programs or a la carte sales to supplement

the federal reimbursement they receive. School districts can weigh these financial considerations and other local factors in their decision-making process when considering community eligibility. Many local decision makers realize the benefits of community eligibility, and are willing to contribute non-federal funds, if needed, to optimize student academic achievement.

Now, into the third year of nationwide availability, as school districts have had time to learn about community eligibility and expand the provision to more schools, FRAC is seeing many states with large numbers of schools participating with lower identified student percentages. In the 2016–2017 school year, a full 40 percent of all participating schools have identified student percentages of less than 60 percent. Of all eligible schools with identified student percentages of 50 to just under 60 percent, seven states have more than 90 percent of such schools participating and seven more have over 80 percent of schools in this category participating. Out of all participating schools, 6,027 schools, or 29 percent, have identified student percentages between 50 and 60 percent.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up by Schools' Identified Student Percentage for School Year 2016–2017

Identified Student Percentage	Eligible Schools	Adopting Schools	Percent Adopting CEP
40 — less than 50 percent	10,567	2,188	20.7%
50 — less than 60 percent	10,491	6,027	57.5%
60 percent and above	16,736	12,418	74.2%

Looking at schools in the 40 to 50 percent identified student range, the number and share of schools participating is much lower, as would be expected. Only eight states have at least half of all eligible schools in this category participating. However, the number of schools in this category is not insignificant. In the 2016–2017 school year, there are now 2,188 schools with identified student percentages of 40 to 50 percent

participating, representing 11 percent of all community eligibility schools. The number of participating schools in this category demonstrates the viability of community eligibility for schools with lower identified student

percentages, as there are now thousands across the country making it work in their communities and ensuring that all children in their schools have access to two healthy meals at school.

State and Local Factors Impacting Adoption of Community Eligibility

Three years into community eligibility, there are many best practices and lessons learned that have emerged and can benefit school districts considering community eligibility, and states looking to increase their schools' and districts' take-up in the coming school year. In most states, implementation of community eligibility has been relatively smooth, with states adding schools each year as state interest grows, and as more schools learn about its many benefits. In these successful states, several factors were at play in building strong support at the state level, resulting in a range of positive developments: effective outreach efforts and comprehensive technical support from state agency staff and advocacy organizations, often in partnership with each other; clear policies for community eligibility schools on data to be used in place of school meal applications for purposes of state education funding and other programs; and effective and efficient direct certification systems that allowed schools to maximize the financial viability of community eligibility. These are discussed in more detail below.

Strong State Leadership

Making community eligibility a success and ensuring smooth implementation for school districts takes planning and leadership at the state level. Many child nutrition agencies in states with high take-up rates of community eligibility embraced the provision as a new opportunity to support students and schools. Kentucky, Montana, Oregon, and West Virginia are several examples of states that carried out robust outreach and education efforts to ensure that eligible schools were aware of community eligibility and that districts would not miss out on its benefits. Effective state agency outreach strategies included: targeting the highest-need school

districts with the state's specialized technical assistance; providing various in-person and web-based training opportunities to learn more about community eligibility and maximize direct certification rates; widely promoting U.S. Department of Agriculture webinars, guidance, and resources; engaging community groups, education associations, and advocacy organizations in outreach and education efforts; designating a staff person to lead community eligibility outreach and education; and creating state-specific resources to provide clear guidance to school districts.

In addition, as discussed in more detail below, state leadership can be beneficial to resolve issues that may arise from community eligibility schools no longer collecting school meal applications, as a number of state and federal programs and funding streams have traditionally relied upon schools' free and reduced-price meal eligibility data. On this front, leadership from the state superintendent of education or other public officials is beneficial to help overcome any barriers and encourage cooperation among all stakeholders. States that facilitated communication among other stakeholders in the state department of education, including staff working on Title I, accountability, E-rate, assessment, and school funding, were better equipped to establish policies that ensured a smooth transition for community eligibility schools that no longer had access to school meal application data. Conversely, many states with lower take-up rates over the first three years did not proactively provide technical support or resolve interdepartmental questions in advance, leaving schools uncertain of the implications of moving to community eligibility, resulting in fewer schools participating in the program.

