



Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools

School Year 2025–2026

JULY 2026 | WWW.FRAC.ORG

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About FRAC

[The Food Research & Action Center](#) 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. To learn more, visit [FRAC.org](#) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Threads](#), and [Bluesky](#).



Community Eligibility Participation 2025–2026



9,438

school districts had one or more schools adopting CEP, an increase of **566** school districts, or **6.4 percent**, from the 2024–2025 school year.



66.8 percent

of eligible school districts adopted CEP.



55,362

schools adopted CEP, an increase of **1,128** schools, or **2.1 percent**, from the 2024–2025 school year.



74.9 percent

of eligible schools adopted CEP.



27.6 million

children attended a CEP school, an increase of **386,019** children, or **1.4 percent**, from the 2024–2025 school year.



Executive Summary

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) allows high-need schools and school districts to offer breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge. It is an essential strategy for reducing hunger in schools and expanding children's access to nutritious school meals. Since its nationwide launch in the 2014–2015 school year, CEP participation has boomed, improving access to nutritious school meals for children across the nation. In the 2025–2026 school year, 55,362

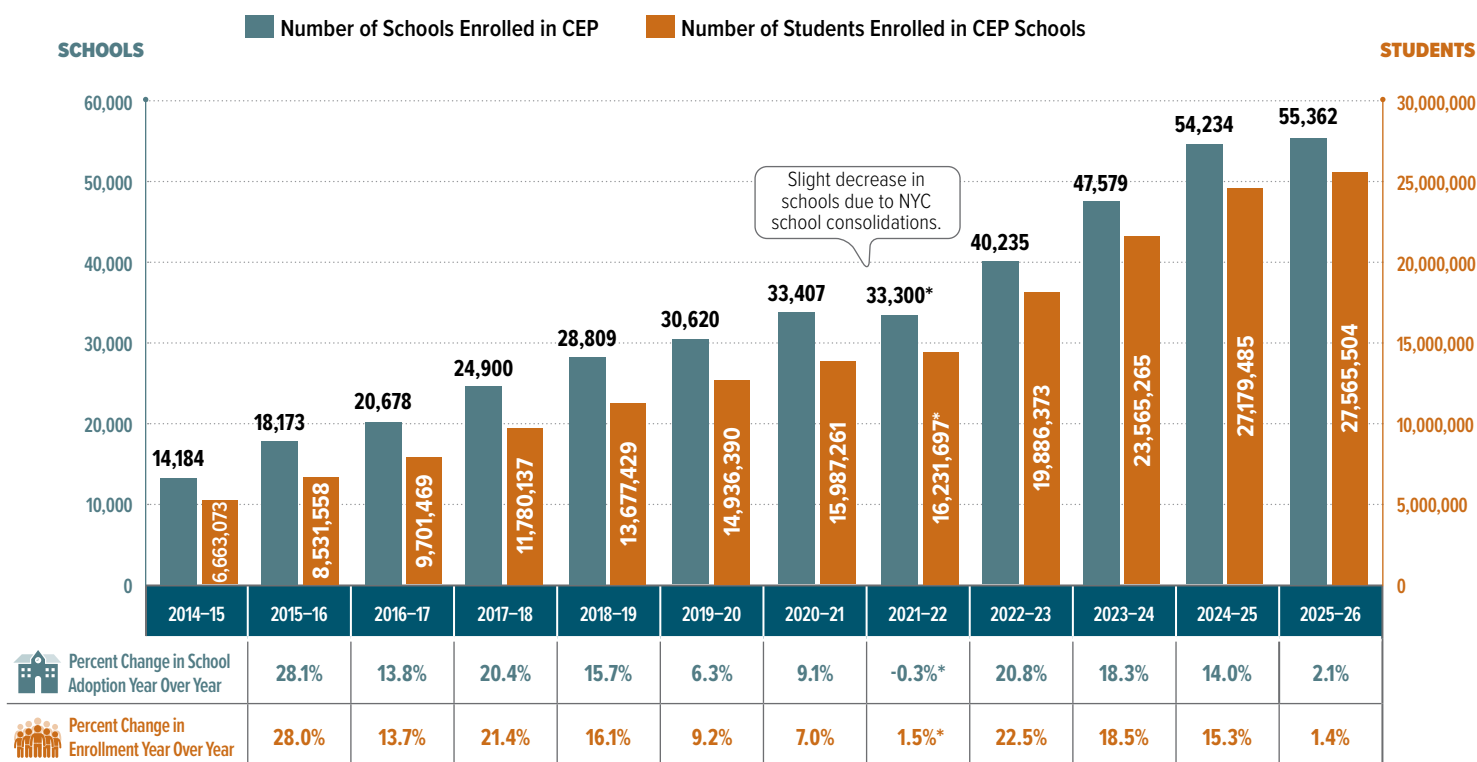
schools adopted CEP, an increase of 1,128 schools, or 2.1 percent, from the 2024–2025 school year.

CEP is a win for students, families, and schools. [Research](#) consistently shows that offering school meals to all children at no cost reduces childhood food insecurity, improves diet quality, and strengthens the foundation for lifelong health. CEP participation is also associated with [better school attendance](#), [improved student behavior](#), and [stronger academic](#)

[performance](#). And CEP benefits families as well: At a time when food and living costs remain high, families can count on school breakfast and lunch to help make ends meet.

CEP also streamlines school meals program administration. It eliminates school meal debt and reduces paperwork by removing the need to collect, process, and verify school meals applications. Instead, CEP schools are reimbursed based on their identified student percentage (ISP),

GRAPH 1: 12-Year Trend in CEP Adoption



*The number of students enrolled in CEP schools in 2021 increased even though there was a slight decrease in schools adopting CEP. This was driven by school consolidations in New York City.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

or the share of students who are automatically certified for free meals without a school meal application. ISP includes children who are [directly certified](#) for free school meals because their household participates in specific federal programs, most notably the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Despite its many benefits, significant barriers, particularly inadequate federal reimbursement, prevent many eligible schools from participating. These challenges are intensifying following the passage of the [2025 budget reconciliation law](#) (H.R. 1), which enacted severe and unprecedented cuts to SNAP that have [already caused millions of people to lose nutrition benefits](#).

