



Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools

School Year 2020–2021

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This report was written by Allyson Pérez and Crystal FitzSimons. The findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of FRAC alone.

About FRAC

The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) improves the nutrition, health, and well-being of people struggling against poverty-related hunger in the United States through advocacy, partnerships, and by advancing bold and equitable policy solutions. For more information about FRAC, or to [sign up](#) for FRAC's e-newsletters, go to frac.org.

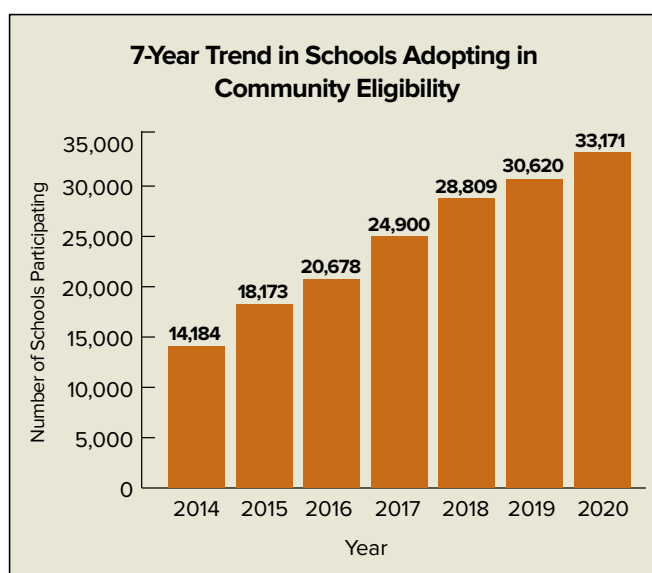


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The Community Eligibility Provision allows high-poverty schools to offer breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students on a four-year cycle. Schools that participate in community eligibility often see increased participation in school meals, allowing more students to experience the many educational and health benefits linked to school meal participation. Schools no longer have to collect and process school meal applications, which reduces administrative costs and paperwork, allowing school nutrition staff to focus more on offering healthy, appealing meals. Moreover, offering meals at no charge to all students eliminates the stigma from the perception that school meals are only for low-income children, and facilitates the implementation of “breakfast after the bell” service models, such as breakfast in the classroom, which further boosts participation.

As more schools continue to experience and share the academic, health, and administrative benefits of community eligibility, eligible school districts¹ continue to adopt the provision or expand implementation.



During the 2020–2021 school year, many schools and districts across the country chose to offer free meals to all students through the Summer Nutrition Programs thanks to waiver authority granted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However, more schools did “sign up” for the Community Eligibility Provision in the 2020–2021 school year, even if they did not officially operate the provision. The increase in families becoming eligible for, and participating in, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits has led to more schools becoming eligible to implement community eligibility. These resulting higher identified student percentages (ISP) also have allowed schools to claim higher federal reimbursement rates, making community eligibility a more financially viable option and ensuring that students are offered nutritious school meals at no charge beyond the pandemic.

The pandemic has not slowed year-after-year gains as adoption by school districts and schools rose, leading to a corresponding growth in the number of children benefiting from community eligibility. Here are the Food Research & Action Center’s top-level findings for the 2020–2021 school year:

- 5,479 school districts have one or more schools adopting community eligibility, an increase of 361 school districts, or 7.1 percent, from the 2019–2020 school year;
- 33,171 schools have adopted community eligibility, an increase of 2,551 schools, or 8.3 percent, from the prior school year;
- 68 percent of eligible schools have adopted community eligibility;
- 15.5 million children attend a school that offers free breakfast and lunch to all students through community eligibility, an increase of over 530,000 children, or 3.6 percent, from the prior school year.

¹This report uses the term “school district” to refer to a Local Education Agency (LEA). LEAs include large and small school districts, including charter schools where the school can be the only one in that LEA.

Despite these numbers, there are many eligible schools that are not participating, even though they and their students stand to benefit from community eligibility. Take-up rates vary substantially across the states. Several factors that existed prior to the pandemic — such as challenges associated with the loss of traditional school meal application data, low rates of direct certification (the latter being the foundation of community eligibility), and variation in the use of community eligibility and child nutrition waivers offered for the 2020–2021 school year — have hindered widespread adoption in some states and school districts. However, barriers can be overcome with strong state, district, and school-level leadership; hands-on technical assistance from national, state, and local stakeholders; and peer-to-peer learning among districts.

As school districts look ahead to the 2021–2022 school year, community eligibility continues to offer an important opportunity to respond to the economic crisis created by COVID-19 by offering meals at no charge to all students for at least four years. As more families become directly certified for school meals through participation in SNAP and other means-tested programs, even more schools are becoming eligible to implement community eligibility. School breakfast and lunch will remain a critical nutritional support for the millions of children whose families are being impacted by the crisis and are critical to overcoming the expected long-term financial and educational impacts of the pandemic. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), State child nutrition agencies, and anti-hunger and education advocates can work together to promote community eligibility to districts that will find the option more financially viable in the upcoming school year, especially those that are

newly eligible, and to provide technical assistance and support to allow these districts to implement community eligibility successfully and sustainably.

