

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY SUPPORTS CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND LEARNING

In **TENNESSEE**, approximately **288,000** 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:

1,295 SCHOOLS

in **TENNESSEE** adopted CEP. An additional **250** 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 **TENNESSEE**, during the 2024–2025 school year:



671,312

children ate a school lunch and **396,644** children ate a school breakfast on an average school day.²



147

school districts adopted CEP for some or all schools. An additional **32** school districts had schools that were eligible to adopt CEP but did not participate.



571,198

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 **TENNESSEE'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			
BRISTOL CITY	7	7	3,541
CARTER COUNTY	14	14	4,402
COCKE COUNTY	11	11	3,763
ELIZABETHTON CITY	5	5	2,072
GREENE COUNTY	15	15	5,360
GREENEVILLE CITY	6	4	1,320
HAMBLEN COUNTY	18	18	9,518
HANCOCK COUNTY	4	4	850
HAWKINS COUNTY	15	15	5,630
JEFFERSON COUNTY	12	12	6,156
JOHNSON CITY	11	8	3,359
JOHNSON COUNTY	6	6	1,714
KINGSPORT CITY	12	12	6,921
NEWPORT CITY	1	1	649
ROGERSVILLE CITY	1	1	590
SEVIER COUNTY	24	0	
SULLIVAN COUNTY	15	15	7,588
UNICOI COUNTY	6	6	1,966
WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOLS	12	12	6,573
Congressional District #2			
ALCOA CITY	4	0	
BLOUNT COUNTY	20	0	
CAMPBELL COUNTY	8	8	1,156
CLAIBORNE COUNTY	12	12	2,798
GRAINGER COUNTY	9	9	2,684

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
JEFFERSON COUNTY	12	12	6,156
KNOX COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	75	64	30,509
LENOIR CITY	3	2	1,235
LOUDON COUNTY	9	0	
UNION COUNTY	9	9	2,529
Congressional District #3			
ATHENS CITY	3	3	1,707
BRADLEY COUNTY	10	10	7,215
CAMPBELL COUNTY	8	8	1,156
CLINTON CITY SCHOOLS	3	1	164
ETOWAH CITY	1	1	347
HAMILTON COUNTY	54	48	26,624
MCMINN COUNTY	9	9	4,685
MONROE COUNTY	12	12	4,003
MORGAN COUNTY	7	7	1,822
OAK RIDGE CITY SCHOOLS	4	4	1,961
POLK COUNTY	6	6	1,837
ROANE COUNTY	17	17	5,675
SCOTT COUNTY	7	7	2,249
SWEETWATER CITY SCHOOLS	4	4	1,332
Congressional District #4			
BLEDSE COUNTY	4	4	1,174
COFFEE COUNTY	10	0	
DAYTON CITY	1	1	746
FAYETTEVILLE CITY	3	3	1,070
FRANKLIN COUNTY	10	10	4,186

(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 **TENNESSEE'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
GILES COUNTY	8	8	3,191
GRUNDY COUNTY	5	5	1,623
LAWRENCE COUNTY	13	13	6,001
LINCOLN COUNTY	5	0	
MANCHESTER CITY SCHOOLS	1	0	
MARION COUNTY	9	9	3,147
MEIGS COUNTY	4	4	1,646
MOORE COUNTY	2	0	
MURFREESBORO CITY SCHOOLS	13	13	8,673
RHEA COUNTY	7	7	3,560
RICHARD CITY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	1	178
RUTHERFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS	4	0	
SEQUATCHIE COUNTY	3	3	1,777
TULLAHOMA CITY	7	7	3,303
WARREN COUNTY	11	11	5,691
Congressional District #5			
FRANKLIN SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	
LEBANON SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	0	
LEWIS COUNTY	4	4	1,622
MARSHALL COUNTY	5	0	
MAURY COUNTY	22	13	6,260
METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS-DAVIDSON COUNTY	137	137	61,822
WILLIAMSON COUNTY	2	0	
WILSON COUNTY	11	0	
Congressional District #6			
CANNON COUNTY	5	5	1,714
CLAY COUNTY	4	4	985

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
CUMBERLAND COUNTY	12	12	6,527
DEKALB COUNTY	5	5	2,305
FENTRESS COUNTY	6	6	2,088
JACKSON COUNTY	4	4	1,378
LEBANON SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	0	
MACON COUNTY	8	8	3,927
METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS-DAVIDSON COUNTY	137	137	61,822
ONEIDA SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	3	1,137
OVERTON COUNTY	8	8	2,577
PICKETT COUNTY	2	2	498
PUTNAM COUNTY	18	12	5,163
SCOTT COUNTY	7	7	2,249
SMITH COUNTY	9	9	2,774
SUMNER COUNTY	29	0	
TROUSDALE COUNTY	3	3	1,335
VAN BUREN COUNTY SCHOOLS	2	2	735
WARREN COUNTY	11	11	5,691
WHITE COUNTY	8	8	3,528
WILSON COUNTY	11	0	
Congressional District #7			
BENTON COUNTY	7	7	1,513
CHEATHAM COUNTY	2	0	
CLARKSVILLE-MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM	32	0	
DECATUR COUNTY	4	4	1,371
DICKSON COUNTY	14	0	
FRANKLIN SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	0	