Because CEP eligibility and federal reimbursement are tied to the share of students directly certified for free school meals, SNAP cuts threaten schools' ability to implement CEP. As fewer children are directly certified for free school meals, federal

reimbursement for CEP schools will decrease, making it harder for schools to sustain offering all students school meals at no charge. Some schools will no longer be eligible for CEP while others will be forced to drop CEP entirely. While states that have adopted [Healthy School Meals for All](#) policies are better positioned to sustain CEP participation, as SNAP cuts drive down ISPs, the cost of providing free school meals to all students will increasingly fall on states, placing even more strain on already tight budgets.

The solution is clear: Increase schools' ability to implement CEP so that more students, families, and schools can experience the benefits of Healthy School Meals for All. To protect students' access to healthy school meals in the short-term, Congress must [repeal the SNAP cuts](#) and [invest in CEP](#). In the long-term, Congress must [pass a national Healthy School Meals for All policy](#) to truly ensure no child faces hunger during the school day.

About This Report

This report analyzes CEP adoption — nationally and for each state and the District of Columbia — in the 2025–2026 school year, and is based on four measures:

1. the number of CEP-eligible and adopting schools and school districts;
2. the percent of eligible schools and districts that have adopted CEP;
3. the number and share of eligible schools that have adopted CEP based on the school's poverty level; and
4. the number of students attending a school that participates in CEP.

As a companion to this report, FRAC has compiled all data collected in an [online database](#) of eligible and adopting schools that can be searched by state and school district.



How Community Eligibility Works

Community eligibility allows high-need schools and school districts to offer school breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge regardless of income, increasing children's access to nutritious school meals and reducing the administrative burden of operating School Nutrition Programs. Instead of collecting school meal applications, CEP schools are reimbursed using a formula based on the identified student percentage — the percentage of students who are automatically eligible for free school meals without having to submit an application. Participating schools must offer both breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge, and are required to use non-federal funds to offset any additional costs, over and above federal reimbursements, of serving free meals to all students.

How Schools Can Participate

Any school, group of schools in a school district, or an entire school district with 25 percent or more “identified students” is eligible to participate. Identified students include:

- ▶ children directly certified for free school meals through data matching because their households receive SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations benefits, and in most states, Medicaid benefits (combined with an income test); and
- ▶ children who are certified for free school meals without an application because they are homeless, migrant, runaway, enrolled in Head Start, or in foster care.



How Schools Are Reimbursed

Although all meals are offered at no charge to all students in CEP schools, federal reimbursements are based on the school's, group of schools', or district's ISP. Identified students are a subset of the children who would be certified to receive free or reduced-price school meals if schools collected meal applications. For that reason, the ISP is multiplied by 1.6 to calculate the percentage of meals reimbursed at the federal free rate, and the remainder of meals are reimbursed at the lower, federal paid rate. For example, a school with 50 percent identified students would be reimbursed for 80 percent of the meals served at the free reimbursement rate ($50 \times 1.6 = 80$), and 20 percent at the paid rate. There is no reduced-price reimbursement rate in CEP schools.

CEP Benefits



Eases administrative burdens.

Schools no longer collect, process, or verify school meal applications, reducing administrative burdens and saving significant time that school nutrition professionals can reinvest in other areas, such as improving meal quality.



Improves operational efficiencies.

Schools do not need to track each meal served by fee category (free, reduced-price, paid), and instead report total meal counts, easing meal service operations. School nutrition staff do not need to collect fees from students who are eligible for reduced-price or paid school meals, allowing students to move through cafeteria lines faster, and ensuring that more children can be served.



Increases meal participation.

Offering meals at no charge to all students increases participation among all students because it eliminates any perception that the school meals programs are just for children from households with low incomes.



Supports school nutrition services' finances.

In addition to increased participation, schools no longer accrue school meal debt for reduced-price and paid students, and they do not have to follow up with families to collect unpaid school meal fees.



Key Findings for the 2025–2026 School Year

The number of schools participating in CEP increased in the 2025–2026 school year, but the pace of growth slowed substantially compared with recent years:



9,438 school districts had one or more schools adopting CEP, an increase of **566 school districts**, or **6.4 percent**, from the 2024–2025 school year.



14,123 school districts were eligible to adopt CEP this school year, **2.5 percent** more than were eligible in the 2024–2025 school year.



66.8 percent of eligible **school districts** adopted CEP.



74.9 percent of eligible **schools** adopted CEP.



73,939 schools were eligible to adopt CEP this school year, **0.7 percent** more than were eligible in the 2024–2025 school year.



55,362 schools adopted CEP, an increase of **1,128 schools**, or **2.1 percent**, from the 2024–2025 school year.



25,942 CEP-participating schools, or **46.9 percent**, had an identified student percentage of 60 percent or greater.



27.6 million children attended a CEP school, an increase of **386,019 children**, or **1.4 percent**, from the 2024–2025 school year.



School District and School Adoption

Nationally, 9,438 school districts, 66.8 percent of those eligible, and 55,362 schools, 74.9 percent of those eligible, adopted CEP in the 2025–2026 school year. New Mexico had 100 percent of eligible schools and school districts adopting CEP in 2025–2026, due in part to the state’s [Healthy School Meals for All](#) policy, which provides state funding to help offset the cost of offering all children school meals at no charge. West Virginia also maintained high school district-level adoption, with 100 percent of eligible school districts participating. West Virginia’s share of eligible schools participating in CEP decreased slightly this year, going from 99.2 percent of eligible schools participating in 2024–2025 to 88.8 percent of eligible schools participating in 2025–2026. This drop may be attributed to [decreasing public school enrollment](#) and subsequent school consolidations, which reduced the total number of schools adopting CEP this year compared to last year, as well as a 10.8 percent increase in the number of schools eligible to participate (68 additional schools). In total, 29 states exceeded the national school district adoption average of 66.8 percent.