USDA's extension of the deadline to opt into community eligibility for the 2021–2022 school year gives school districts (when they calculate their ISP) the necessary time to include the additional students who are now eligible outside of the application, particularly families who are applying for SNAP benefits. The school breakfast and lunch reimbursements are calculated by multiplying the ISP by 1.6 to determine the percentage of meals that will be reimbursed at the free rate. For example, a school with 50 percent identified students would be reimbursed for 80 percent of the breakfasts and lunches served at the free reimbursement rate and the remaining 20 percent at the paid rate.

Leading up to the extended deadline of June 30 to set their ISP, school districts should implement direct certification best practices to set their district's ISP so that it will accurately reflect the poverty level within the school for the upcoming school year. Below is a list of some best practices:

- perform direct certification matches frequently leading up to June 30;
- when possible, extend eligibility to students living in households with other students who are directly certified;
- connect with the homeless liaison/school counselor to identify any students who are newly homeless or have come into foster care; and
- partner with community organizations to perform SNAP outreach to families within the school district.

About This Report

This report analyzes community eligibility implementation — nationally and for each state and the District of Columbia — in the 2020–2021 school year, and is based on three measures:

- the number of eligible and adopting school districts and schools;
- the share of eligible districts and schools that have adopted community eligibility; and
- the number and share of eligible schools that have adopted, based on the school's poverty level.

As a companion to this report, the Food Research & Action Center has compiled all data collected in a [database](#) of eligible and participating schools that can be searched by state and school district.

How Community Eligibility Works

Authorized by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, and phased in select states before being rolled out nationwide, the Community Eligibility Provision allows high-poverty schools to offer breakfast and lunch free of charge to all students, and to realize significant administrative savings by eliminating school meal applications. Any district, group of schools in a district, or school with 40 percent or more “identified students” — children who are eligible for free school meals who already are identified by means other than an individual household application — can choose to participate.

“Identified students” include those who are in two categories:

- children who are directly certified for free school meals through data matching because their households receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) benefits, or, in some states, Medicaid benefits;²

- children who are certified for free meals without an application because they are homeless, migrant, enrolled in Head Start, or in foster care.

Community eligibility schools are reimbursed for meals served, based on a formula. Reimbursements to the school are calculated by multiplying the percentage of identified students by 1.6 to determine the percentage of meals that will be reimbursed at the federal free rate. This is to account for the additional students who would be certified for free school meals through the school meal application process.

School districts also may choose to participate districtwide or group schools however they choose if the district or group has an overall identified student percentage of 40 percent or higher.

The American Families Plan and Community Eligibility

The American Families Plan proposes to increase the community eligibility multiplier from 1.6 for all schools to 2.5 percent for elementary schools, and 1.9 percent for middle and high schools, making community eligibility a financially viable option for more high-poverty schools and multiplying the gains of this initiative. The plan also would allow elementary schools to participate if 25 percent of their students are directly certified for free school meals, instead of the current 40 percent threshold. This would dramatically expand the number of schools and districts eligible to participate in community eligibility, further increasing the number of students with access to nutritious school meals at no charge.

Additional Resources

- [*Direct Certification Improves Low-Income Student Access to School Meals: An Updated Guide to Direct Certification*](#)
- [*School District Strategies for Improving Direct Certification*](#)
- [*Community Eligibility: Making it Work with Lower ISPs*](#)
- **CEP Financial Calculators** — School districts and other stakeholders should use these tools to group schools strategically and to maximize the federal funding received.

For more information and additional resources to help determine if community eligibility is a possibility for your school district, go to the Food Research & Action Center’s [Community Eligibility webpage](#).

² The following states use Medicaid data, along with an income test, to determine categorical eligibility for free school meals: Illinois, Kentucky, New York, and Pennsylvania. The following states use Medicaid data to determine categorical eligibility for both free and reduced-price school meals: California, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Technical Notes

The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) obtained information on schools that were approved to operate under community eligibility in the 2020–2021 school year from state education agencies or entities at the state level that administer the federal school nutrition programs. Between November 2020 and April 2021, FRAC collected these data:

- school name;
- school district name;
- identified student percentage (ISP);
- participation in community eligibility as an individual school, part of a group, or a whole district; and
- enrollment.

FRAC followed up with state education agencies for data clarifications and, when necessary, to obtain missing data.

Under federal law, states are required to publish, by May 1 of each year, a list of schools and districts with ISPs of at least 40 percent and those with ISPs between 30 and just under 40 percent (near-eligible schools and districts). For the 2020–2021 school year, this deadline was extended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to June 30, 2020, in order to grant flexibility to state agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic. FRAC compared this published list to the lists of approved schools, and compiled a universe of eligible and approved schools and districts in the 2020–2021 school year. When compiling the universe of eligible schools, FRAC treated a district as eligible if it contained at least one eligible school. FRAC treated a school as eligible if it appeared on a state’s published list of eligible schools. In addition, schools that were missing from a state’s list of eligible schools, but appeared on its list of adopting schools were treated as eligible.

This year, FRAC gave the states the option to report both eligible and adopting schools in the fall data collection. This gave states the opportunity to update their eligible schools list to reflect any school closures or consolidations. Alabama, Alaska, Illinois, Louisiana, Ohio, South Carolina, Virginia, and Wyoming chose to provide both eligible and adopting schools for this analysis.

There are two circumstances under which a school might be able to adopt community eligibility even if it did not appear on a state’s list of eligible schools:

1. USDA permitted states to base their May published lists on proxy data readily available to them. Proxy data are merely an indicator of potential eligibility, not the basis for eligibility. Districts must submit more accurate information, which may be more complete, more recent,

or both, when applying to adopt community eligibility.