(continued)

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(continued)

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
HICKMAN COUNTY	8	8	2,883
HOUSTON COUNTY	4	4	1,114
HUMPHREYS COUNTY	6	6	2,399
METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS-DAVIDSON COUNTY	137	137	61,822
PERRY COUNTY	4	4	1,003
ROBERTSON COUNTY	16	14	5,903
STEWART COUNTY	5	5	1,901
WAYNE COUNTY	7	7	2,024
WILLIAMSON COUNTY	2	0	
Congressional District #8			
ALAMO CITY	1	1	561
BELLS CITY	1	1	385
BENTON COUNTY	7	7	1,513
BRADFORD SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	2	594
CHESTER COUNTY	6	0	
CROCKETT COUNTY	5	5	1,835
DYER COUNTY	8	8	3,312
DYERSBURG CITY	4	4	2,395
FAYETTE COUNTY	7	7	2,751
GERMANTOWN MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
GIBSON COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	6	6	1,346
HARDEMAN COUNTY	9	9	2,692
HARDIN COUNTY	7	7	2,984
HAYWOOD COUNTY	6	6	2,314
HENDERSON COUNTY	9	9	3,627
HENRY COUNTY	6	6	2,687

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
HUMBOLDT CITY	3	3	1,087
HUNTINGDON SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	3	1,244
JACKSON-MADISON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	24	24	12,847
LAKE COUNTY	3	3	743
LAUDERDALE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	7	3,029
LEXINGTON CITY	2	0	
MCKENZIE SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	0	
MCNAIRY COUNTY	8	8	3,421
MEMPHIS-SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS	204	204	105,719
MILAN SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	3	1,772
MILLINGTON MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS	3	3	2,425
OBION COUNTY	7	7	2,796
PARIS SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	3	1,475
TIPTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	14	14	9,299
TRENTON SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	3	1,237
UNION CITY	3	3	1,612
WEAKLEY COUNTY	11	11	3,805
Congressional District #9			
MEMPHIS-SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS	204	204	105,719
MILLINGTON MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS	3	3	2,425
TIPTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	14	14	9,299
Unassigned School Districts			
Not all school districts could be matched to congressional districts due to data inconsistencies			
ALVIN C. YORK INSTITUTE	1	0	
ANDERSON COUNTY SCHOOLS	16	16	5,690
AVENTURA COMMUNITY SCHOOL	1	0	

(continued)

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BEDFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS	15	15	8,275
BELIEVE MEMPHIS ACADEMY	1	1	395
BENTON COUNTY	1	1	352
BINGHAMPTON CHRISTIAN ACADEMY, INC.	1	1	126
BLED SOE COUNTY	1	1	340
BRADLEY COUNTY	6	6	2,346
BRINKLEY HEIGHTS URBAN ACADEMY	1	1	76
CAMPBELL COUNTY	4	4	928
CHATT ACADEMY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	1	1	97
CHATTANOOGA CHARTER SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE	3	3	709
CHATTANOOGA GIRLS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY	1	1	326
CIRCLES OF SUCCESS LEARNING ACADEMY	1	1	204
CLEVELAND CITY	9	9	5,203
COLLEGIATE SCHOOL OF MEMPHIS	2	2	642
CREATIVE LIFE PREPARATORY SCHOOL	1	1	39
EXPLORE COMMUNITY SCHOOL	1	1	542
FRAYSER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	3	3	1,004
FREEDOM PREPARATORY ACADEMY	4	4	1,781
GENESIS LEARNING CENTERS	4	4	105
GESTALT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	5	5	2,465
GREATER PRAISE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	1	1	65
HELEN ROSS MCNABB-GATEWAY CENTER	2	0	
HOLLOW ROCK BRUCETON SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	2	573
INTREPID COLLEGE PREP	2	0	
JOURNEY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	2	2	843
KING'S DAUGHTERS SCHOOL	2	0	

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
KIPP MEMPHIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	3	3	1,041
KIPP NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	4	4	1,293
KNOWLEDGE ACADEMIES	1	1	540
LEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS INC	6	6	3,437
MEMPHIS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE & ENGINEERING	1	1	567
MEMPHIS DELTA PREP	1	1	372
MEMPHIS RISE ACADEMY	1	1	568
MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY AT HIGHLAND PARK	1	1	281
PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS	2	2	560
PURPOSE PREPARATORY ACADEMY	1	1	363
REPUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS	3	3	779
RETHINK FORWARD	1	1	612
ROCKETSHIP EDUCATION	3	3	792
SMITHSON CRAIGHEAD ACADEMY	1	1	293
SOUTH CARROLL COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	1	313
STAR ACADEMY	1	1	266
STRIVE COLLEGIATE ACADEMY	1	1	213
TENNESSEE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND	1	0	
TENNESSEE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF	1	0	
THE LAND ACADEMY ELEMENTARY INC	1	1	14
VALOR COLLEGIATE ACADEMIES	2	0	
WEST CARROLL COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	3	710
WEST TENNESSEE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF	1	0	
WORD OF FAITH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	1	1	108
YOUTH TOWN OF TENNESSEE, INC.	1	0	

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