Following New Mexico, Oregon, New York, Vermont, and Massachusetts ranked next in the percent of eligible schools adopting CEP this school year. Oregon had 99.6 percent of eligible schools participate (1,206 schools); Vermont had 99.3 percent of eligible schools participate (298 schools); New York had 99.4 percent of eligible schools participate (4,507 schools); and Massachusetts had 98.9 percent of eligible schools participate (1,431 schools). Like New Mexico, Vermont, New York, and Massachusetts all have [Healthy School Meals for All](#) policies. Similarly, Oregon’s [Community Eligibility Provision Incentive Reimbursement Program](#) supports schools with lower ISPs in implementing CEP by covering the gap between the federal

KEY FINDINGS FOR THE 2025–2026 SCHOOL YEAR CONTINUED

free reimbursement rate and the state’s goal of reimbursing 90 percent of meals at the federal free rate. Overall, 22 states exceeded the national school-level adoption average of 74.9 percent.

Maine (209.7 percent), New Jersey (70 percent), Idaho (52 percent), Arkansas (50.8 percent), and Wyoming (30.6 percent) saw the largest percentage increases in school-level adoption. For Maine, New Jersey, Idaho, and Arkansas, this growth was likely driven by initiating Medicaid Direct Certification in the 2024–2025 school year, which increased schools’ ISP, and in turn, the amount of federal reimbursement CEP schools received, making CEP implementation more financially feasible. Wyoming, which initiated [Medicaid Direct Certification](#) in the 2023–2024 school year, has seen significant growth in the number of schools adopting CEP over the last two years, going from 24 participating schools in the 2023–2024 school year to 64 schools in the 2025–2026 school year, a 167 percent increase in CEP adoption since initiating Medicaid Direct Certification.

Seventeen states and the District of Columbia decreased the total number of schools implementing CEP in 2025–2026 compared to 2024–2025: Alaska, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Florida, Illinois, and Nevada experienced the largest decrease in the number of schools participating in CEP in the 2025–2026 school year. In Florida, 289 fewer schools, a 9.8 percent decrease, and seven fewer school districts, a 2.6 percent decrease, adopted CEP in 2025–2026 compared to 2024–2025. In Illinois, 47 fewer schools, a 2 percent decrease, and 15 fewer school districts, a 3.1 percent decrease, adopted CEP in the 2025–2026 school year compared to the previous school year. In Nevada, two additional

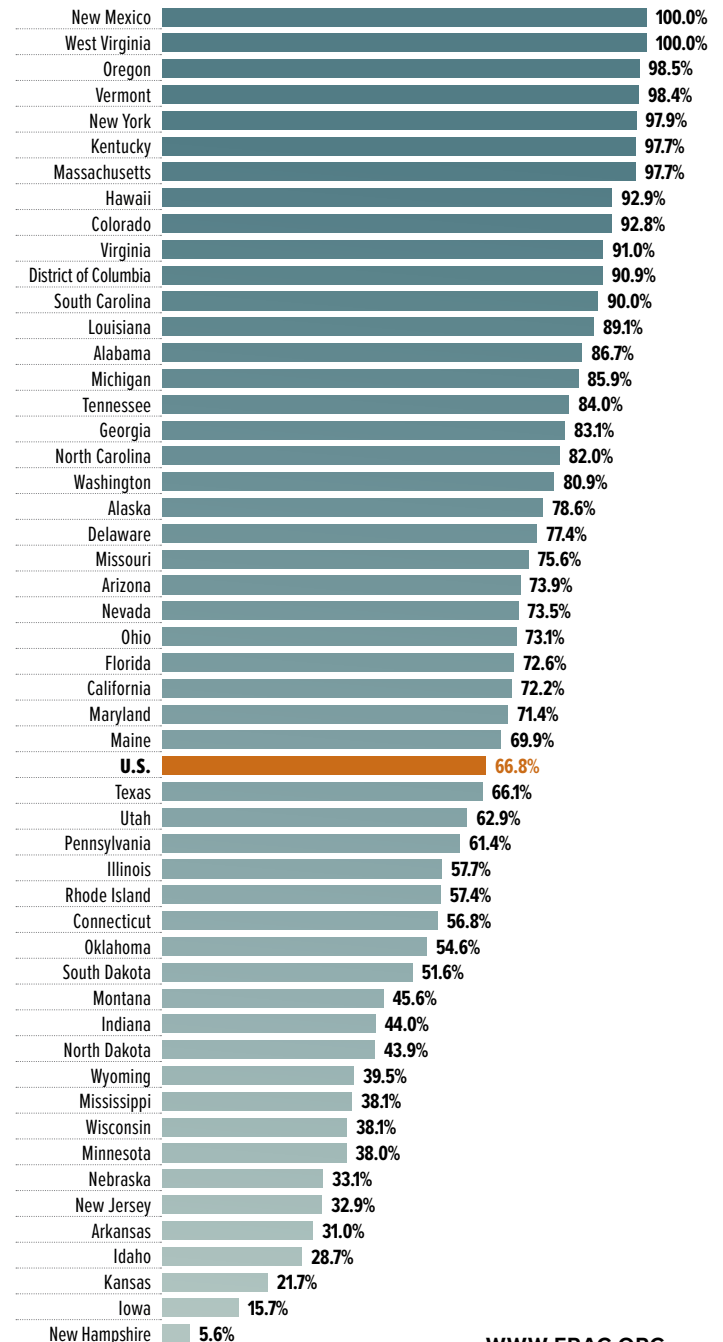
school districts participated in CEP in 2025–2026; however, 30 fewer schools participated, marking a 5.4 percent decrease in school-level adoption compared to the 2024–2025 school year.

Florida had the largest decrease in the total number of schools participating in CEP from 2024–2025 to the 2025–2026. Of the 289 schools no longer participating in CEP, 239 of them (82.7 percent) come from three school districts: [Broward County School Board](#), Duval County School Board, and Pasco County School Board. In the 2024–2025 school year, Broward County School Board used CEP and pandemic-era funding to offer every student school meals at no charge. However, when COVID funding ran out, Broward County withdrew from CEP and returned to the traditional tiered-reimbursement system of qualifying children for free, reduced-price, or paid meals based on their individual household income. The school district could have continued using CEP to offer free meals to all students at many of their eligible schools but chose not to, favoring an all or nothing approach to implementation, even if it meant many students in the district lost their connection to free school meals.

