

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY SUPPORTS CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND LEARNING

In **SOUTH CAROLINA**, approximately **209,000** 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.

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.

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:

1,006 SCHOOLS

in SOUTH CAROLINA adopted CEP. An additional 64 schools were eligible to adopt CEP but did not participate.

In SOUTH CAROLINA, during the 2024–2025 school year:

 **515,175**

children ate a school lunch and 283,220 children ate a school breakfast on an average school day.²



97

school districts adopted CEP for some or all schools. An additional 6 school districts had schools that were eligible to adopt CEP but did not participate.



602,988

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 **SOUTH 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			
BEAUFORT COUNTY	33	33	20,739
BERKELEY COUNTY	31	31	26,931
CHARLESTON COUNTY	67	67	32,886
COLLETON COUNTY	8	8	4,672
DORCHESTER 02	10	10	8,471
DORCHESTER 04	5	5	2,130
JASPER COUNTY	4	4	2,733
Congressional District #2			
AIKEN COUNTY	42	42	22,847
LEXINGTON 01	24	4	2,396
LEXINGTON 02	12	12	8,680
LEXINGTON 03	4	4	1,998
LEXINGTON 04	7	7	3,461
LEXINGTON 05	17	13	9,550
ORANGEBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	27	27	10,593
RICHLAND 01	49	49	20,850
RICHLAND 02	32	25	20,729
Congressional District #3			
ABBEVILLE COUNTY	8	8	2,861
AIKEN COUNTY	42	42	22,847
ANDERSON 01	14	7	4,851
ANDERSON 02	7	7	3,495
ANDERSON 03	5	5	2,759
ANDERSON 04	6	6	3,054
ANDERSON 05	18	18	12,384

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
EDGEFIELD COUNTY	7	7	3,075
GREENVILLE COUNTY	84	77	65,686
GREENWOOD 50	14	14	8,510
GREENWOOD 51	3	3	876
GREENWOOD 52	4	4	1,602
LAURENS 55	9	9	5,093
LAURENS 56	6	6	2,719
LEXINGTON 03	4	4	1,998
MCCORMICK COUNTY	1	1	569
NEWBERRY COUNTY	12	12	5,712
OCONEE COUNTY	16	16	10,029
PICKENS COUNTY	23	23	15,644
SALUDA COUNTY	4	4	2,453
Congressional District #4			
GREENVILLE COUNTY	84	77	65,686
SPARTANBURG 01	10	10	5,420
SPARTANBURG 02	14	12	8,532
SPARTANBURG 03	5	5	2,788
SPARTANBURG 04	4	4	2,899
SPARTANBURG 05	14	8	4,512
SPARTANBURG 06	15	15	12,301
SPARTANBURG 07	12	12	8,107
Congressional District #5			
CHEROKEE COUNTY	15	15	7,650
CHESTER COUNTY	9	9	4,585
FAIRFIELD COUNTY	8	8	2,299

(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>

The following table identifies the school districts in each of **SOUTH 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

(continued)

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
KERSHAW COUNTY	16	16	11,021
LANCASTER COUNTY	15	15	8,075
LEE COUNTY	5	5	1,340
SPARTANBURG 01	10	10	5,420
SPARTANBURG 02	14	12	8,532
SPARTANBURG 03	5	5	2,788
SPARTANBURG 07	12	12	8,107
SUMTER COUNTY	24	24	14,117
UNION COUNTY	6	6	3,611
YORK 01 - YORK	9	9	5,084
YORK 02 - CLOVER	6	0	
YORK 03 - ROCK HILL	23	23	16,333
Congressional District #6			
ALLENDALE COUNTY	3	3	997
BAMBERG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	6	6	1,772
CALHOUN COUNTY	3	3	1,524
CHARLESTON COUNTY	67	67	32,886
CLARENDON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	9	9	4,108
COLLETON COUNTY	8	8	4,672
DORCHESTER 02	10	10	8,471
DORCHESTER 04	5	5	2,130
FLORENCE 03	8	8	2,851
HAMPTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	9	9	2,312
JASPER COUNTY	4	4	2,733
ORANGEBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	27	27	10,593
RICHLAND 01	49	49	20,850

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
RICHLAND 02	32	25	20,729
SUMTER COUNTY	24	24	14,117
WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY	8	8	2,804
Congressional District #7			
CHESTERFIELD COUNTY	16	16	6,909
DARLINGTON COUNTY	18	18	8,799
DILLON 03	3	3	1,492
DILLON 04	7	7	3,734
FLORENCE 01	23	23	15,910
FLORENCE 02	2	2	1,060
FLORENCE 03	8	8	2,851
FLORENCE 05	3	3	1,223
GEORGETOWN COUNTY	18	18	8,204
HORRY COUNTY	53	53	48,757
MARION COUNTY	10	10	3,816
MARLBORO COUNTY	7	7	3,533
Unassigned School Districts			
Not all school districts could be matched to congressional districts due to data inconsistencies			
BARNWELL COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	9	9	3,095
BERKELEY CHARTER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, INC	1	0	
BETTIS PREPARATORY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY	1	1	131
BRIDGEWATER ACADEMY	1	1	125
BUTLER ACADEMY	1	1	282
CALHOUN FALLS CHARTER SCHOOL - SC PUBLIC CHARTER DISTRICT	1	1	164
CHABAD ACADEMY	1	1	93
CHEROKEE COUNTY CHARTER SCHOOL	1	1	575

(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>

The following table identifies the school districts in each of **SOUTH 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

(continued)

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
CLEAR DOT CHARTER SCHOOL COLUMBIA, INC.	1	1	406
COLUMBIA EAST POINT ACADEMY	1	0	
FELTON LABORATORY SCHOOL	1	1	299
FULL GOSPEL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	1	1	45
GLOBAL ACADEMY OF SOUTH CAROLINA	1	1	273
GOUCHER CHARTER ACADEMY	1	1	157
GREEN CHARTER SCHOOL MIDLANDS	1	0	
GREENWOOD CHARTER ACADEMY	1	1	329
HIGH POINT ACADEMY, INC. CHARTER SCHOOL	1	1	1,191
LEAD ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL	1	1	383
LEGACY EARLY COLLEGE	1	1	1,518
LIBERTY STEAM CHARTER SCHOOL	1	1	585
MEVERS SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE	1	0	
MIDLANDS STEM INSTITUTE	1	1	252
ORANGEBURG HIGH SCHOOL FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONS	1	1	440
PEE DEE MATH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY	1	1	221
POLARIS TECH CHARTER SCHOOL	1	1	525
RIVERVIEW CHARTER SCHOOL	1	0	
ROYAL LIVE OAKS ACADEMY-RIDGELAND - CHARTER INSTITUTE OF ERSKINE	1	1	661
SPARTANBURG PREPARATORY CHARTER SCHOOL - SC PUBLIC CHARTER DIST	1	1	509
ST ANTHONY OF PADUA CATHOLIC SCHOOL	1	1	150
ST MARTIN DE PORRES CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	1	1	45
THE PALMETTO SCHOOL	1	1	59
THORNWELL CHARTER SCHOOL	1	1	299
VIRTUS ACADEMY OF SOUTH CAROLINA	1	1	659

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/ipeds/data/ipedsdatacenter/ipedsdatacenter.asp>; and NCES. School district geographic relationship files for the 119th Congress. <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipedsdatacenter/ipedsdatacenter.asp>