State Policies Regarding Eliminating School Meal Applications

School meal application data have traditionally been used for a variety of purposes in the education arena, as it has been a readily available proxy for poverty. When switching to community eligibility, schools no longer have that data available on individual students because schools no longer collect school meal applications for each household. However, throughout the implementation process, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Education worked closely to establish policies for community eligibility schools to access federal programs without the need for individual student free and reduced-price eligibility data. For example, the U.S. Department of Education has issued comprehensive guidance for schools providing options for community eligibility schools to use alternative data sources.⁵

At the state level, many formulas to provide state education funding rely on poverty data to provide additional support to low-income students and their schools. Approximately half of all states have state education funding tied to traditional free or reduced-price school meal eligibility. Most of these states have developed new policies for community eligibility schools to ensure that these schools do not lose funding due to no longer collecting school meal applications. Some states have struggled to establish a clear policy for community eligibility schools, creating uncertainty for schools that are interested in participating but unsure how state education funding would be calculated. As a result, in several states where this is the case, adoption of community eligibility has been limited.

Fortunately, three years into nationwide community eligibility, several strategies for effective state policies have emerged. First, for these funding streams districts can use alternative measures of poverty in community eligibility schools, such as direct certification data available through the National School Lunch Program, or the state can provide Medicaid participation data. This option allows school districts to use data that already exists and maximizes the administrative savings school districts can achieve through community

eligibility. States that have moved to measures of poverty based on alternative data sources for purposes of state education funding and other programs include the District of Columbia, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania.⁶ In addition, states can allow school districts to use their identified student percentage multiplied by 1.6, known as the “free claiming percentage” under community eligibility, as a proxy for free and reduced-price percentages in community eligibility schools. A number of states, including New Mexico, use this approach to determine school-level need for state funding purposes.

Approximately 18 states that use free and reduced-price school meal eligibility to target funding in their state education funding formulas have established a policy requiring school districts to collect household income data outside of the school meals program. Several of these states, however, are exploring the option to move to alternative data sources, such as direct certification data, so that they do not need to collect additional paperwork and take full advantage of the administrative relief community eligibility offers. While school districts participating in community eligibility in these states have by and large been successful at collecting household income forms, the perceived fear of losing state education funding if they are not able to collect enough forms can still be a barrier for school districts considering community eligibility. States implementing or refining policies that require household income forms should look to adopt best practices, such as the following, to increase collection rates:

- require forms to be collected less frequently, such as once every four years as does California;
- allow school districts to incorporate income questions in other forms schools are already collecting, as opposed to having a state-required form;

⁵ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2016). *Updated Title I Guidance for Schools Electing Community Eligibility*. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/updated-title-i-guidance-schools-electing-community-eligibility>. Accessed on March 22, 2017.

⁶ For additional state approaches, see FRAC and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities’ *State Approaches in the Absence of Meal Applications* chart (<http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/cep-state-education-data-policies.pdf>).

- simplify any state-required form to include just the information needed and remove unnecessary items required by the National School Lunch Program forms; and
- allow school districts extended time to collect the forms throughout the school year, as data are often not needed until the following school year.

When a state does not establish a clear policy for distributing state education funding or funding for other programs, however, districts are wary of adopting community eligibility without knowing the effects it might have outside of the school nutrition department. Since the first year of nationwide availability in the 2014–2015 school year, many states assessed lessons learned from other states to develop and clarify state policies for community eligibility schools, resulting in more school districts choosing to implement community eligibility in 2015–2016 and 2016–2017.

Direct Certification Rates

Direct certification is the backbone of community eligibility. It allows school districts to certify automatically children in certain other public benefits programs as eligible for school meals through a data matching process. The vast majority of “identified students” in community eligibility schools are students living in households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) who have been directly certified through data matching at the state or local level. Under current federal law, school districts are required to directly certify children in SNAP households, perform at least three matches per year, and achieve a benchmark of directly certifying for school meals 95 percent of children in SNAP households. In the 2014–2015 school year, 24 states were meeting this federal benchmark of 95 percent. However, 19 states directly certified less than 90 percent of all children in SNAP households, and Arizona and California reached less than three-quarters.⁷

Identified student counts also can include children who are directly certified because their household participates in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or because they are in

foster care or Head Start or receive homeless, runaway, or migrant education services. Therefore, states that are able to directly certify virtually all children in SNAP households and that have expanded their direct certification systems to include a variety of other data sources help school districts maximize their identified student percentage and make community eligibility financially viable for more school districts and schools. Conversely, in states and school districts where direct certification rates are low and their data sources are less robust, a school’s level of poverty can be underrepresented by the identified student percentage. As a result, in these states, there will be fewer schools and districts that are eligible, resulting in fewer high-poverty schools adopting the provision.