2. A school can participate as a member of an adopting group (part or all of a district). A group’s eligibility is based on the ISP for the group as a whole.

The lists obtained from state education agencies indicated whether schools have elected to adopt community eligibility, the ISP the schools use to determine the federal reimbursement for meals served, and the total number of students attending each adopting school.

USDA issued child nutrition waivers for the 2020–2021 school year that allowed school districts to operate the Summer Nutrition Programs and that waived the area eligibility requirement for the Summer Nutrition Programs, thus allowing meals to be offered at no charge to all students. Many school districts and schools that were approved to adopt community eligibility actually provided meals during the 2020–2021 school year through the Summer Nutrition Program waivers.

The following states had schools that did not provide student enrollment numbers:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| ■ Alabama (8) | ■ Michigan (2); |
| ■ California (43); | ■ Missouri (3); |
| ■ Florida (6); | ■ New Mexico (1); |
| ■ Georgia (8); | ■ New York (115); |
| ■ Idaho (1); | ■ South Carolina (4); |
| ■ Louisiana (1); | ■ Tennessee (5); |
| ■ Massachusetts (149); | ■ Texas (8); and |
| ■ Maryland (2); | ■ Washington (1). |

Maine was the only state that did not provide the ISP used by adopting community eligibility schools to calculate federal reimbursements for meals served, often referred to as the "claiming ISP" or "grouped ISP." For these 73 schools, the ISP is shown as N/A in the database.

Ohio was the only state that reported schools' free claiming percentages (ISP multiplied by 1.6) as 100 percent, so it is impossible to know the exact grouped ISP. It can be determined that the school is participating in community eligibility with an ISP of 62.5 percent or above. In these cases, which affects 373 schools, 62.5 percent was used in the database.

To avoid leaving enrollment information blank, student enrollment data from the community eligibility list published in June 2020 was used in the tables for 115 schools in New York.

TABLE 1: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up Rate in School Districts¹ for School Years (SY) 2019–2020 and 2020–2021

State	Eligible for CEP SY 2019–2020	Adopting CEP SY 2019–2020	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible SY 2019–2020	Eligible for CEP SY 2020–2021	Adopting CEP SY 2020–2021	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible SY 2020–2021
Alabama	117	49	41.9%	55	34	61.8%
Alaska	40	32	80.0%	41	34	82.9%
Arizona	291	174	59.8%	469	184	39.2%
Arkansas	148	69	46.6%	171	75	43.9%
California	684	336	49.1%	903	380	42.1%
Colorado	66	22	33.3%	69	23	33.3%
Connecticut	76	50	65.8%	77	55	71.4%
District of Columbia	24	19	79.2%	41	37	90.2%
Delaware ²	22	19	86.4%	23	19	82.6%
Florida	300	198	66.0%	294	200	68.0%
Georgia	133	105	78.9%	131	107	81.7%
Hawaii	12	11	91.7%	12	11	91.7%
Idaho	35	21	60.0%	56	23	41.1%
Illinois	504	267	53.0%	706	290	41.1%
Indiana	229	92	40.2%	259	113	43.6%
Iowa	76	20	26.3%	115	22	19.1%
Kansas	37	7	18.9%	110	10	9.1%
Kentucky	175	173	98.9%	174	166	95.4%
Louisiana	130	125	96.2%	133	125	94.0%
Maine	59	29	49.2%	104	29	27.9%
Maryland	31	16	51.6%	22	16	72.7%
Massachusetts	154	99	64.3%	139	103	74.1%
Michigan	693	368	53.1%	720	405	56.3%
Minnesota	155	66	42.6%	158	69	43.7%
Mississippi	124	63	50.8%	161	75	46.6%
Missouri	213	101	47.4%	224	103	46.0%
Montana	70	55	78.6%	66	57	86.4%
Nebraska	95	16	16.8%	94	21	22.3%
Nevada	17	15	88.2%	25	21	84.0%
New Hampshire	11	3	27.3%	9	3	33.3%
New Jersey	170	85	50.0%	160	83	51.9%
New Mexico	142	123	86.6%	142	125	88.0%
New York	546	430	78.8%	588	465	79.1%
North Carolina	149	105	70.5%	141	104	73.8%

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TABLE 1: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up Rate in School Districts¹ for School Years (SY) 2019–2020 and 2020–2021

State	Eligible for CEP SY 2019–2020	Adopting CEP SY 2019–2020	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible SY 2019–2020	Eligible for CEP SY 2020–2021	Adopting CEP SY 2020–2021	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible SY 2020–2021
North Dakota	23	23	100.0%	26	23	88.5%
Ohio	466	327	70.2%	477	331	69.4%
Oklahoma	255	122	47.8%	188	109	58.0%
Oregon	123	84	68.3%	137	91	66.4%
Pennsylvania	400	227	56.8%	403	243	60.3%
Rhode Island	26	8	30.8%	22	9	40.9%
South Carolina	83	61	73.5%	80	61	76.3%
South Dakota	43	27	62.8%	46	29	63.0%
Tennessee	139	91	65.5%	190	97	51.1%
Texas	902	411	45.6%	911	489	53.7%
Utah	16	13	81.3%	15	14	93.3%
Vermont	22	18	81.8%	31	19	61.3%
Virginia	162	75	46.3%	132	98	74.2%
Washington	168	89	53.0%	160	100	62.5%
West Virginia	57	53	93.0%	55	54	98.2%
Wisconsin	251	118	47.0%	245	117	47.8%
Wyoming	9	8	88.9%	9	8	88.9%
US Total	8,873	5,118	57.7%	9,719	5,479	56.4%

¹ For the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 school year data, school districts are defined as eligible if they include at least one school with an identified student percentage (ISP) of 40 percent or higher, or at least one school has already adopted community eligibility.