As a result, 180 Broward County schools dropped CEP in the 2025–2026 school year; however, it should be noted that [Broward County recently announced](#) that it would reintroduce CEP in 141 schools in the 2026–2027 school year. Similarly, when pandemic-era funding was exhausted, [Duval County School Board](#) and [Pasco County School Board](#) decreased the number of schools participating in CEP by 28 and 31 schools respectively, but continued CEP in schools where it was financially feasible.

In addition to decreasing student enrollment and subsequent school closures, low (below 40 percent) or decreasing ISPs likely contributed to some

GRAPH 2: Percentage of Eligible School Districts Adopting CEP in School Year 2025–2026



KEY FINDINGS FOR THE 2025–2026 SCHOOL YEAR CONTINUED

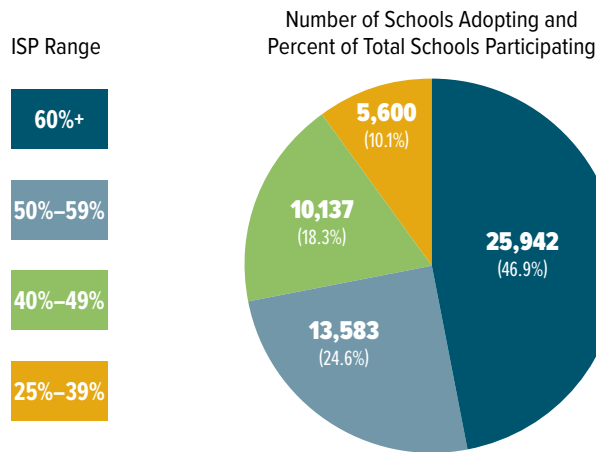
previously participating schools dropping CEP in the 2025–2026 school year.¹ For example, eight schools in Connecticut that participated in CEP in 2024–2025 did not adopt CEP in 2025–2026. All these schools previously participated in the 25 percent to 40 percent ISP range, suggesting that the federal reimbursement at lower ISPs was insufficient to cover the cost of offering all children free school meals. Similarly, 17 Kentucky schools that participated in the 2024–2025 school year did not adopt CEP in 2025–2026. Fourteen of those schools (82.4 percent) had ISPs in the 25 percent–40 percent ISP range. Iowa, Nevada, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin demonstrated similar trends, with most schools that dropped CEP in 2025–2026 having ISPs below 40 percent.

School Adoption by Poverty Level

Schools with higher poverty levels, reflected in higher ISPs, are better positioned to adopt CEP and sustain it financially under the current federal reimbursement structure. Schools with ISPs at or above 60 percent continued to show the strongest CEP adoption rates, consistent with prior years. In the 2025–2026 school year, 25,942 schools with ISPs greater than 60 percent adopted CEP, representing 99.6 percent of all eligible schools at this poverty level. In 2025–2026, 13,583 schools, 90.1 percent of those eligible, in the 50 percent to 59 percent ISP range; 10,137 schools, 74.1 percent of those eligible, in the 40 to 49 percent ISP range, and 5,600 schools, 35.5 percent, in the 25 to 39 percent range, adopted CEP. New Mexico, Oregon, New York, Massachusetts, and Vermont had the highest adoption rates at the lowest eligibility levels, with over 97.6 percent of eligible schools in the 25 percent to 39 percent ISP range in each state adopting CEP in 2025–2026. All of those states either subsidize CEP schools or have

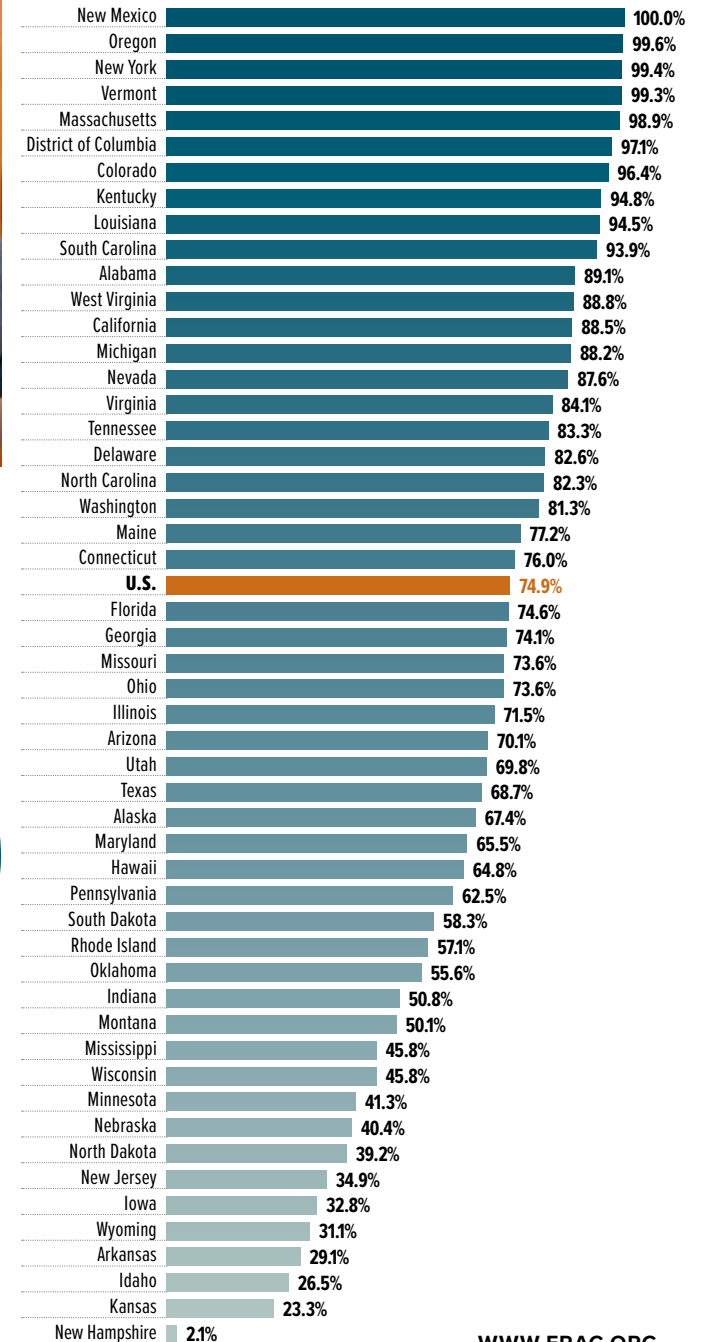


GRAPH 3: CEP Adoption by ISP³



a Healthy School Meals for All policy. Conversely, when we exclude all nine states with a Healthy School Meals for All policy or the two states with a CEP subsidy (e.g., [Washington](#)² and Oregon), only 12.4 percent of eligible schools in the 25 to 39 percent ISP range adopted CEP in 2025–2026.

