

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY SUPPORTS CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND LEARNING

In **ARKANSAS**, approximately **187,000** children live in food-insecure households, jeopardizing their health and well-being.¹

School meal programs combat food insecurity by providing millions of children with the nutrition they need to learn and thrive.

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is an option within the school meal programs that increases students' access to nutritious food by allowing schools and school districts serving large numbers of children from families with low incomes to offer meals at no charge to all students.

How CEP Schools Are Reimbursed

Rather than relying on school meal applications to determine a school's federal reimbursements, CEP schools are reimbursed based on the share of students who are automatically eligible for free school meals without an application because they meet specific criteria, such as being in foster care or participating in certain federal means-tested programs, including SNAP. Schools can adopt CEP if at least 25 percent of students meet these criteria. The more students who are automatically eligible for free school meals, the more federal reimbursement CEP schools receive.

CEP Is a Win for Students, Families, and Schools

CEP provides all students access to the balanced school breakfasts and lunches they need to be well-nourished and ready to learn, while reducing the stigma often present in school cafeterias when schools have to track students' eligibility for free, reduced-price, and paid meals.

When students have access to free meals at school, families have lower grocery bills and more money in their household budgets to help make ends meet.

CEP makes school meal operations more efficient and effective for schools and districts. CEP eliminates the administrative burden associated with school meal applications, strengthens program integrity, and supports school nutrition finances by eliminating school meal debt and increasing participation in school breakfast and lunch programs, which allows for economies of scale.

In the 2024–2025 school year, 74 percent of eligible schools nationwide adopted CEP. These 54,000 schools reached more than 27 million students around the country.



In the 2024–2025 school year:

185 SCHOOLS

in ARKANSAS adopted CEP. An additional 283 schools were eligible to adopt CEP but did not participate.

THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) CUTS

recently enacted in H.R. 1 will **exacerbate food insecurity** and have ripple effects for the school meal programs, including threatening schools' ability to implement CEP.

As children lose access to SNAP, their automatic eligibility for free school meals is severed and federal reimbursement for meals served in CEP schools decreases, jeopardizing the program's financial viability.

In ARKANSAS, during the 2024–2025 school year:



315,827

children ate a school lunch and 195,266 children ate a school breakfast on an average school day.²



55

school districts adopted CEP for some or all schools. An additional 118 school districts had schools that were eligible to adopt CEP but did not participate.



73,281

children attended schools that adopted CEP.

By repealing SNAP cuts and investing in CEP, policymakers can reduce barriers that keep eligible children from receiving free school meals and help families afford to put food on the table.

¹ Analysis of 2023 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement, rounded to the nearest 1,000. The data for this analysis was pooled across multiple years to ensure adequate sample sizes for every state. As a result, cross-state comparisons using multiple fact sheets may cover different time periods.

² Average daily participation data for school breakfast and lunch are reflective of April 2025. U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. (2025). State-level table current activity. Accessed September 24, 2025. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/child-nutrition-tables>

The following table identifies the school districts in each of **ARKANSAS'** congressional districts that contain CEP-eligible and participating schools, as well as the number of children enrolled in CEP schools for the 2024–2025 school year.³

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
Congressional District #1			
ALPENA SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
AUGUSTA	2	2	361
BALD KNOB SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
BARTON LEXA	2	2	633
BATESVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
BLYTHEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	4	1,628
BRADFORD	2	2	443
BRINKLEY	2	2	439
BUFFALO ISLAND CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
CALICO ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
CARLISLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
CAVE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
CEDAR RIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
CLARENDON	2	2	430
CORNING SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
COTTER	2	2	707
DES ARC SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
DREW CENTRAL	3	3	1,241
DUMAS	4	4	932
EARLE	2	2	465
EAST POINSETT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
ENGLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
FLIPPIN	3	3	831
FORREST CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	5	2,261
GOSNELL SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
HAMBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	0	

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
HARRISBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
HARRISON SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
HAZEN SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
HECTOR	2	2	609
HELENA-WEST HELENA	2	2	987
HIGHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
HILLCREST SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
HOXIE	2	2	863
IZARD COUNTY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
JACKSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
JACKSONVILLE NORTH PULASKI SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	0	
JONESBORO	10	10	6,670
LAKESIDE	4	4	915
LAWRENCE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
LEAD HILL SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
LEE COUNTY	2	2	644
LONOKE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
MAMMOTH SPRING	2	2	526
MARION SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
MARKED TREE SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
MARVELL	2	2	295
MCCRORY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
MCGEHEE	3	3	1,122
MIDLAND	2	2	529
MOUNTAIN HOME SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
MOUNTAIN VIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	

(continued)

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³ Food Research & Action Center. (2025). Community Eligibility Provision database for the 2024–2025 school year. <https://frac.org/community-eligibility-database/>. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Common core of data for the 2023–2024 school year. <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/files.asp>; and NCES. School district geographic relationship files for the 119th Congress. <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/geographic/relationshipfiles>