² The total number of school districts eligible for, and the percentage of those adopting, CEP in the 2019–2020 school year has been updated from the original publication of *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2019–2020* (Food Research & Action Center, May 2020) to reflect the revised data provided by the Delaware Department of Education. The U.S. total number of districts eligible and participating were adjusted based on the Delaware revision, but did not affect the U.S. total percentage of schools adopting community eligibility in the 2019–2020 school year.

TABLE 2: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up Rate in Schools¹ for School Years (SY) 2019–2020 and 2020–2021

State	Eligible for CEP SY 2019–2020	Adopting CEP SY 2019–2020	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible SY 2019–2020	Eligible for CEP SY 2020–2021	Adopting CEP SY 2020–2021	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible SY 2020–2021
Alabama	757	445	58.8%	468	250	53.4%
Alaska	235	208	88.5%	236	216	91.5%
Arizona	817	446	54.6%	1,770	500	28.2%
Arkansas	403	229	56.8%	463	255	55.1%
California	4,804	3,275	68.2%	5,936	3,777	63.6%
Colorado	347	105	30.3%	346	108	31.2%
Connecticut	462	364	78.8%	493	426	86.4%
District of Columbia	133	115	86.5%	170	166	97.6%
Delaware ²	122	116	95.1%	123	116	94.3%
Florida	2,784	1,374	49.4%	2,796	1,440	51.5%
Georgia	992	834	84.1%	948	819	86.4%
Hawaii	96	68	70.8%	113	80	70.8%
Idaho	90	61	67.8%	124	62	50.0%
Illinois	2,168	1,588	73.2%	2,766	1,693	61.2%
Indiana	789	462	58.6%	879	515	58.6%
Iowa	310	176	56.8%	378	177	46.8%
Kansas	173	70	40.5%	514	44	8.6%
Kentucky	1,050	1,028	97.9%	1,102	1,060	96.2%
Louisiana	1,105	1,029	93.1%	1,163	1,087	93.5%
Maine	104	73	70.2%	231	73	31.6%
Maryland	320	238	74.4%	387	364	94.1%
Massachusetts	862	685	79.5%	823	720	87.5%
Michigan	2,123	1,259	59.3%	2,218	1,466	66.1%
Minnesota	330	146	44.2%	312	153	49.0%
Mississippi	535	337	63.0%	689	390	56.6%
Missouri	699	427	61.1%	720	432	60.0%
Montana	176	150	85.2%	171	154	90.1%
Nebraska	274	26	9.5%	274	43	15.7%
Nevada	327	316	96.6%	433	399	92.1%
New Hampshire	16	3	18.8%	19	3	15.8%
New Jersey	621	319	51.4%	606	315	52.0%
New Mexico	636	568	89.3%	630	574	91.1%
New York	3,753	3,481	92.8%	3,890	3,633	93.4%
North Carolina	1,327	941	70.9%	1,218	955	78.4%

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TABLE 2: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up Rate in Schools¹ for School Years (SY) 2019–2020 and 2020–2021

State	Eligible for CEP SY 2019–2020	Adopting CEP SY 2019–2020	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible SY 2019–2020	Eligible for CEP SY 2020–2021	Adopting CEP SY 2020–2021	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible SY 2020–2021
North Dakota	31	31	100.0%	42	37	88.1%
Ohio	1,280	1,022	79.8%	1,273	1,025	80.5%
Oklahoma	696	408	58.6%	483	306	63.4%
Oregon	493	353	71.6%	685	590	86.1%
Pennsylvania	1,459	1,112	76.2%	1,496	1,171	78.3%
Rhode Island	101	58	57.4%	91	61	67.0%
South Carolina	634	531	83.8%	617	531	86.1%
South Dakota	131	97	74.0%	134	102	76.1%
Tennessee	981	840	85.6%	1,528	831	54.4%
Texas	5,558	3,250	58.5%	5,666	3,700	65.3%
Utah	57	51	89.5%	58	54	93.1%
Vermont	64	53	82.8%	81	56	69.1%
Virginia	1,085	511	47.1%	1,210	782	64.6%
Washington	629	314	49.9%	639	394	61.7%
West Virginia	615	545	88.6%	598	558	93.3%
Wisconsin	804	468	58.2%	752	494	65.7%
Wyoming	15	14	93.3%	15	14	93.3%
US Total	44,373	30,620	69.0%	48,777	33,171	68.0%

¹ For the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 school year data, schools are defined as eligible if they have an identified student percentage (ISP) of 40 percent or higher, or if they adopted community eligibility.

² The total number of schools eligible for, and the percentage of those adopting, CEP for the 2019–2020 school year has been updated from the original publication of *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2019–2020* (Food Research & Action Center, May 2020) to reflect the revised data provided by the Delaware Department of Education. The U.S. total number of schools eligible and participating were adjusted based on the Delaware revision, but the change did not affect the U.S. total percentage of schools adopting community eligibility in the 2019–2020 school year.