GRAPH 4: Percentage of Eligible Schools Adopting Community Eligibility in School Year 2025–2026



Medicaid Direct Certification

[Medicaid Direct Certification](#)⁴ supports CEP adoption by increasing schools' ISPs, which in turn increases federal reimbursement and strengthens the financial sustainability of offering all students school meals at no charge.

In the 2024–2025 school year, six new states began directly certifying children using Medicaid and household income data: Arkansas, Idaho, Maine, New Jersey, North Dakota, and Rhode Island. Five of these states experienced increases in the number of schools adopting CEP in 2025–2026, collectively reaching more than 237,993 additional children through CEP compared to the previous school year. Rhode Island saw a 46.9 percent increase in the number of schools eligible to adopt CEP after implementing Medicaid Direct Certification (67 additional schools); however, adoption remained flat with 120 schools participating in 2024–2025 and 2025–2026. This is likely because most newly eligible schools — 55.2 percent — had ISPs less than 40 percent, making CEP financially challenging without additional funding sources.

As of the 2025–2026 school year, 44 states use Medicaid and household income data to directly certify children for school meals. Six states — Alaska, Hawaii, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, and South Dakota — and the District of Columbia are not participating. Expanding Medicaid Direct Certification to all states and the District of Columbia, as proposed in the School Meal Modernization and Hunger Elimination Act ([S.1431](#)), would increase children's access to healthy school meals, reduce the administrative burden of processing school meal applications, and support schools' abilities to implement CEP.

Medicaid Unwinding

The 2020 Families First Coronavirus Response Act required states to keep most [Medicaid enrollees continuously covered](#) in exchange for enhanced federal funding. This policy sharply reduced Medicaid churning — the cyclical process where a Medicaid recipient temporarily loses coverage often because of administrative barriers or minor fluctuations in income — and ensured stable health coverage for tens of millions of people during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) enrollment grew from [71.4 million in February 2020 to 91.8 million by October 2022](#), an increase of 20.4 million people, driven largely by the continuous coverage requirement. Continuous enrollment ended in March 2023, triggering a large-scale unwinding process that caused millions of individuals to lose Medicaid access. While some individuals [lost Medicaid access](#) due to changing circumstances which rendered them no longer eligible, [many individuals lost Medicaid](#) due to burdensome administrative requirements regarding the redetermination process.

Since Medicaid unwinding began, [total enrollment in Medicaid and CHIP has fallen by 20 percent](#). Between February 2020 and January 2026, 22 states saw a decline in the share of children enrolled in these programs. In states that use Medicaid Direct Certification, drops in children's Medicaid enrollment can lower ISPs, which in turn affects schools' ability to adopt CEP. Schools that began CEP in the 2021–2022 school year, when continuous Medicaid coverage was still in place, felt the impact of unwinding by spring 2025 as they made CEP decisions for the 2025–2026 school year. Drops in Medicaid enrollment that negatively affected ISPs may have caused some schools to stop CEP. Because CEP operates on a four year cycle, the effects of Medicaid unwinding on ISPs and CEP adoption may continue through the 2027–2028 school year.

Student Enrollment

Nearly 27.6 million students benefited from CEP in the 2025–2026 school year, 386,019 more children, a 1.4 percent increase, compared to the 2024–2025 school year. This is the lowest percent increase in students enrolled in CEP schools since the program became available nationwide in the 2014–2015 school year. California saw the highest increase in students enrolled at CEP schools, 128,676 additional students, whereas Maine (204.2 percent), New Jersey (80.2 percent), Idaho (53.2 percent), Arkansas (51 percent), and Wyoming (29.6 percent) experienced the greatest percent growth in the number of students enrolled in CEP schools. These increases were likely driven by states initiating Medicaid Direct Certification in the 2023–2024 school year (Wyoming) and in the 2024–2025 school year (Maine, New Jersey, Idaho, and Arkansas).

Twenty states experienced a decrease in the number of students enrolled in CEP schools — Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Collectively, 373,809 fewer children were enrolled in CEP schools across these states. New Hampshire (175 fewer students, 28.8 percent decrease), Nebraska (12,692 fewer students, 13.8 percent decrease), Florida (232,636 fewer students, 10.7 percent decrease), Nevada (33,895 fewer students, 8.8 percent decrease), and Utah (2,165 fewer students, 8 percent decrease) experienced the largest percent decrease in students enrolled in CEP schools in the 2025–2026 school year compared to the 2024–2025 school year.

Sixteen of the 20 states with decreasing enrollment had fewer schools adopting CEP in the 2025–2026 school year (Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Iowa,