States can improve direct certification systems and support community eligibility schools in the process if they:

- work with appropriate state agency counterparts to incorporate TANF, FDPIR, foster care, homeless, runaway, and migrant student data into state direct certification systems;
- increase the frequency that school enrollment and program enrollment data are updated and matched against each other to weekly or even real-time;
- improve algorithms to account for nicknames, common mistakes, such as inverted numbers in date of birth or misspelled words; and
- develop functionalities to provide partial matches that can be resolved at the local level and individual look up functions that allow schools to search for new students.

For more information on strategies to improve direct certification, read FRAC and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities’ report, *Improving Direct Certification Will Help More Low-Income Children Receive School Meals*.

⁷ Moore, Q., Conway, K., Kyler, B., & Gothro, A. (2016). *Direct Certification in the National School Lunch Program: State Implementation Progress, School Year 2014–2015 Report to Congress*. Available at: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/ops/NSLPDirectCertification2015.pdf>. Accessed on March 15, 2017.

Conclusion

Community eligibility is a win-win for high-needs schools and districts and the many low-income families they serve. The option creates hunger-free schools so that high-needs schools and districts can focus on educating students who are well-nourished and ready to learn, and allows school nutrition staff to focus on providing nutritious meals by streamlining administrative requirements. The more than 20,000 schools participating understand the countless benefits that community eligibility provides and the power of the provision to improve school nutrition programs is demonstrated by the reach it has achieved in just three years.

Nevertheless, there are significant opportunities for sustained growth — and more robust growth in underutilizing states and districts — in the coming school years. States and school districts need to work through any remaining barriers, improve direct certification systems, provide ways for school districts to keep sharing their experiences with their peers, and help school districts expand to new schools as they become more comfortable with the provision.

Technical Notes

The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) obtained information on schools that have adopted community eligibility as of September 2016 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and state education agencies. Between September 2016 and December 2016, USDA collected these data — specifically, the school’s name, school district, identified student percentage (ISP), participation in community eligibility as an individual school, part of a group, or a whole district, and enrollment — and provided this information to FRAC. FRAC and USDA followed up with state education agencies for data clarifications and to obtain missing data.

Under federal law, states are required to publish, by May 1 of each year, a list of schools and districts with ISPs of at least 40 percent and those with ISPs between 30 and just under 40 percent (near-eligible schools and districts). FRAC compared these published lists to the lists of adopting schools, and compiled a universe of eligible and participating schools and districts in the 2016–2017 school year. When compiling the universe of eligible schools, FRAC treated a district as eligible if it contained at least one eligible school. FRAC treated a school as eligible if it appeared on a state’s published list of eligible schools. In addition, schools that were missing from a state’s list of eligible schools, but appeared on its list of adopting schools were treated as eligible.

There are two circumstances under which a school might be able to adopt community eligibility even if it did not appear on a state’s list of eligible schools:

1. A school can participate as a group (part or all of a district). A group’s eligibility is based on the ISP for the group as a whole. A group may contain schools that would not qualify individually.
2. USDA permitted states to base their published lists on proxy data readily available to them. Proxy data are merely an indicator of potential eligibility, not the basis for eligibility. Districts must submit more accurate information, which may be more complete, more recent, or both, when applying to adopt community eligibility.

The lists obtained from USDA and state education agencies indicated whether each district elected to adopt community eligibility partially or districtwide, and whether each school was part of an adopting group. For most adopting schools (except for 828 schools in Illinois and 3 schools in South Carolina), states provided group-level ISP data for adopting schools.

TABLE 1: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up in School Districts for School Years 2015–2016 and 2016–2017