TABLE 3: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up Rate by Schools' Identified Student Percentage (ISP)¹ for School Year 2020–2021

State	Total Adopting	Eligible: 40 – <50%	Adopting: 40 – <50%	Percentage Adopting: 40 – <50%	Eligible: 50 – <60%	Adopting: 50 – <60%	Percentage Adopting: 50 – <60%	Eligible: 60%+	Adopting: 60%+	Percentage Adopting: 60%+
Alabama	250	38	20	52.6%	167	71	42.5%	263	159	60.5%
Alaska	216	45	34	75.6%	39	37	94.9%	118	110	93.2%
Arizona	500	282	118	41.8%	249	187	75.1%	232	189	81.5%
Arkansas	255	228	98	43.0%	134	92	68.7%	102	65	63.7%
California	3,777	1,115	450	40.4%	1,314	1,009	76.8%	2,214	2,024	91.4%
Colorado	108	178	20	11.2%	98	32	32.7%	64	46	71.9%
Connecticut	426	145	105	72.4%	119	100	84.0%	229	221	96.5%
District of Columbia	166	24	21	87.5%	121	121	100.0%	25	24	96.0%
Delaware	116	43	36	83.7%	68	68	100.0%	12	12	100.0%
Florida	1,440	395	81	20.5%	405	86	21.2%	1,997	1,273	63.7%
Georgia	819	151	70	46.4%	298	278	93.3%	500	471	94.2%
Hawaii	80	29	3	10.3%	33	29	87.9%	48	48	100.0%
Idaho	62	69	45	65.2%	15	11	73.3%	6	5	83.3%
Illinois	1,693	514	106	20.6%	590	298	50.5%	1,665	1,289	77.4%
Indiana	515	236	47	19.9%	268	180	67.2%	377	288	76.4%
Iowa	177	145	8	5.5%	128	90	70.3%	108	79	73.1%
Kansas	44	41	7	17.1%	64	33	51.6%	20	4	20.0%
Kentucky	1,060	167	145	86.8%	285	277	97.2%	610	598	98.0%
Louisiana	1,087	111	68	61.3%	273	250	91.6%	779	769	98.7%
Maine ²	73	Not Reported	Not Reported	—	Not Reported	Not Reported	—	Not Reported	Not Reported	—
Maryland	364	92	81	88.0%	106	99	93.4%	188	183	97.3%
Massachusetts	720	159	89	56.0%	140	120	85.7%	524	511	97.5%
Michigan	1,466	479	147	30.7%	510	351	68.8%	1,230	967	78.6%
Minnesota	153	88	23	26.1%	57	21	36.8%	167	109	65.3%
Mississippi	390	122	0	0.0%	130	51	39.2%	387	339	87.6%
Missouri	432	252	76	30.2%	171	110	64.3%	295	242	82.0%
Montana	154	46	34	73.9%	45	41	91.1%	78	77	98.7%
Nebraska	43	111	10	9.0%	72	11	15.3%	90	19	21.1%
Nevada	399	148	125	84.5%	132	127	96.2%	153	147	96.1%
New Hampshire	3	13	1	7.7%	5	1	20.0%	1	1	100.0%
New Jersey	315	251	69	27.5%	151	74	49.0%	205	171	83.4%
New Mexico	574	89	41	46.1%	362	355	98.1%	180	178	98.9%
New York	3,633	379	251	66.2%	342	297	86.8%	3,169	3,084	97.3%

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TABLE 3: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up Rate by Schools' Identified Student Percentage (ISP)¹ for School Year 2020–2021

State	Total Adopting	Eligible: 40 – <50%	Adopting: 40 – <50%	Percentage Adopting: 40 – <50%	Eligible: 50 – <60%	Adopting: 50 – <60%	Percentage Adopting: 50 – <60%	Eligible: 60%+	Adopting: 60%+	Percentage Adopting: 60%+
North Carolina	955	340	154	45.3%	268	213	79.5%	571	544	95.3%
North Dakota	37	10	6	60.0%	10	9	90.0%	20	19	95.0%
Ohio	1,025	341	200	58.7%	284	226	79.6%	645	596	92.4%
Oklahoma	306	290	171	59.0%	129	100	77.5%	61	30	49.2%
Oregon	590	538	502	93.3%	74	67	90.5%	40	21	52.5%
Pennsylvania	1,171	334	138	41.3%	283	219	77.4%	804	748	93.0%
Rhode Island	61	26	6	23.1%	25	18	72.0%	39	35	89.7%
South Carolina	531	125	67	53.6%	208	187	89.9%	285	277	97.2%
South Dakota	102	44	19	43.2%	25	20	80.0%	65	63	96.9%
Tennessee	831	186	164	88.2%	316	310	98.1%	357	356	99.7%
Texas	3,700	945	122	12.9%	1,418	880	62.1%	3,307	2,697	81.6%
Utah	54	7	7	100.0%	30	30	100.0%	21	17	81.0%
Vermont	56	46	31	67.4%	18	13	72.2%	11	5	45.5%
Virginia	782	432	171	39.6%	505	367	72.7%	274	244	89.1%
Washington	394	247	93	37.7%	247	178	72.1%	147	122	83.0%
West Virginia	558	186	159	85.5%	336	328	97.6%	76	71	93.4%
Wisconsin	494	221	48	21.7%	182	124	68.1%	353	322	91.2%
Wyoming	14	6	6	100.0%	3	2	66.7%	6	6	100.0%
US Total ³	33,171	10,509	4,493	42.8%	11,252	8,198	72.9%	23,118	19,875	86.0%

