

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY SUPPORTS CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND LEARNING

In **SOUTH DAKOTA**, approximately **39,000** 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:

103 SCHOOLS

in **SOUTH DAKOTA** adopted CEP. An additional **71** 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 **SOUTH DAKOTA**, during the 2024–2025 school year:

 **98,438**

children ate a school lunch and **31,098** children ate a school breakfast on an average school day.²

 **32**

school districts adopted CEP for some or all schools. An additional **30** school districts had schools that were eligible to adopt CEP but did not participate.

 **15,540**

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 2021–2023 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 DAKOTA'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
At-Large Congressional District			
ABERDEEN SCHOOL DISTRICT 06-1	3	0	
AGAR-BLUNT-ONIDA SCHOOL DISTRICT 58-3	1	0	
AMERICAN HORSE SCHOOL	1	1	193
ANDES CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 11-1	3	3	309
AVON SCHOOL DISTRICT 04-1	1	0	
BENNETT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 03-1	3	3	502
BROOKINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT 05-1	1	0	
CASTLEWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT 28-1	1	0	
CHAMBERLAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT 07-1	2	0	
CHEYENNE RIVER BIE SCHOOLS	6	6	1,097
COLOME CONSOLIDATED 59-3	2	0	
CRAZY HORSE DAY SCHOOL	3	3	222
CROW CREEK SIOUX TRIBE	4	4	407
DUPREE SCHOOL DISTRICT 64-2	3	3	404
EAST DAKOTA EDUCATIONAL COOPERATIVE	3	0	
ENEMY SWIM DAY SCHOOL	1	1	140
FLANDREAU INDIAN SCHOOL	1	1	102
HENRY SCHOOL DISTRICT 14-2	1	0	
HURON SCHOOL DISTRICT 02-2	4	0	
IROQUOIS SCHOOL DISTRICT 02-3	1	0	
ISNA WICA OWAYAWA	1	1	251
KADOKA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 35-2	1	0	
LAKE PRESTON SCHOOL DISTRICT 38-3	1	0	
LITTLE EAGLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	1	65
LITTLE WOUND SCHOOL SYSTEM	5	5	719

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
LOWER BRULE SIOUX TRIBE	3	3	279
LYMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT 42-1	1	0	
MARION SCHOOL DISTRICT 60-3	3	0	
MARTY INDIAN SCHOOL	3	3	194
MCINTOSH SCHOOL DISTRICT 15-1	3	3	159
MCLAUGHLIN SCHOOL DISTRICT 15-2	3	3	448
MEADE SCHOOL DISTRICT 46-1	1	0	
MILLER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 29-4	1	0	
MITCHELL SCHOOL DISTRICT 17-2	1	0	
MOBRIDGE-POLLOCK SCHOOL DISTRICT 62-6	3	0	
NEWELL SCHOOL DISTRICT 09-2	1	0	
OELRICHS SCHOOL DISTRICT 23-3	3	3	119
OGLALA LAKOTA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 65-1	5	5	1,591
PIERRE INDIAN LEARNING CENTER	2	2	110
PIERRE SCHOOL DISTRICT 32-2	2	0	
PINE RIDGE SCHOOL	3	3	533
PORCUPINE CONTRACT SCHOOL	1	1	107
RAPID CITY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 51-4	9	6	2,284
SIOUX FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT 49-5	20	5	624
SISSETON SCHOOL DISTRICT 54-2	3	0	
SMEE SCHOOL DISTRICT 15-3	3	3	191
ST FRANCIS INDIAN SCHOOL	3	3	476
STANLEY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 57-1	2	0	
TAKINI SCHOOL	2	2	157
TIOSPA ZINA TRIBAL SCHOOL	3	3	447
TIOSPAYE TOPA	2	2	161

(continued)

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(continued)

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TODD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 66-1	12	12	1,808
TRIPP-DELMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT 33-5	3	0	
VERMILLION SCHOOL DISTRICT 13-1	1	0	
VIBORG-HURLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT 60-6	2	0	
WAGNER COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 11-4	4	4	892
WATERTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT 14-4	2	0	
WAUBAY SCHOOL DISTRICT 18-3	2	0	
WHITE RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT 47-1	4	4	407
WINNER SCHOOL DISTRICT 59-2	2	0	
WOUNDED KNEE SCHOOL SYSTEM	1	1	142
YANKTON SCHOOL DISTRICT 63-3	1	0	