State	School Year 2015–2016			School Year 2016–2017		
	Eligible for CEP	Adopting CEP	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible	Eligible for CEP	Adopting CEP	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible
Alabama	121	36	29.8 %	120	38	31.7 %
Alaska	30	21	70.0 %	33	26	78.8 %
Arizona	271	56	20.7 %	307	99	32.2 %
Arkansas	180	18	10.0 %	180	45	25.0 %
California	236	40	16.9 %	515	78	15.1 %
Colorado	71	14	19.7 %	63	18	28.6 %
Connecticut	39	14	35.9 %	46	21	45.7 %
Delaware	32	24	75.0 %	34	26	76.5 %
District of Columbia	49	38	77.6 %	47	39	83.0 %
Florida	211	102	48.3 %	218	142	65.1 %
Georgia	163	93	57.1 %	156	100	64.1 %
Hawaii	14	11	78.6 %	17	12	70.6 %
Idaho	52	19	36.5 %	47	22	46.8 %
Illinois	585	195	33.3 %	376	203	54.0 %
Indiana	152	36	23.7 %	180	54	30.0 %
Iowa	95	17	17.9 %	52	16	30.8 %
Kansas	61	10	16.4 %	63	8	12.7 %
Kentucky	171	137	80.1 %	171	151	88.3 %
Louisiana	108	63	58.3 %	118	92	78.0 %
Maine	79	16	20.3 %	80	22	27.5 %
Maryland	31	11	35.5 %	31	14	45.2 %
Massachusetts	136	48	35.3 %	176	65	36.9 %
Michigan	412	190	46.1 %	370	178	48.1 %
Minnesota	210	57	27.1 %	161	65	40.4 %
Mississippi	139	50	36.0 %	149	55	36.9 %
Missouri	235	82	34.9 %	253	90	35.6 %
Montana	64	47	73.4 %	69	50	72.5 %
Nebraska	26	4	15.4 %	29	8	27.6 %
Nevada	9	5	55.6 %	14	10	71.4 %
New Hampshire	25	2	8.0 %	15	3	20.0 %
New Jersey	178	50	28.1 %	174	71	40.8 %
New Mexico	131	93	71.0 %	149	112	75.2 %
New York	720	186	25.8 %	439	243	55.4 %
North Carolina	128	83	64.8 %	148	93	62.8 %

TABLE 1: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up in School Districts for School Years 2015–2016 and 2016–2017

State	School Year 2015–2016			School Year 2016–2017		
	Eligible for CEP	Adopting CEP	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible	Eligible for CEP	Adopting CEP	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible
North Dakota	17	17	100.0 %	21	18	85.7 %
Ohio	NA	254	NA	321	296	92.2 %
Oklahoma	344	53	15.4 %	349	94	26.9 %
Oregon	116	68	58.6 %	110	71	64.5 %
Pennsylvania	274	141	51.5 %	328	153	46.6 %
Rhode Island	13	2	15.4 %	25	3	12.0 %
South Carolina	89	42	47.2 %	91	47	51.6 %
South Dakota	43	26	60.5 %	52	30	57.7 %
Tennessee	156	97	62.2 %	156	94	60.3 %
Texas	571	171	29.9 %	602	190	31.6 %
Utah	15	6	40.0 %	18	7	38.9 %
Vermont	37	17	45.9 %	33	21	63.6 %
Virginia	89	26	29.2 %	90	38	42.2 %
Washington	158	50	31.6 %	158	57	36.1 %
West Virginia	54	46	85.2 %	55	48	87.3 %
Wisconsin	183	91	49.7 %	184	97	52.7 %
Wyoming	8	3	37.5 %	7	5	71.4 %
U.S. Total	7,331	2,978	37.2 %	7,600	3,538	46.6 %

- a. Data for the 2015–2016 school year is from *Community Eligibility Adoption Rises in the 2015–2016 School Year, Increasing Access to School Meals*, Food Research & Action Center and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, April 2016 (see report for full data notes).
- b. The 2015–2016 report contained data on school districts in Guam. The 2016–2017 report excludes Guam and therefore U.S. totals for the 2015–2016 school year have been adjusted.
- c. For the 2016–2017 school year, school districts are defined as eligible if they include at least one school with an ISP of 40 percent or higher, or at least one school that adopted community eligibility. For the 2015–2016 data, school districts are defined as eligible if they include at least one school with an ISP of 40 percent or higher.
- d. For 2015–2016, Ohio did not publish a list of eligible schools. It is therefore excluded from the total number of eligible school districts and the national percentage of school districts adopting community eligibility for that year, but is included in the U.S. total number of adopting districts.

TABLE 2: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up in Schools for School Years 2015–2016 and 2016–2017