¹In addition to the states that did not report the identified student percentage (ISP) that community eligibility schools use for federal reimbursements for all adopting schools, some states reported ISPs for adopting schools that are below the 40 percent eligibility threshold (35 schools in Alaska, six schools in Arizona, 294 schools in California, 10 schools in Colorado, one school in Idaho, 40 schools in Kentucky, one school in Maryland, one school in Michigan, four schools in Missouri, two schools in Montana, three schools in Nebraska, one school in New Jersey, one school in New York, 44 schools in North Carolina, three schools in North Dakota, three schools in Ohio, five schools in Oklahoma, 66 schools in Pennsylvania, two schools in Rhode Island, one school in Tennessee, one school in Texas, seven schools in Vermont, and one school in Washington). These schools are not included in the total number of adopting schools by each ISP category. Schools with an ISP below 40 percent can participate in community eligibility as part of a group of schools with a combined reach of the 40 percent threshold or as part of a "grace year," which is the year following a school's four-year CEP cycle.

² Maine did not report the identified student percentages that community eligibility schools use for claiming federal reimbursements for meals served.

³ The data referenced in footnotes 1 and 2 account for the difference between the U.S. total number of adopting schools and the total number of adopting schools by identified student percentage category.

TABLE 4: Student Enrollment for School Years (SY) 2014–2015,¹ 2015–2016,^{2,3} 2016–2017,⁴ 2017–2018,⁵ 2018–2019,⁶ 2019–2020,⁷ and 2020–2021⁸

State	Enrollment SY 2014–2015	Enrollment SY 2015–2016	Enrollment SY 2016–2017	Enrollment SY 2017–2018	Enrollment SY 2018–2019	Enrollment SY 2019–2020	Enrollment SY 2020–2021	Change SY 2019–2020 to SY 2020–2021
Alabama	180,789	196,802	195,853	208,748	208,929	208,068	101,387	-106,681
Alaska	27,666	29,234	34,106	36,575	37,244	36,560	38,089	1,529
Arizona	30,763	55,048	94,229	116,488	145,273	178,535	193,750	15,215
Arkansas	791	20,060	55,605	71,475	80,732	91,510	104,128	12,618
California	113,513	435,900	748,533	799,646	1,690,225	1,944,304	2,207,703	263,399
Colorado	12,455	34,920	36,198	39,244	39,950	39,028	40,165	1,137
Connecticut	66,524	105,547	110,322	118,067	151,552	175,155	208,824	33,669
District of Columbia	47,013	51,524	56,143	58,085	62,424	61,909	65,025	3,116
Delaware ⁹	46,096	50,837	56,306	58,154	62,920	61,047	61,156	109
Florida	274,071	474,006	579,138	705,602	858,135	872,443	913,549	41,106
Georgia	354,038	420,383	467,411	472,296	490,319	510,532	494,963	-15,569
Hawaii	2,640	4,650	20,150	28,750	28,994	27,747	33,120	5,373
Idaho	18,828	32,299	33,058	33,898	28,876	21,953	21,646	-307
Illinois	552,751	672,831	685,101	725,241	731,062	762,195	804,574	42,379
Indiana	96,604	117,187	127,405	136,855	172,969	224,192	247,399	23,207
Iowa	32,103	46,021	50,589	53,880	67,192	81,424	83,660	2,236
Kansas	5,992	19,641	22,661	25,722	26,338	26,038	13,563	-12,475
Kentucky	279,144	385,043	436,419	479,450	501,059	522,512	539,460	16,948
Louisiana	146,141	217,496	341,492	455,318	399,190	493,727	3,449	-490,278
Maine ^{10,11}	5,284	17,977	20,411	20,435	23,733	19,975	Not Reported	—
Maryland	7,624	94,496	99,484	103,814	106,218	102,788	171,613	68,825
Massachusetts	134,071	200,948	238,872	260,364	282,030	301,465	274,211	-27,254
Michigan	266,249	275,579	273,071	287,801	418,447	466,540	544,806	78,266
Minnesota	20,688	49,944	57,003	57,957	63,057	51,818	53,982	2,164
Mississippi	136,095	148,781	151,815	147,677	164,297	145,097	162,110	17,013
Missouri	106,126	111,319	121,962	134,996	139,884	143,692	142,542	-1,150
Montana	15,802	21,161	23,290	26,180	24,777	21,741	22,340	599
Nebraska	180	2,425	4,277	7,411	7,276	6,173	12,100	5,927
Nevada	7,917	15,970	71,345	95,001	100,957	218,746	293,179	74,433
New Hampshire	—	644	1,125	1,082	1,100	652	621	-31
New Jersey	99,840	107,277	127,108	140,199	153,533	144,312	143,586	-726
New Mexico	119,300	149,057	164,569	177,388	175,756	186,116	187,301	1,185
New York	505,859	528,748	603,795	1,586,981	1,646,409	1,742,005	1,719,661	-22,344
North Carolina	310,850	357,307	367,705	433,204	418,820	455,237	463,666	8,429
North Dakota	5,284	5,661	5,698	6,039	6,525	7,424	9,420	1,996
Ohio	305,451	354,727	363,860	397,594	409,467	410,400	412,116	1,716

