

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY SUPPORTS CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND LEARNING

In **VERMONT**, approximately **11,000** 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:

293 SCHOOLS

in **VERMONT** adopted CEP. An additional **1** school was 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 **VERMONT**, during the 2024–2025 school year:



54,269

children ate a school lunch and **34,577** children ate a school breakfast on an average school day.²



60

school districts adopted CEP for some or all schools. An additional **1** school district had schools that were eligible to adopt CEP but did not participate.



71,420

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 2019–2023 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 **VERMONT'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			
ADDISON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	9	9	1,655
ADDISON NORTHWEST SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	3	857
BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	4	2,154
BENNINGTON-RUTLAND SU	6	6	1,052
BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	14	14	3,521
BURR AND BURTON ACADEMY	1	1	751
CALEDONIA CENTRAL SU	7	7	1,231
CENTRAL VERMONT SUPERVISORY UNION	6	6	1,175
CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	2	526
COLCHESTER TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	5	2,196
ESSEX NORTH SU	1	1	143
ESSEX WESTFORD EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DIST.	9	9	3,909
FRANKLIN NORTHEAST SU	9	9	1,937
FRANKLIN WEST SU	1	1	611
GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	1	1	226
GRAND ISLE SU	4	4	512
GREATER RUTLAND COUNTY SUPERVISORY UNION	9	9	1,554
HARTFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT	6	6	1,496
HARWOOD UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT	2	2	696
KINGDOM EAST SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	7	7	1,125
LAMOILLE NORTH SU	6	6	1,883
LAMOILLE SOUTH SUPERVISORY UNION	6	6	1,543

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
LARAWAY SCHOOL, INC.	1	1	19
LINCOLN TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	1	75
LYNDON INSTITUTE	1	1	431
MAPLE RUN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	5	2,554
MILL RIVER UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	5	792
MILTON TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	3	1,438
MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	4	1,807
MONTPELIER ROXBURY SUPERVISORY UNION	3	3	1,214
MOUNT MANSFIELD UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	1	64
MOUNTAIN VIEWS SUPERVISORY UNION	6	6	1,006
MT. ABRAHAM UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT	6	6	1,194
NORTH COUNTRY SU	11	11	2,630
NORTHEASTERN FAMILY INSTITUTE	3	3	90
ORANGE EAST SU	6	6	1,575
ORANGE SOUTHWEST UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	4	986
ORLEANS CENTRAL SU	8	8	1,034
ORLEANS SOUTHWEST SU	7	7	873
RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT	3	3	412
RUTLAND CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	7	1,993
RUTLAND NORTHEAST SU	8	8	1,379
SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	5	1,227
SOUTH BURLINGTON TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT	5	5	2,513
SOUTHWEST VERMONT SU	13	13	3,127

(continued)

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(continued)

School District	Number of CEP-Eligible Schools	Number of CEP-Participating Schools	Students Enrolled in CEP-Participating Schools
SPRINGFIELD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT	4	4	1,098
ST. JOHNSBURY TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	1	622
THE VILLAGE SCHOOL OF NORTH BENNINGTON	1	1	138
THETFORD ACADEMY	1	1	310
TWO RIVERS SU	5	5	808
UNITED CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	1	0	
VERMONT ACHIEVEMENT CENTER	1	1	55
WASHINGTON CENTRAL UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT	6	6	1,406
WASHINGTON COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES INC.	1	1	52
WHITE RIVER VALLEY SUPERVISORY UNION	8	8	1,278
WINDHAM CENTRAL SU	7	7	660
WINDHAM NORTHEAST SU	6	6	1,030
WINDHAM SOUTHEAST SU	8	8	2,343
WINDHAM SOUTHWEST SU	5	5	555
WINDSOR SOUTHEAST SU	4	4	1,115
WINOOSKI SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	1	764