

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY SUPPORTS CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND LEARNING

In **NORTH CAROLINA**, approximately **342,000** 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:

1,895 SCHOOLS

in NORTH CAROLINA adopted CEP. An additional **461** 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 NORTH CAROLINA, during the 2024–2025 school year:

 **792,779**

children ate a school lunch and **455,078** children ate a school breakfast on an average school day.²

 **160**

school districts adopted CEP for some or all schools. An additional **37** school districts had schools that were eligible to adopt CEP but did not participate.

 **949,368**

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 2022–2023 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 **NORTH CAROLINA'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			
BERTIE COUNTY SCHOOLS	7	7	1,775
CAMDEN COUNTY SCHOOLS	1	0	
CURRITUCK COUNTY SCHOOLS	6	0	
EDENTON/CHOWAN SCHOOLS	4	4	1,816
EDGEcombe COUNTY SCHOOLS	19	19	6,505
GATES COUNTY SCHOOLS	5	0	
GRANVILLE COUNTY SCHOOLS	16	16	6,525
GREENE COUNTY SCHOOLS	6	6	2,828
HALIFAX COUNTY SCHOOLS	11	11	2,174
HERTFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS	7	7	2,423
LENOIR COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	17	17	8,324
MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS	8	8	2,645
NASH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	23	23	13,249
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY SCHOOLS	5	5	1,301
PASQUOTANK COUNTY SCHOOLS	13	13	4,716
PERQUIMANS COUNTY SCHOOLS	4	4	1,692
ROANOKE RAPIDS CITY SCHOOLS	5	5	2,755
TYRRELL COUNTY SCHOOLS	3	3	472
VANCE COUNTY SCHOOLS	15	15	5,365
WARREN COUNTY SCHOOLS	6	6	1,697
WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOLS	3	3	765
WAYNE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	34	34	17,229
WELDON CITY SCHOOLS	4	4	722
WILSON COUNTY SCHOOLS	24	22	9,865

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
Congressional District #2			
WAKE COUNTY SCHOOLS	130	44	25,093
Congressional District #3			
BEAUFORT COUNTY SCHOOLS	13	13	5,730
CARTERET COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	18	14	5,438
CLINTON CITY SCHOOLS	5	5	2,994
CRAVEN COUNTY SCHOOLS	24	16	6,987
DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS	10	3	692
DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS	13	13	9,884
HYDE COUNTY SCHOOLS	1	1	292
JONES COUNTY SCHOOLS	5	5	1,062
ONslow COUNTY SCHOOLS	37	1	169
PAMLICO COUNTY SCHOOLS	4	4	1,192
PITT COUNTY SCHOOLS	39	38	22,752
SAMPSON COUNTY SCHOOLS	18	18	8,050
Congressional District #4			
CHAPEL HILL-CARRBORO SCHOOLS	15	0	
CHATHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS	17	17	6,696
DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS	55	55	32,282
ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOLS	12	4	1,457
WAKE COUNTY SCHOOLS	130	44	25,093
Congressional District #5			
ALEXANDER COUNTY SCHOOLS	11	11	4,381
ALLEGHANY COUNTY SCHOOLS	4	4	1,466
ASHE COUNTY SCHOOLS	6	6	2,679
CALDWELL COUNTY SCHOOLS	24	22	9,962

(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)

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
ELKIN CITY SCHOOLS	3	0	
GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS	113	112	59,295
MOUNT AIRY CITY SCHOOLS	4	4	1,779
ROCKINGHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS	23	23	11,397
STOKES COUNTY SCHOOLS	17	13	3,648
SURRY COUNTY SCHOOLS	19	19	7,229
WATAUGA COUNTY SCHOOLS	9	0	
WILKES COUNTY SCHOOLS	22	22	8,494
Congressional District #6			
CABARRUS COUNTY SCHOOLS	35	10	5,644
DAVIDSON COUNTY SCHOOLS	35	20	7,822
DAVIE COUNTY SCHOOLS	12	0	
FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS	77	69	43,678
GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS	113	112	59,295
KANNAPOLIS CITY SCHOOLS	10	10	5,969
LEXINGTON CITY SCHOOLS	7	7	3,032
ROWAN-SALISBURY SCHOOLS	31	31	17,816
THOMASVILLE CITY SCHOOLS	4	4	2,199
Congressional District #7			
BLADEN COUNTY SCHOOLS	12	12	4,021
BRUNSWICK COUNTY SCHOOLS	20	20	13,260
CLINTON CITY SCHOOLS	5	5	2,994
COLUMBUS COUNTY SCHOOLS	12	12	5,296
CUMBERLAND COUNTY SCHOOLS	83	69	35,690
NEW HANOVER COUNTY SCHOOLS	38	30	14,114
PENDER COUNTY SCHOOLS	15	15	7,051