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TABLE 4: Student Enrollment for School Years (SY) 2014–2015,¹ 2015–2016,^{2,3} 2016–2017,⁴ 2017–2018,⁵ 2018–2019,⁶ 2019–2020,⁷ and 2020–2021⁸

State	Enrollment SY 2014–2015	Enrollment SY 2015–2016	Enrollment SY 2016–2017	Enrollment SY 2017–2018	Enrollment SY 2018–2019	Enrollment SY 2019–2020	Enrollment SY 2020–2021	Change SY 2019–2020 to SY 2020–2021
Oklahoma	43,433	66,323	104,162	148,994	152,695	154,078	99,447	-54,631
Oregon	103,601	129,635	130,336	129,766	122,553	133,615	240,052	106,437
Pennsylvania	327,573	394,630	426,984	470,275	509,073	540,877	565,014	24,137
Rhode Island	838	6,531	10,350	16,675	18,043	30,915	32,220	1,305
South Carolina	111,453	173,364	201,587	235,711	249,036	255,006	265,027	10,021
South Dakota	13,056	14,626	15,981	15,499	19,409	18,332	20,310	1,978
Tennessee	417,165	436,821	428,424	437,641	389,163	382,428	367,184	-15,244
Texas	941,262	1,015,384	984,976	1,184,559	1,566,088	1,873,513	2,111,019	237,506
Utah	7,019	8,565	8,880	12,353	20,148	20,900	19,194	-1,706
Vermont	7,386	12,751	13,508	13,946	13,768	12,053	12,239	186
Virginia	42,911	99,404	119,051	156,687	204,610	241,056	385,041	143,985
Washington	53,369	69,432	75,357	95,514	110,815	126,278	158,518	32,240
West Virginia	124,978	145,057	177,875	195,075	208,960	209,566	212,362	2,796
Wisconsin	133,232	146,330	156,519	158,325	165,513	172,782	188,219	15,437
Wyoming	1,255	1,255	1,370	1,500	1,886	1,931	2,043	112
US Total	6,663,073	8,531,558	9,701,469	11,780,137	13,677,429	14,936,390	15,466,753	530,363

¹ Data for the 2014–2015 school year are from *Take Up of Community Eligibility This School Year* (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, February 2015).

² Data for the 2015–2016 school year are from *Community Eligibility Adoption Rises for the 2015–2016 School Year, Increasing Access to School Meals* (Food Research & Action Center and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, updated May 2016).

³ *Community Eligibility Adoption Rises for the 2015–2016 School Year, Increasing Access to School Meals* (Food Research & Action Center and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, updated May 2016) contains data on enrollment in community eligibility schools in Guam. Community Eligibility Continues to Grow in the 2016–2017 School Year (Food Research & Action Center, March 2017) excludes Guam; therefore, the U.S. totals for the 2015–2016 school year have been adjusted.

⁴ Data for the 2016–2017 school year are from *Community Eligibility Continues to Grow in the 2016–2017 School Year* (Food Research & Action Center, March 2017). Some schools did not provide student enrollment information for the 2016–2017 school year: one school in California, two schools in Georgia, four schools in Idaho, three schools in Maine, 26 schools in Tennessee, and four schools in South Carolina.

⁵ Data for the 2017–2018 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2018–2019* (Food Research & Action Center, May 2019). Some schools did not provide student enrollment information for the 2017–2018 school year: 12 schools in Alaska, 19 schools in Louisiana, four schools in Mississippi, five schools in Oklahoma, one school in South Carolina, and two schools in Vermont.

⁶ Data for the 2018–2019 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2018–2019* (Food Research & Action Center, May 2019). Some schools did not provide student enrollment information for the 2018–2019 school year: four schools in Hawaii, 182 schools in Louisiana, 25 schools in Mississippi, 14 schools in South Carolina, and three schools in Utah.

⁷ Data for the 2019–2020 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2019–2020* (Food Research & Action Center, May 2020). Some schools did not provide student enrollment information for the 2019–2020 school year: 19 schools in Alabama, 11 schools in California, four schools in the District of Columbia, five schools in Indiana, two schools in Louisiana, seven schools in Maine, two schools in Massachusetts, 10 schools in Michigan, one school in Nevada, four schools in Oregon, 18 schools in South Carolina, one school in South Dakota, five schools in Texas, and one school in Virginia. The U.S. totals were adjusted accordingly.

⁸ Some schools did not provide student enrollment information for the 2020–2021 school year: eight schools in Alabama, 43 schools in California, six schools in Florida, eight schools in Georgia, one school in Idaho, one school in Louisiana, 149 schools in Massachusetts, two schools in Michigan, three schools in Missouri, one school in New Mexico, 115 schools in New York, four schools in South Carolina, five schools in Tennessee, eight schools in Texas, and one school in Washington.

⁹ The total number of students enrolled for the 2014–2015, 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2019–2020 school years have been updated from the original publication of *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2019–2020* (Food Research & Action Center, May 2020) to reflect the revised data provided by the Delaware Department of Education. The U.S. totals were adjusted accordingly.

¹⁰ Maine did not report student enrollment data for community eligibility schools for the 2020–2021 school year.