State	School Year 2015–2016			School Year 2016–2017		
	Eligible for CEP	Adopting CEP	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible	Eligible for CEP	Adopting CEP	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible
Alabama	840	392	46.7 %	795	391	49.2 %
Alaska	180	137	76.1 %	204	174	85.3 %
Arizona	733	133	18.1 %	849	227	26.7 %
Arkansas	492	57	11.6 %	488	139	28.5 %
California	875	651	74.4 %	3,187	1,070	33.6 %
Colorado	416	82	19.7 %	396	91	23.0 %
Connecticut	280	212	75.7 %	291	228	78.4 %
Delaware	132	107	81.1 %	133	115	86.5 %
District of Columbia	178	155	87.1 %	172	160	93.0 %
Florida	2,561	831	32.4 %	2,588	1,001	38.7 %
Georgia	1,053	700	66.5 %	1,064	768	72.2 %
Hawaii	109	25	22.9 %	114	43	37.7 %
Idaho	169	88	52.1 %	151	92	60.9 %
Illinois	2,264	1,322	58.4 %	1,752	1,363	77.8 %
Indiana	606	253	41.7 %	658	283	43.0 %
Iowa	315	110	34.9 %	231	119	51.5 %
Kansas	262	64	24.4 %	246	69	28.0 %
Kentucky	998	804	80.6 %	1,041	888	85.3 %
Louisiana	919	484	52.7 %	1,020	741	72.6 %
Maine	170	59	34.7 %	176	72	40.9 %
Maryland	391	227	58.1 %	384	228	59.4 %
Massachusetts	756	462	61.1 %	865	525	60.7 %
Michigan	1,164	662	56.9 %	1,157	652	56.4 %
Minnesota	402	125	31.1 %	347	153	44.1 %
Mississippi	579	298	51.5 %	690	333	48.3 %
Missouri	670	330	49.3 %	785	367	46.8 %
Montana	155	127	81.9 %	173	138	79.8 %
Nebraska	112	9	8.0 %	110	15	13.6 %
Nevada	194	36	18.6 %	253	122	48.2 %
New Hampshire	51	2	3.9 %	30	3	10.0 %
New Jersey	651	227	34.9 %	631	270	42.8 %
New Mexico	576	429	74.5 %	633	487	76.9 %
New York	3,585	1,351	37.7 %	3,039	1,561	51.4 %
North Carolina	1,285	752	58.5 %	1,311	787	60.0 %

TABLE 2: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up in Schools for School Years 2015–2016 and 2016–2017

State	School Year 2015–2016			School Year 2016–2017		
	Eligible for CEP	Adopting CEP	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible	Eligible for CEP	Adopting CEP	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible
North Dakota	24	24	100.0 %	30	25	83.3 %
Ohio	NA	842	NA	960	918	95.6 %
Oklahoma	864	184	21.3 %	945	301	31.9 %
Oregon	476	340	71.4 %	452	346	76.5 %
Pennsylvania	1,084	795	73.3 %	1,224	861	70.3 %
Rhode Island	96	10	10.4 %	110	21	19.1 %
South Carolina	694	348	50.1 %	681	412	60.5 %
South Dakota	178	109	61.2 %	276	124	44.9 %
Tennessee	1,204	924	76.7 %	1,176	909	77.3 %
Texas	3,396	1,665	49.0 %	3,673	1,678	45.7 %
Utah	55	28	50.9 %	54	29	53.7 %
Vermont	94	56	59.6 %	79	60	75.9 %
Virginia	462	206	44.6 %	468	255	54.5 %
Washington	599	172	28.7 %	598	193	32.3 %
West Virginia	495	428	86.5 %	568	492	86.6 %
Wisconsin	610	381	62.5 %	610	415	68.0 %
Wyoming	13	5	38.5 %	13	7	53.8 %
U.S. Total	34,467	18,220	50.4 %	37,881	20,721	54.7 %

- Data for the 2015–2016 school year is from *Community Eligibility Adoption Rises in the 2015–2016 School Year, Increasing Access to School Meals*, Food Research & Action Center and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, April 2016 (see report for full data notes).
- The 2015–2016 report contained data on schools in Guam. The 2016–2017 report excludes Guam and therefore U.S. totals for the 2015–2016 school year have been adjusted.
- For the 2016–2017 school year, schools are defined as eligible for community eligibility if their ISP is 40 percent or higher, or if they adopted community eligibility. For the 2015–2016 data, schools are defined as eligible if they have an ISP of 40 percent or higher.

TABLE 3: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up by Schools' Identified Student Percentage (ISP) for School Year 2016–2017