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
ROBESON COUNTY SCHOOLS	36	35	20,863
SAMPSON COUNTY SCHOOLS	18	18	8,050
WHITEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS	4	4	2,050
Congressional District #8			
ANSON COUNTY SCHOOLS	9	9	2,925
CABARRUS COUNTY SCHOOLS	35	10	5,644
CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS	148	115	83,805
KANNAPOLIS CITY SCHOOLS	10	10	5,969
MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOLS	11	11	3,658
RICHMOND COUNTY SCHOOLS	15	15	6,615
ROBESON COUNTY SCHOOLS	36	35	20,863
SCOTLAND COUNTY SCHOOLS	10	10	5,494
STANLY COUNTY SCHOOLS	22	22	8,523
UNION COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	37	17	8,380
Congressional District #9			
ALAMANCE-BURLINGTON SCHOOLS	36	23	13,235
ASHEBORO CITY SCHOOLS	8	8	4,399
CHATHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS	17	17	6,696
CUMBERLAND COUNTY SCHOOLS	83	69	35,690
GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS	113	112	59,295
HOKE COUNTY SCHOOLS	14	14	8,734
MOORE COUNTY SCHOOLS	20	15	6,304
RANDOLPH COUNTY SCHOOLS	31	25	11,198
Congressional District #10			
CATAWBA COUNTY SCHOOLS	28	21	11,353
FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS	77	69	43,678

(continued)

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HICKORY CITY SCHOOLS	9	9	3,782
IREDELL-STATESVILLE SCHOOLS	26	24	11,769
LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOLS	18	15	6,187
MOORESVILLE GRADED SCHOOL DISTRICT	8	0	
NEWTON CONOVER CITY SCHOOLS	6	5	1,778
YADKIN COUNTY SCHOOLS	13	10	3,457
Congressional District #11			
ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS	8	0	
AVERY COUNTY SCHOOLS	8	8	1,861
BUNCOMBE COUNTY SCHOOLS	43	43	21,814
CHEROKEE COUNTY SCHOOLS	13	13	3,083
CLAY COUNTY SCHOOLS	4	4	1,309
GRAHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS	3	3	1,096
HAYWOOD COUNTY SCHOOLS	15	15	6,512
HENDERSON COUNTY SCHOOLS	22	8	3,195
JACKSON COUNTY SCHOOLS	9	9	3,456
MACON COUNTY SCHOOLS	11	9	3,124
MADISON COUNTY SCHOOLS	7	7	2,070
MCDOWELL COUNTY SCHOOLS	15	15	6,113
MITCHELL COUNTY SCHOOLS	6	6	1,835
POLK COUNTY SCHOOLS	7	7	2,152
SWAIN COUNTY SCHOOLS	4	4	1,754
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS	9	9	3,294
YANCEY COUNTY SCHOOLS	7	7	2,065
Congressional District #12			
CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS	148	115	83,805

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
Congressional District #13			
CASWELL COUNTY SCHOOLS	6	6	2,107
FRANKLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS	16	16	7,989
GRANVILLE COUNTY SCHOOLS	16	16	6,525
HARNETT COUNTY SCHOOLS	28	15	8,869
JOHNSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS	48	48	37,540
LEE COUNTY SCHOOLS	17	17	9,321
PERSON COUNTY SCHOOLS	13	13	4,614
WAKE COUNTY SCHOOLS	130	44	25,093
Congressional District #14			
BURKE COUNTY SCHOOLS	26	26	11,759
CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS	148	115	83,805
CLEVELAND COUNTY SCHOOLS	27	27	14,186
GASTON COUNTY SCHOOLS	54	45	24,602
POLK COUNTY SCHOOLS	7	7	2,152
RUTHERFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS	19	19	7,439
Unassigned School Districts			
Not all school districts could be matched to congressional districts due to data inconsistencies			
A.C.E. ACADEMY	1	1	428
ALPHA ACADEMY	1	0	
AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CHARLOTTE	1	1	126
AMERICAN RENAISSANCE SCHOOL	1	0	
ARAPAHOE CHARTER SCHOOL	1	1	480
BETHEL HILL CHARTER	1	1	348
CAMP LEJEUNE SCHOOLS	5	0	
CAPITOL ENCORE ACADEMY	1	1	741