The following table identifies the school districts in each of **ARKANSAS'** congressional districts that contain CEP-eligible and participating schools, as well as the number of children enrolled in CEP schools for the 2024–2025 school year.³

(continued)

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
NETTLETON SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	0	
NEWPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	2	1,119
NORFORK SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
NORTH LITTLE ROCK	14	14	7,807
OSCEOLA SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	0	
OZARK MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
PARAGOULD	7	7	3,137
POCAHONTAS SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	0	
PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	0	
RECTOR SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
RIVERCREST	3	3	1,192
RIVERSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
SEARCY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
SHIRLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
SLOAN-HENDRIX SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
STAR CITY	3	3	1,418
STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	2	891
TRUMAN	3	3	1,421
WEST MEMPHIS	9	9	4,655
WYNNE SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
YELLVILLE-SUMMIT SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
Congressional District #2			
BALD KNOB SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
BRADFORD	2	2	443
CLINTON	3	3	1,276
CONWAY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	0	

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
DARDANELLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
EAST END SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
FOUNTAIN LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
GUY PERKINS	2	2	357
JACKSONVILLE NORTH PULASKI SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	0	
JESSIEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	25	0	
MIDLAND	2	2	529
NORTH LITTLE ROCK	14	14	7,807
PERRYVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	0	
QUITMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
RIVERVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
SEARCY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
SEARCY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
SHIRLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
SOUTH CONWAY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	0	
TWO RIVERS	2	2	799
WEST SIDE (CLEBURNE CO)	2	2	478
WHITE COUNTY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
WONDERVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
Congressional District #3			
ALPENA SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
BERRYVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
BOONEVILLE	3	3	1,328
CEDARVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	

(continued)

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(continued)

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DECATUR	3	3	605
FAYETTEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
FORT SMITH PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT	18	0	
GREEN FOREST SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
GREENLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
HACKETT	2	2	820
HUNTSVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
JASPER SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	0	
MOUNTAINBURG	3	3	629
MULBERRY	3	3	445
SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
VAN BUREN SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
Congressional District #4			
ALPENA SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
ARKADELPHIA SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
ASHDOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
ATKINS SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
BISMARCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
BLEVINS SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
BOONEVILLE	3	3	1,328
CADDO HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
CAMDEN FAIRVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
CENTERPOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
CLARKSVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	0	
CLEVELAND COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
CLINTON	3	3	1,276
COSSATOT RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
COUNTY LINE DISTRICT	1	0	
CROSSETT SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
CUTTER-MORNING STAR SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
DANVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
DARDANELLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
DEER/MT. JUDEA SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
DIERKS SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
DREW CENTRAL	3	3	1,241
DUMAS	4	4	932
EL DORADO SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
EMERSON-TAYLOR-BRADLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
FORDYCE SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
FOREMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
FOUKE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
FOUNTAIN LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
GURDON SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
HACKETT	2	2	820
HAMBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	0	
HAMPTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
HARRISON SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
HECTOR	2	2	609
HERMITAGE	2	2	436
HOPE	6	6	2,280
HOT SPRINGS	6	6	3,675
HUNTSVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
JASPER SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	0	

(continued)

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JESSIEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
JUNCTION CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
KIRBY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
LAFAYETTE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
LAKE HAMILTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
LAKESIDE	4	4	915
LAMAR SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	25	0	
MAGAZINE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
MAGNOLIA SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	0	
MALVERN SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
MCGEEHEE	3	3	1,122
MENA SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
MINERAL SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
MONTICELLO SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
MOUNT IDA SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
MOUNTAIN PINE	2	2	632
MULBERRY	3	3	445
NEVADA	2	2	426
OUACHITA RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
OZARK MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
OZARK SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
PARIS	3	3	1,030
PINE BLUFF	7	7	3,165
PRESCOTT	3	3	1,004
PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	0	

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
RUSSELLVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	0	
SOUTH PIKE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
STAR CITY	3	3	1,418
STRONG-HUTTIG SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
TEXARKANA	8	8	3,871
TWO RIVERS	2	2	799
WALDRON SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	0	
WARREN	4	4	1,431
WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	0	
WESTERN YELL COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	0	
WESTSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT (JOHNSON COUNTY)	1	0	
WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
WONDERVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
Unassigned School Districts			
Not all school districts could be matched to congressional districts due to data inconsistencies			
AR LIGHTHOUSE CHARTER SCHOOLS	1	0	
CROSS COUNTY	2	2	661
DERMOTT	2	2	355
ESTEM PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS	2	0	
FRIENDSHIP ASPIRE ACADEMY SCHOOL DISTRICT	6	0	
FUTURE SCHOOL OF FORT SMITH	1	1	230
GRADUATE ARKANSAS (SIA TECH CHARTER SCHOOL DISTRICT)	1	1	562
IMBODEN AREA CHARTER SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
KIPP DELTA CHARTER	5	5	1,224
RESPONSIVE EDUCATION SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	0	
SCHOLARMADE ACHIEVEMENT PLACE	1	1	391

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