State	Total Schools Adopting CEP	Eligible Schools 40-<50% ISP	Adopting Schools 40-<50% ISP	Percent Adopting 40-<50% ISP	Eligible Schools 50-<60% ISP	Adopting Schools 50-<60% ISP	Percent Adopting 50-<60% ISP	Eligible Schools 60%+ ISP	Adopting Schools 60%+ ISP	Percent Adopting 60%+ ISP
Alabama	391	222	23	10.4 %	299	192	64.2 %	274	176	64.2 %
Alaska	174	15	6	40.0 %	42	37	88.1 %	147	131	89.1 %
Arizona	227	271	33	12.2 %	284	87	30.6 %	294	107	36.4 %
Arkansas	139	217	36	16.6 %	149	60	40.3 %	122	43	35.2 %
California	1,070	1,416	231	16.3 %	867	255	29.4 %	895	575	64.2 %
Colorado	91	186	6	3.2 %	154	71	46.1 %	56	14	25.0 %
Connecticut	228	46	11	23.9 %	163	146	89.6 %	82	71	86.6 %
Delaware	115	40	29	72.5 %	55	51	92.7 %	38	35	92.1 %
District of Columbia	160	16	8	50.0 %	127	127	100.0 %	29	25	86.2 %
Florida	1,001	459	32	7.0 %	481	60	12.5 %	1,648	909	55.2 %
Georgia	768	214	34	15.9 %	331	258	77.9 %	517	473	91.5 %
Hawaii	43	38	2	5.3 %	19	1	5.3 %	57	40	70.2 %
Idaho	92	79	35	44.3 %	62	51	82.3 %	9	5	55.6 %
Illinois	1,363	308	101	32.8 %	267	164	61.4 %	1,109	1,030	92.9 %
Indiana	283	233	40	17.2 %	187	96	51.3 %	238	147	61.8 %
Iowa	119	81	6	7.4 %	51	29	56.9 %	99	84	84.8 %
Kansas	69	89	2	2.2 %	108	50	46.3 %	49	17	34.7 %
Kentucky	888	124	43	34.7 %	400	367	91.8 %	517	478	92.5 %
Louisiana	741	132	11	8.3 %	256	194	75.8 %	632	536	84.8 %
Maine	72	107	29	27.1 %	48	27	56.3 %	21	16	76.2 %
Maryland	228	98	6	6.1 %	60	23	38.3 %	226	199	88.1 %
Massachusetts	525	179	21	11.7 %	161	70	43.5 %	525	434	82.7 %
Michigan	652	267	48	18.0 %	290	171	59.0 %	600	433	72.2 %
Minnesota	153	158	11	7.0 %	34	7	20.6 %	154	134	87.0 %
Mississippi	333	138	0	0.0 %	207	86	41.5 %	345	247	71.6 %
Missouri	367	261	62	23.8 %	198	99	50.0 %	326	206	63.2 %
Montana	138	65	40	61.5 %	46	38	82.6 %	62	60	96.8 %
Nebraska	15	58	1	1.7 %	28	4	14.3 %	24	10	41.7 %
Nevada	122	86	7	8.1 %	149	110	73.8 %	18	5	27.8 %
New Hampshire	3	22	2	9.1 %	6	0	0.0 %	2	1	50.0 %
New Jersey	270	213	37	17.4 %	175	63	36.0 %	243	170	70.0 %
New Mexico	487	143	39	27.3 %	272	241	88.6 %	218	207	95.0 %
New York	1,561	730	283	38.8 %	620	286	46.1 %	1,689	992	58.7 %

TABLE 3: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up by Schools' Identified Student Percentage (ISP) for School Year 2016–2017

State	Total Schools Adopting CEP	Eligible Schools 40-<50% ISP	Adopting Schools 40-<50% ISP	Percent Adopting 40-<50% ISP	Eligible Schools 50-<60% ISP	Adopting Schools 50-<60% ISP	Percent Adopting 50-<60% ISP	Eligible Schools 60%+ ISP	Adopting Schools 60%+ ISP	Percent Adopting 60%+ ISP
North Carolina	787	373	38	10.2 %	391	253	64.7 %	547	496	90.7 %
North Dakota	25	6	1	16.7 %	7	7	100.0 %	17	17	100.0 %
Ohio	918	115	102	88.7 %	202	192	95.0 %	637	618	97.0 %
Oklahoma	301	383	63	16.4 %	319	131	41.1 %	243	107	44.0 %
Oregon	346	138	71	51.4 %	195	170	87.2 %	119	105	88.2 %
Pennsylvania	861	272	64	23.5 %	312	223	71.5 %	640	574	89.7 %
Rhode Island	21	32	1	3.1 %	27	0	0.0 %	51	20	39.2 %
South Carolina	412	155	13	8.4 %	198	122	61.6 %	328	277	84.5 %
South Dakota	124	23	3	13.0 %	36	16	44.4 %	217	105	48.4 %
Tennessee	909	237	76	32.1 %	384	324	84.4 %	555	509	91.7 %
Texas	1,678	1,156	144	12.5 %	1,157	622	53.8 %	1,360	912	67.1 %
Utah	29	34	16	47.1 %	13	9	69.2 %	7	4	57.1 %
Vermont	60	34	20	58.8 %	31	29	93.5 %	14	11	78.6 %
Virginia	255	192	30	15.6 %	137	88	64.2 %	139	137	98.6 %
Washington	193	281	39	13.9 %	161	49	30.4 %	156	105	67.3 %
West Virginia	492	261	212	81.2 %	244	226	92.6 %	63	54	85.7 %
Wisconsin	415	158	17	10.8 %	81	45	55.6 %	371	353	95.1 %
Wyoming	7	6	3	50.0 %	0	0	-	7	4	57.1 %
U.S. Total	20,721	10,567	2,188	20.7 %	10,491	6,027	57.5 %	16,736	12,418	74.2 %

