

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY SUPPORTS CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND LEARNING

In **MAINE**, approximately **38,000** 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:

114 SCHOOLS

in **MAINE** adopted CEP.

An additional **206** 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 **MAINE**, during the 2024–2025 school year:

 **116,576**

children ate a school lunch and **71,951** children ate a school breakfast on an average school day.²



37

school districts adopted CEP for some or all schools. An additional **82** school districts had schools that were eligible to adopt CEP but did not participate.



33,795

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 2020–2023 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 **MAINE'S** 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			
BIDDEFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS	5	5	2,395
JEFFERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	1	236
PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS	14	11	4,927
RSU 01 - LKRSU	2	0	
RSU 02	1	0	
RSU 04	1	0	
RSU 11/MSAD 11	3	0	
RSU 12	3	0	
RSU 13	5	0	
RSU 17/MSAD 17	9	0	
RSU 18	2	0	
RSU 23	2	0	
RSU 40/MSAD 40	6	0	
RSU 49/MSAD 49	5	0	
RSU 55/MSAD 55	2	0	
RSU 57	2	1	284
RSU 61/MSAD 61	4	0	
SANFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS	7	4	1,346
SOUTH PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS	4	3	1,300
WATERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	4	0	
WESTBROOK	5	5	2,289
WINSLOW SCHOOLS	2	0	
WISCASSET PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	2	423
Congressional District #2			
AIRLINE CSD	1	0	
ALEXANDER PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
ANDOVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
ATHENS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
AUBURN PUBLIC SCHOOLS	8	7	2,221
AUGUSTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	6	0	
BAILEYVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	0	
BANGOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS	11	10	2,378
BEALS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
BREWER PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
BROOKSVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
CALAIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	0	
CASWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	1	37
CHERRYFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
CUTLER PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
EAST MACHIAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
EAST MILLINOCKET PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
EASTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	0	
ELLSWORTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
GREENBUSH PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
HARMONY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	1	59
JONESPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
LEWISTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	7	7	5,043
LIMESTONE	1	1	145
LISBON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
MACHIAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	0	
MACHIASPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
MADAWASKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	0	

(continued)

NOTE: School districts, rather than individual schools, are listed under congressional districts. If a school district crosses congressional district boundaries, all of their schools and children are included in each congressional district. Not all school districts could be matched to congressional districts due to inconsistencies in how the data sources numerically identify and name school districts and schools. Unmatched school districts are listed as unassigned.

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>

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(continued)

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MEDWAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	1	UNKNOWN
MILLINOCKET PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	0	
MOOSABEC CSD	1	0	
MSAD 27	1	0	
MSAD 46	2	2	837
OTIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
PEMBROKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
PERRY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
PRINCETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
RSU 02	1	0	
RSU 03/MSAD 03	7	0	
RSU 04	1	0	
RSU 09	6	0	
RSU 10	6	6	1,778
RSU 11/MSAD 11	3	0	
RSU 12	3	0	
RSU 16	1	0	
RSU 17/MSAD 17	9	0	
RSU 18	2	0	
RSU 19	6	1	UNKNOWN
RSU 20	3	0	
RSU 22	2	0	
RSU 24	6	6	828
RSU 25	4	0	
RSU 29/MSAD 29	4	4	1,231

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
RSU 30/MSAD 30	2	2	164
RSU 31/MSAD 31	2	0	
RSU 34	5	0	
RSU 37/MSAD 37	4	0	
RSU 39	2	0	
RSU 41/MSAD 41	5	3	367
RSU 42/MSAD 42	2	0	
RSU 44/MSAD 44	2	0	
RSU 45/MSAD 45	2	0	
RSU 49/MSAD 49	5	0	
RSU 50	1	0	
RSU 53/MSAD 53	3	0	
RSU 54/MSAD 54	7	5	1,820
RSU 55/MSAD 55	2	0	
RSU 56	3	0	
RSU 58/MSAD 58	3	0	
RSU 59/MSAD 59	3	0	
RSU 64/MSAD 64	3	0	
RSU 67	3	0	
RSU 68/MSAD 68	2	0	
RSU 70/MSAD 70	2	1	292
RSU 71	9	7	1,278
RSU 73	4	0	
RSU 74/MSAD 74	4	4	593
RSU 79/MSAD 01	4	0	
RSU 80/MSAD 04	2	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>

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(continued)

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RSU 83/MSAD 13	2	0	
RSU 84/MSAD 14	1	1	144
RSU 85/MSAD 19	1	0	
RSU 86	2	1	235
RSU 88	2	2	267
RSU 89	2	2	279
SEDGWICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
WHITING PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	0	
WOODLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS	1	1	168
Unassigned School Districts			
Not all school districts could be matched to congressional districts due to data inconsistencies			
ARTHUR R. GOULD SCH--LCYDC	1	0	
BLUE HILL HARBOR SCHOOL	1	0	
COMMUNITY REGIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL	3	0	
CONNOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL- CONSOLIDATED	1	1	UNKNOWN
EDUCATION IN UNORGANIZED TERR	3	0	
FOXCROFT ACADEMY	1	0	
GLEN STRATTON LEARNING CENTER	1	1	UNKNOWN
INDIAN TOWNSHIP SCHOOL	1	1	115
KINGMAN	1	1	UNKNOWN
LEE ACADEMY	1	0	
MAINE ARTS ACADEMY	1	0	
MAINE CENTRAL INSTITUTE	1	0	
ME ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCE	1	1	190
PLEASANT POINT	1	1	126

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