¹¹ Since Maine did not experience a decrease or increase in school adoption of community eligibility in the 2020–2021 school year (SY), the change in enrollment from SY 2019–2020 to SY 2020–2021 does not include Maine's enrollment data.

TABLE 5: Number of Schools Adopting the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for School Years (SY) 2014–2015,¹ 2015–2016,² 2016–2017,³ 2017–2018,⁴ 2018–2019,⁵ 2019–2020, and 2020–2021⁶

State	Adopting SY 2014–2015	Adopting SY 2015–2016	Adopting SY 2016–2017	Adopting SY 2017–2018	Adopting SY 2018–2019	Adopting SY 2019–2020	Adopting SY 2020–2021	Change SY 2019–2020 to SY 2020–2021
Alabama	347	392	391	425	444	445	250	-195
Alaska	123	137	174	213	208	208	216	8
Arizona	73	133	227	296	372	446	500	54
Arkansas	4	57	139	178	201	229	255	26
California	208	651	1,070	1,311	2,833	3,275	3,777	502
Colorado	34	82	91	101	105	105	108	3
Connecticut	133	212	228	241	307	364	426	62
District of Columbia	96	107	115	116	119	115	166	51
Delaware ⁷	95	108	117	116	212	116	116	0
Florida	548	831	1,001	1,142	1,356	1,374	1,440	66
Georgia	589	700	768	787	818	834	819	-15
Hawaii	6	25	43	65	69	68	80	12
Idaho	50	88	92	92	82	61	62	1
Illinois	1,041	1,322	1,363	1,499	1,541	1,588	1,693	105
Indiana	214	253	283	287	362	462	515	53
Iowa	78	110	119	123	156	176	177	1
Kansas	18	64	69	72	75	70	44	-26
Kentucky	611	804	888	948	984	1,028	1,060	32
Louisiana	335	484	741	968	1,016	1,029	1,087	58
Maine	21	59	72	71	87	73	73	0
Maryland	25	227	228	242	242	238	364	126
Massachusetts	294	462	525	574	613	685	720	35
Michigan	625	662	652	715	1,105	1,259	1,466	207
Minnesota	56	125	153	154	163	146	153	7
Mississippi	257	298	333	342	410	337	390	53
Missouri	298	330	367	402	420	427	432	5
Montana	93	127	138	158	157	150	154	4
Nebraska	2	9	15	26	26	26	43	17
Nevada	13	36	122	153	167	316	399	83
New Hampshire	-	2	3	3	4	3	3	0
New Jersey	197	227	270	306	331	319	315	-4
New Mexico	343	429	487	535	546	568	574	6
New York	1,246	1,351	1,561	3,381	3,565	3,481	3,633	152
North Carolina	648	752	787	914	882	941	955	14
North Dakota	23	24	25	26	29	31	37	6

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TABLE 5: Number of Schools Adopting the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for School Years (SY) 2014–2015,¹ 2015–2016,² 2016–2017,³ 2017–2018,⁴ 2018–2019,⁵ 2019–2020, and 2020–2021⁶

State	Adopting SY 2014–2015	Adopting SY 2015–2016	Adopting SY 2016–2017	Adopting SY 2017–2018	Adopting SY 2018–2019	Adopting SY 2019–2020	Adopting SY 2020–2021	Change SY 2019–2020 to SY 2020–2021
Ohio	739	842	918	998	998	1,022	1,025	3
Oklahoma	100	184	301	413	427	408	306	-102
Oregon	262	340	346	344	341	353	590	237
Pennsylvania	646	795	861	959	1,031	1,112	1,171	59
Rhode Island	1	10	21	34	37	58	61	3
South Carolina	226	348	412	471	515	531	531	0
South Dakota	142	109	124	89	97	97	102	5
Tennessee	862	924	909	914	836	840	831	-9
Texas	1,477	1,665	1,678	2,070	2,716	3,250	3,700	450
Utah	22	28	29	35	52	51	54	3
Vermont	32	56	60	68	62	53	56	3
Virginia	87	206	255	341	428	511	782	271
Washington	122	172	193	232	273	314	394	80
West Virginia	369	428	492	518	540	545	558	13
Wisconsin	348	381	415	422	438	468	494	26
Wyoming	5	5	7	10	11	14	14	0
US Total	14,184	18,173	20,678	24,900	28,809	30,620	33,171	2,551

¹ Data for the 2014–2015 school year are from *Take Up of Community Eligibility This School Year* (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, February 2015).

² Data for the 2015–2016 school year are from *Community Eligibility Adoption Rises for the 2015–2016 School Year, Increasing Access to School Meals* (Food Research & Action Center and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, updated May 2016).

³ Data for the 2016–2017 school year are from *Community Eligibility Continues to Grow in the 2016–2017 School Year* (Food Research & Action Center, March 2017).

⁴ Data for the 2017–2018 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2018–2019* (Food Research & Action Center, May 2019).

⁵ Data for the 2018–2019 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2018–2019* (Food Research & Action Center, May 2019).

⁶ See Table 2 for full notes on adopting schools in the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 school years.

⁷ The total number of schools participating in CEP for the 2014–2015, 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2019–2020 school years have been updated from the original publication of *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2019–2020* (Food Research & Action Center, May 2020) to reflect the revised data provided by the Delaware Department of Education. The Delaware revision did not affect the U.S. total percentage of schools adopting community eligibility in these school years.



Food Research & Action Center
1200 18th Street, NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036

202.986.2200
www.frac.org

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