- a. For most schools, grouped ISPs were reported for schools participating in groups or districtwide. However, for South Carolina, the state agency provided individual ISPs for three participating schools, and for Illinois, the state agency provided individual ISPs for 828 participating schools.
- b. Some state agencies did not provide ISP information for certain schools including nine schools in California, two schools in Georgia, and four schools in Idaho. These schools were not included in this table.
- c. Six schools in Ohio and 77 schools in Illinois were not included in this table due to issues with reported identified student percentages.

TABLE 4: Student Enrollment in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Schools for School Years 2014–2015, 2015–2016, and 2016–2017

State	Total Student Enrollment			Change 2014–2015 to 2015–2016	Change 2015–2016 to 2016–2017
	SY 2014–2015	SY 2015–2016	SY 2016–2017		
Alabama	180,789	196,802	195,853	16,013	-949
Alaska	27,666	29,234	34,106	1,568	4,872
Arizona	30,763	55,048	94,229	24,285	39,181
Arkansas	791	20,060	55,605	19,269	35,545
California	113,513	435,900	748,533	322,387	312,633
Colorado	12,455	34,920	36,198	22,465	1,278
Connecticut	66,524	105,547	110,322	39,023	4,775
Delaware	47,013	51,524	56,143	4,511	4,619
District of Columbia	44,485	54,061	56,774	9,576	2,713
Florida	274,071	474,006	579,138	199,935	105,132
Georgia	354,038	420,383	467,411	66,345	47,028
Hawaii	2,640	4,650	20,150	2,010	15,500
Idaho	18,828	32,299	33,058	13,471	759
Illinois	552,751	672,831	685,101	120,080	12,270
Indiana	96,604	117,187	127,405	20,583	10,218
Iowa	32,103	46,021	50,589	13,918	4,568
Kansas	5,992	19,641	22,661	13,649	3,020
Kentucky	279,144	385,043	436,419	105,899	51,376
Louisiana	146,141	217,496	341,492	71,355	123,996
Maine	5,284	17,977	20,411	12,693	2,434
Maryland	7,624	94,496	99,484	86,872	4,988
Massachusetts	134,071	200,948	238,872	66,877	37,924
Michigan	266,249	275,579	273,071	9,330	-2,508
Minnesota	20,688	49,944	57,003	29,256	7,059
Mississippi	136,095	148,781	151,815	12,686	3,034
Missouri	106,126	111,319	121,962	5,193	10,643
Montana	15,802	21,161	23,290	5,359	2,129
Nebraska	180	2,425	4,277	2,245	1,852
Nevada	7,917	15,970	71,345	8,053	55,375
New Hampshire	0	644	1,125	644	481
New Jersey	99,840	107,277	127,108	7,437	19,831
New Mexico	119,300	149,057	164,569	29,757	15,512

TABLE 4: Student Enrollment in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Schools for School Years 2014–2015, 2015–2016, and 2016–2017

State	Total Student Enrollment			Change 2014–2015 to 2015–2016	Change 2015–2016 to 2016–2017
	SY 2014–2015	SY 2015–2016	SY 2016–2017		
New York	505,859	528,748	603,795	22,889	75,047
North Carolina	310,850	357,307	367,705	46,457	10,398
North Dakota	5,284	5,661	5,698	377	37
Ohio	305,451	354,727	363,860	49,276	9,133
Oklahoma	43,433	66,323	104,162	22,890	37,839
Oregon	103,601	129,635	130,336	26,034	701
Pennsylvania	327,573	394,630	426,984	67,057	32,354
Rhode Island	838	6,531	10,350	5,693	3,819
South Carolina	111,453	173,364	201,587	61,911	28,223
South Dakota	13,056	14,626	15,981	1,570	1,355
Tennessee	417,165	436,821	428,424	19,656	-8,397
Texas	941,262	1,015,384	984,976	74,122	-30,408
Utah	7,019	8,565	8,880	1,546	315
Vermont	7,386	12,751	13,508	5,365	757
Virginia	42,911	99,404	119,051	56,493	19,647
Washington	53,369	69,432	75,357	16,063	5,925
West Virginia	124,978	145,057	177,875	20,079	32,818
Wisconsin	133,232	146,330	156,519	13,098	10,189
Wyoming	1,255	1,255	1,370	0	115
U.S. Total	6,661,462	8,534,782	9,701,937	1,873,320	1,167,155