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CARDINAL CHARTER ACADEMY	1	0	
CARDINAL CHARTER ACADEMY AT WENDELL FALLS	1	0	
CARTER G. WOODSON SCHOOL	1	1	482
CENTRAL CAROLINA ACADEMY	1	0	
CENTRAL PARK SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN	1	0	
CHARLOTTE LAB SCHOOL	1	0	
CHATHAM CHARTER SCHOOL	1	0	
CIS ACADEMY	1	0	
CLASSICAL CHARTER SCHOOLS OF WHITEVILLE	1	1	817
CLASSICAL CHARTER SCHOOLS OF WILMINGTON	1	1	131
COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF DIGITAL AND VISUAL ARTS (CSDVA)	1	1	174
CONCORD LAKE STEAM ACADEMY	1	1	656
DILLARD ACADEMY	1	1	238
DORAL ACADEMY OF NORTH CAROLINA	1	0	
DURHAM CHARTER SCHOOL	3	3	946
EVERGREEN COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL	1	0	
FORSYTH ACADEMY	1	1	722
GASTON COLLEGE PREPARATORY	1	1	1,139
GATE CITY CHARTER ACADEMY	1	1	678
GIRLS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY OF WILMINGTON	1	1	323
GLOBAL SCHOLARS ACADEMY	1	1	195
GREENSBORO ISLAMIC ACADEMY	1	1	245
GUILFORD PREPARATORY	1	1	584
HALIWA-SAPONI TRIBAL SCHOOL	1	1	143
HENDERSON COLLEGIATE	1	1	1,257
IREDELL CHARTER ACADEMY OF ARTS & SCIENCE	1	0	

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
JOHNSTON CHARTER ACADEMY	1	0	
KESTREL HEIGHTS CHARTER SCHOOL	1	0	
KIPP - HALIFAX COLLEGE PREPARATORY	1	1	550
KIPP CHARLOTTE	2	2	865
KIPP DURHAM COLLEGE PREPARATORY	1	1	361
LANGTREE CHARTER ACADEMY	1	0	
MALLARD CREEK STEM ACADEMY	1	1	922
MARJORIE WILLIAMS ACADEMY	1	1	112
MATTHEW'S CHARTER ACADEMY	1	0	
MAUREEN JOY CHARTER	1	1	605
MOVEMENT CHARTER SCHOOL	1	1	712
MOVEMENT SCHOOL EASTLAND	1	1	467
MOVEMENT SCHOOL NORTHWEST	1	1	99
MOVEMENT SCHOOL SOUTHWEST	1	1	200
NEXT GENERATION ACADEMY	1	1	409
NORTH EAST CAROLINA PREPARATORY SCHOOL	1	1	1,022
NORTHEAST ACADEMY FOR AEROSPACE AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES	1	0	
OLD MAIN STREAM ACADEMY	1	1	337
PAUL R. BROWN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY	1	1	171
PREEMINENT CHARTER	1	1	679
QUALITY EDUCATION ACADEMY	1	1	641
QUEEN'S GRANT COMMUNITY	1	0	
RESEARCH TRIANGLE CHARTER	1	1	719
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS	3	3	151
RISE SOUTHEAST RALEIGH CHARTER SCHOOL	1	1	467
RISING LEADERS ACADEMY	1	1	362

(continued)

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ROCKY MOUNT PREPARATORY	1	1	840
ROLESVILLE CHARTER ACADEMY	1	0	
SALLIE B HOWARD SCHOOL	1	1	1,179
SOUTHWEST CHARLOTTE STEM ACADEMY	1	1	796
STEELE CREEK PREPARATORY ACADEMY	1	1	379
SUCCESS INSTITUTE CHARTER	1	1	89
SUGAR CREEK CHARTER	2	2	1,447
SUMMIT CREEK ACADEMY	1	1	644
THE COLLEGE PREPARATORY AND LEADERSHIP ACADEMY OF HIGH POINT	1	1	826
THE EXPERIENTIAL SCHOOL OF GREENSBORO	1	0	
THE MATH AND SCIENCE ACADEMY OF CHARLOTTE	2	2	667
TRIAD MATH & SCIENCE ACADEMY	1	1	1,263
TRINITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	1	1	523
UNION PREPARATORY ACADEMY	1	0	
VALOR PREPARATORY ACADEMY	2	0	
WAKE FOREST CHARTER ACADEMY	1	0	
WAYNE STEM ACADEMY	1	0	
WEST LAKE PREPARATORY ACADEMY	1	0	
WILMINGTON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS	1	0	
WILSON PREPARATORY ACADEMY	1	1	707
WINTERVILLE CHARTER ACADEMY	1	0	
Z.E.C.A. SCHOOL OF ART AND TECHNOLOGY	1	1	101

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