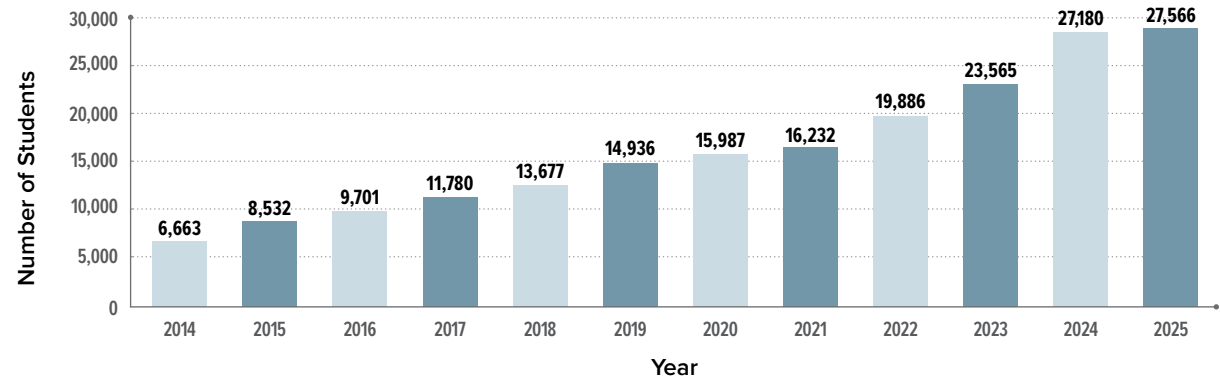
Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin), two states (New Mexico and Rhode Island) maintained the same number of CEP-participating schools between 2024–2025 and 2025–2026, and two states (Mississippi and Montana) increased the number of CEP-participating schools between 2024–2025 and 2025–2026. [Like many states across the nation](#), Mississippi and Montana are experiencing multiyear trends of declining public-school enrollment. [Statewide student enrollment in Mississippi](#) has decreased by nearly 4 percent, going from 442,000 enrolled students in the 2021–2022 school year to 424,534 enrolled students in the 2025–2026 school year. Similarly, [Montana](#) had 8,500 fewer students enrolled in public schools in 2026 than it did in 2023.

Conclusion

CEP has transformed school meals programs by reducing stigma, boosting participation, and ensuring that more students have access to healthy meals every school day. [Its positive impact is undeniable](#): CEP improves children’s diets, supports academic performance, eases pressure on family budgets, and ensures children have access to the nutrition they need to have a successful school day. [CEP also strengthens school meal operations](#). By cutting paperwork, eliminating meal debt, simplifying program management, and supporting school nutrition finances, CEP allows school nutrition professionals to focus on what matters most: providing students with nutritious, culturally relevant meals that support learning and well-being.

Yet despite its proven benefits and broad support, national CEP participation may be reaching its limit under the current federal reimbursement structure. Without additional investments, such as raising the multiplier and expanding Medicaid Direct

GRAPH 5: 12-Year Trend in Student Enrollment in Schools Participating in CEP (in Thousands)



Certification to all states, many schools, especially those with lower ISPs, simply cannot adopt CEP. As a result, far too many students are still missing out on the educational and health benefits of free school meals. And without new federal action, [including reversing the devastating SNAP cuts passed in H.R. 1](#), we may start seeing nationwide drops in CEP adoption as soon as the 2026–2027 school year.

[Several bills](#) now before Congress could prevent this decrease from occurring. First and foremost, Congress must repeal the budget reconciliation law’s cuts to SNAP by passing the Restoring Food Security for American Families and Farmers Act of 2025 ([H.R. 6088/S. 3281](#)). Children and families are already struggling with the loss of SNAP benefits amid record [high food and living costs](#). As more children lose access to SNAP and are no longer directly certified for free school meals, schools’ ability to implement CEP and offer all children healthy school meals at no cost will diminish, resulting in increased hunger at school and at home.

Congress must also strengthen school meal programs by investing in the tools that make them work. That includes [raising the CEP multiplier](#), [expanding direct certification](#) and [categorical eligibility](#) to automatically qualify children for free school meals, [increasing](#)

[federal reimbursement rates](#), [supporting schools’ capacity](#) for [local procurement](#) and [scratch cooking](#), and ultimately, making [Healthy School Meals for All](#) a reality nationwide.

Children can’t wait. Congress needs to act now to ensure that every student in every state has access to the nutrition they need to thrive in the classroom and beyond.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▶ [Community Eligibility Database](#)
- ▶ [Cuts to SNAP Threaten the Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- ▶ [School District Strategies for Improving Direct Certification](#)
- ▶ [Community Eligibility: Making It Work With Lower ISPs](#)
- ▶ [Community Eligibility Partial Implementation Guide](#)

For more information and additional resources to help determine if CEP is a possibility for your school district, go to [FRAC’s Community Eligibility webpage](#).

The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) obtained information on schools that were approved to operate the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) in the 2025–2026 school year from state agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. Between November 2025 and January 2026, FRAC collected these data:

- ▶ school name;
- ▶ school district name;
- ▶ identified student percentage (ISP) used to determine federal reimbursement; and
- ▶ student enrollment.

FRAC followed up with state agencies for data clarifications, and when necessary, to obtain missing data to the maximum extent practical.

Under federal law, states are required to publish, by [May 1 of each year, a list of CEP-eligible and near-eligible schools and districts](#). To examine CEP participation against eligibility, FRAC compared states' May 2025 eligibility lists to the participation files provided by the state agency upon request. In determining school district eligibility, FRAC treated a school 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 eligibility list above the 25 percent threshold. Schools that were missing from a state's eligibility list but appeared on its participation list were treated as eligible.

FRAC gave the states the option to report both eligible and adopting schools in the CEP participation data collection. This gave states the opportunity to update their eligible schools list to reflect any school closures or consolidations. Twenty-five states — Alaska, Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota,

Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming — and the District of Columbia provided both eligible and adopting schools for this analysis. Nine of those states had schools listed on both the eligible and adopting list:

- ▶ one in Alaska
- ▶ one in Connecticut
- ▶ five in Georgia
- ▶ 40 in Missouri
- ▶ one in Nevada
- ▶ three in North Dakota
- ▶ eight in Virginia
- ▶ 10 in Wisconsin
- ▶ one in Wyoming

For this analysis, schools listed in both files were treated as participating.

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

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture (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. School districts must submit more accurate information, which may be more complete, more recent, or both, when applying to adopt CEP.
2. A school can participate as a member of an adopting group (part or all of a school district). A group's eligibility is based on the ISP for the group as a whole.