- a. Data for the 2014–2015 school year is from *Take up of Community Eligibility This School Year*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, February 2015. (see report for full data notes)
- b. Data for the 2015–2016 school year is from *Community Eligibility Adoption Rises in the 2015–2016 School Year, Increasing Access to School Meals*, Food Research & Action Center and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, April 2016. (see report for full data notes)
- c. The 2015–2016 report contained data on enrollment in community eligibility schools in Guam. The 2016–2017 report excludes Guam and therefore U.S. totals for the 2015–2016 school year have been adjusted.
- d. There were some schools that did not provide student enrollment information for the 2016–2017 school year: one school in California, two schools in Georgia, four schools in Idaho, three schools in Maine, 26 schools in Tennessee, and four schools in South Carolina.

TABLE 5: Number of Schools Adopting the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for School Years 2014–2015, 2015–2016, and 2016–2017

State	Number of Schools Adopting CEP			Change SY 2014–2015 to SY 2015–2016	Change SY 2015–2016 to SY 2016–2017
	SY 2014–2015	SY 2015–2016	SY 2016–2017		
Alabama	347	392	391	45	-1
Alaska	123	137	174	14	37
Arizona	73	133	227	60	94
Arkansas	4	57	139	53	82
California	208	651	1,070	443	419
Colorado	34	82	91	48	9
Connecticut	133	212	228	79	16
Delaware	96	107	115	11	8
District of Columbia	125	155	160	30	5
Florida	548	831	1,001	283	170
Georgia	589	700	768	111	68
Hawaii	6	25	43	19	18
Idaho	50	88	92	38	4
Illinois	1,041	1,322	1,363	281	41
Indiana	214	253	283	39	30
Iowa	78	110	119	32	9
Kansas	18	64	69	46	5
Kentucky	611	804	888	193	84
Louisiana	335	484	741	149	257
Maine	21	59	72	38	13
Maryland	25	227	228	202	1
Massachusetts	294	462	525	168	63
Michigan	625	662	652	37	-10
Minnesota	56	125	153	69	28
Mississippi	257	298	333	41	35
Missouri	298	330	367	32	37
Montana	93	127	138	34	11
Nebraska	2	9	15	7	6
Nevada	13	36	122	23	86
New Hampshire	0	2	3	2	1
New Jersey	197	227	270	30	43
New Mexico	343	429	487	86	58

TABLE 5: Number of Schools Adopting the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for School Years 2014–2015, 2015–2016, and 2016–2017

State	Number of Schools Adopting CEP			Change SY 2014–2015 to SY 2015–2016	Change SY 2015–2016 to SY 2016–2017
	SY 2014–2015	SY 2015–2016	SY 2016–2017		
New York	1,246	1,351	1,561	105	210
North Carolina	648	752	787	104	35
North Dakota	23	24	25	1	1
Ohio	739	842	918	103	76
Oklahoma	100	184	301	84	117
Oregon	262	340	346	78	6
Pennsylvania	646	795	861	149	66
Rhode Island	1	10	21	9	11
South Carolina	226	348	412	122	64
South Dakota	142	109	124	-33	15
Tennessee	862	924	909	62	-15
Texas	1,477	1,665	1,678	188	13
Utah	22	28	29	6	1
Vermont	32	56	60	24	4
Virginia	87	206	255	119	49
Washington	122	172	193	50	21
West Virginia	369	428	492	59	64
Wisconsin	348	381	415	33	34
Wyoming	5	5	7	0	2
U.S. Total	14,214	18,220	20,721	4,006	2,501

- a. Data for the 2014–2015 school year is from *Take up of Community Eligibility This School Year*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, February 2015 (see report for full data notes).
- b. Data for the 2015–2016 school year is from *Community Eligibility Adoption Rises in the 2015–2016 School Year, Increasing Access to School Meals*, Food Research & Action Center and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, April 2016 (see report for full data notes).
- c. See table 2 for full notes on adopting schools in the 2016–2017 school year.



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