The participation data requested from state agencies included whether schools have elected to adopt CEP, the ISP the schools use to determine the federal reimbursement for meals served, and the total number of students attending each adopting school. The ISP schools used to determine the federal reimbursement for meals served, sometimes called the group or claiming ISP, is reported for participating schools, while the individual or proxy ISP is reported

for non-participating schools. Two states — Nebraska and Tennessee — provided individual schools' ISP for CEP-participating schools. Therefore, these states may have schools indicated in ISP categories that do not accurately reflect the ISP used to determine federal reimbursements. The following states had CEP-participating schools that did not provide ISP data:

- ▶ 13 schools in California
- ▶ two schools in Missouri
- ▶ three schools in Nebraska
- ▶ one school in North Carolina
- ▶ one school in Pennsylvania
- ▶ two schools in South Carolina
- ▶ 12 schools in Tennessee
- ▶ one school in Vermont

Illinois did not include individual school ISP data in their May eligibility file; therefore, the share of schools adopting CEP at various ISP ranges could not be calculated. Illinois' CEP-participating schools were included in the total counts by ISP range (Table 3). Additionally, the following states had CEP-participating schools with ISPs greater than 0 percent but less than 25 percent. These schools were not included in the analysis of CEP adoption by ISP (Table 3):

- ▶ five schools in California
- ▶ 22 schools in Missouri
- ▶ one school in Nebraska
- ▶ 21 schools in Pennsylvania
- ▶ 16 schools in Tennessee

There are some instances where ISP data is withheld to protect personally identifiable information. Some states reported schools' free-claiming percentages (ISP multiplied by 1.6) rather than the ISP. The reverse calculation (free-claiming percentage divided by 1.6) was completed to determine the appropriate ISP category for these schools. While the exact grouped ISP is unknown in this scenario, it can be determined that the school is participating in CEP with an ISP of at least 62.5 percent.

There are instances where states may not have enrollment data for CEP-participating schools. In some instances, states may withhold enrollment data to protect personally identifiable information. Additionally, some CEP-participating schools may be specialty schools where children are enrolled and counted for in another location. In these instances, enrollment data may not be available. Enrollment data is missing for CEP-participating schools in the following states:

- ▶ 36 schools in Alabama
- ▶ eight schools in Arizona
- ▶ 40 schools in California
- ▶ three schools in Colorado
- ▶ one school in Florida
- ▶ five schools in Georgia
- ▶ two schools in Idaho
- ▶ one school in Illinois
- ▶ one school in Iowa
- ▶ 14 schools in Massachusetts
- ▶ two schools in Missouri
- ▶ three schools in Nebraska
- ▶ one school in Nevada
- ▶ 19 schools in New York
- ▶ 25 schools in Oregon
- ▶ 22 schools in South Carolina
- ▶ 10 schools in Tennessee
- ▶ 29 schools in Texas
- ▶ six schools in Vermont

- ▶ four schools in Virginia

In three states, participating schools reported suppressed enrollment values rather than exact counts:

- ▶ three schools in Kansas reported enrollment as “<10”
- ▶ 14 schools in Washington reported enrollment as “Identified N < 10”
- ▶ five schools in Utah reported enrollment as “N<20”

For Table 4 calculations, FRAC used the median value for each suppressed range:

- ▶ five students reported for enrollment in suppressed Kansas schools;
- ▶ five students reported for enrollment in suppressed Washington schools;
- ▶ 10 students reported for enrollment in suppressed Utah schools.

Additionally, Colorado student enrollment came primarily from [CDE’s 2025–26 School Level PK-12 Membership file](#) rather than the CEP participation file.

- ▶ seven schools in West Virginia

In some instances, states reported multiple schools as one participating site. In Mississippi, 17 records represented multiple sites. Those records were split into their individual school sites. Enrollment from the eligibility sheet was reported, and ISP from the participation sheet was reported. Nebraska reported six records at the district level rather than as individual school sites. For these districts, school-level records were added to reflect the reported schools.

In Michigan, some CEP sites are sponsored by districts other than the school’s home district. For interpretability, the final dataset reports the home district’s information, regardless of which district sponsors the site. Additionally, some schools include multiple CEP sites within the same building, sometimes served by different districts. To avoid inflating the total number of schools in the analysis, these sites were combined into a single school entry.

The CEP participation data for all years indicated in this report reflects the point in time when the data was received from the state agency and may differ slightly from other participation data sources.

Endnotes

- 1 FRAC conducted an additional analysis of changes in ISP for states that experienced a significant net decrease in schools adopting CEP from the 2024–2025 school year to the 2025–2026 school year: Alaska, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, Nevada, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. This year-over-year analysis is limited to schools that could be confidently matched across the 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 datasets. Schools that were new, closed, had changed identifiers, or could not otherwise be matched with confidence were excluded from this matched-record review. As a result, counts in this paragraph describe changes among matched schools and may differ from statewide net changes in CEP adoption.
- 2 Washington provides state funding to supplement the difference between the federal free and paid reimbursement rates in schools with ISPs 40 percent or greater. The state funding does not cover individual schools or groups of schools with ISPs between 25 percent and 40 percent.
- 3 100 CEP-participating schools did not provide ISP data or included schools with ISPs less than 25 percent and therefore were not counted in the school adoption by ISP analysis.
- 4 The [Medicaid Direct Certification Demonstration Project](#) allows schools in participating states to use Medicaid and household income data to automatically link eligible children to free or reduced-price school meals without having to submit a school meals application. Children directly certified for school meals using Medicaid data must also live in households whose incomes fall below the federal thresholds for free or reduced-price school meals. Only children that are directly certified for free school meals using Medicaid data are counted towards a school’s ISP.

Table 1: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up Rate in School Districts for School Years (SY) 2024–2025 and 2025–2026

State	School Year 2024–2025			School Year 2025–2026		
	Eligible for CEP	Adopting CEP	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible	Eligible for CEP¹	Adopting CEP	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible
Alabama	164	139	84.8%	165	143	86.7%
Alaska	38	37	97.4%	42	33	78.6%
Arizona	434	307	70.7%	437	323	73.9%
Arkansas	173	55	31.8%	255	79	31.0%
California	999	704	70.5%	994	718	72.2%
Colorado	181	161	89.0%	180	167	92.8%
Connecticut	111	63	56.8%	111	63	56.8%
Delaware	28	24	85.7%	31	24	77.4%
District of Columbia	50	42	84.0%	44	40	90.9%
Florida	381	275	72.2%	369	268	72.6%
Georgia	219	170	77.6%	207	172	83.1%
Hawaii	14	13	92.9%	14	13	92.9%
Idaho	63	23	36.5%	122	35	28.7%
Illinois	806	484	60.0%	813	469	57.7%
Indiana	418	181	43.3%	420	185	44.0%
Iowa	291	42	14.4%	261	41	15.7%
Kansas	156	47	30.1%	244	53	21.7%
Kentucky	177	172	97.2%	177	173	97.7%
Louisiana	147	130	88.4%	147	131	89.1%
Maine	119	37	31.1%	173	121	69.9%
Maryland	35	23	65.7%	35	25	71.4%
Massachusetts	288	278	96.5%	308	301	97.7%
Michigan	752	585	77.8%	832	715	85.9%
Minnesota	474	154	32.5%	426	162	38.0%
Mississippi	150	52	34.7%	138	54	39.1%
Missouri	282	106	37.6%	176	133	75.6%
Montana	195	79	40.5%	182	83	45.6%
Nebraska	202	49	24.3%	157	52	33.1%
Nevada	42	34	81.0%	49	36	73.5%
New Hampshire	41	3	7.3%	36	2	5.6%
New Jersey	297	83	27.9%	490	161	32.9%
New Mexico	202	200	99.0%	204	204	100.0%
New York	872	859	98.5%	923	904	97.9%
North Carolina	197	160	81.2%	200	164	82.0%
North Dakota	30	24	80.0%	57	25	43.9%
Ohio	871	534	61.3%	799	584	73.1%
Oklahoma	484	267	55.2%	518	283	54.6%
Oregon	203	188	92.6%	196	193	98.5%
Pennsylvania	657	438	66.7%	702	431	61.4%
Rhode Island	35	27	77.1%	47	27	57.4%
South Carolina	103	97	94.2%	110	99	90.0%
South Dakota	62	32	51.6%	64	33	51.6%
Tennessee	179	147	82.1%	181	152	84.0%
Texas	1,096	685	62.5%	1,063	703	66.1%
Utah	30	20	66.7%	35	22	62.9%
Vermont	61	60	98.4%	62	61	98.4%
Virginia	133	124	93.2%	133	121	91.0%
Washington	287	222	77.4%	278	225	80.9%
West Virginia	55	55	100.0%	56	56	100.0%
Wisconsin	461	166	36.0%	417	159	38.1%
Wyoming	39	15	38.5%	43	17	39.5%
U.S. Total	13,784	8,872	64.4%	14,123	9,438	66.8%

Table 2: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up Rate in Schools for School Years (SY) 2024–2025 and 2025–2026

State	School Year 2024–2025			School Year 2025–2026		
	Eligible for CEP	Adopting CEP	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible	Eligible for CEP¹	Adopting CEP	Percentage Adopting CEP of Total Eligible
Alabama	1,316	1,133	86.1%	1,332	1,187	89.1%
Alaska	309	228	73.8%	322	217	67.4%
Arizona	1,502	1,029	68.5%	1,519	1,065	70.1%
Arkansas	468	185	39.5%	960	279	29.1%
California	8,114	7,226	89.1%	8,163	7,227	88.5%
Colorado	1,476	1,357	91.9%	1,477	1,424	96.4%
Connecticut	688	518	75.3%	672	511	76.0%
Delaware	181	159	87.8%	213	176	82.6%
District of Columbia	213	202	94.8%	205	199	97.1%
Florida	3,700	2,956	79.9%	3,577	2,667	74.6%
Georgia	2,150	1,275	59.3%	1,821	1,349	74.1%
Hawaii	186	115	61.8%	182	118	64.8%
Idaho	189	75	39.7%	431	114	26.5%
Illinois	3,247	2,393	73.7%	3,280	2,346	71.5%
Indiana	1,690	817	48.3%	1,686	857	50.8%
Iowa	902	266	29.5%	806	264	32.8%
Kansas	552	177	32.1%	825	192	23.3%
Kentucky	1,211	1,157	95.5%	1,208	1,145	94.8%
Louisiana	1,301	1,230	94.5%	1,275	1,205	94.5%
Maine	320	114	35.6%	457	353	77.2%
Maryland	1,097	700	63.8%	1,100	720	65.5%
Massachusetts	1,407	1,375	97.7%	1,447	1,431	98.9%
Michigan	3,157	2,697	85.4%	3,065	2,703	88.2%
Minnesota	1,404	495	35.3%	1,204	497	41.3%
Mississippi	694	268	38.6%	613	281	45.8%
Missouri	1,074	444	41.3%	686	505	73.6%
Montana	567	250	44.1%	511	256	50.1%
Nebraska	665	216	32.5%	515	208	40.4%
Nevada	603	553	91.7%	597	523	87.6%
New Hampshire	107	3	2.8%	96	2	2.1%
New Jersey	1,034	343	33.2%	1,670	583	34.9%
New Mexico	859	857	99.8%	857	857	100.0%
New York	4,408	4,325	98.1%	4,533	4,507	99.4%
North Carolina	2,356	1,895	80.4%	2,344	1,928	82.3%
North Dakota	58	41	70.7%	125	49	39.2%
Ohio	2,605	1,653	63.5%	2,401	1,766	73.6%
Oklahoma	1,485	846	57.0%	1,622	902	55.6%
Oregon	1,227	1,190	97.0%	1,211	1,206	99.6%
Pennsylvania	2,605	1,827	70.1%	2,893	1,808	62.5%
Rhode Island	143	120	83.9%	210	120	57.1%
South Carolina	1,071	1,006	93.9%	1,089	1,023	93.9%
South Dakota	174	103	59.2%	168	98	58.3%
Tennessee	1,545	1,295	83.8%	1,533	1,277	83.3%
Texas	7,417	4,834	65.2%	7,179	4,932	68.7%
Utah	87	68	78.2%	96	67	69.8%
Vermont	294	293	99.7%	300	298	99.3%
Virginia	1,500	1,253	83.5%	1,476	1,242	84.1%
Washington	1,663	1,311	78.8%	1,635	1,330	81.3%
West Virginia	631	626	99.2%	699	621	88.8%
Wisconsin	1,611	686	42.6%	1,447	663	45.8%
Wyoming	177	49	27.7%	206	64	31.1%
U.S. Total	73,440	54,234	73.8%	73,939	55,362	74.9%

Table 3: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Take-Up Rate by Schools' Identified Student Percentage (ISP) for School Year 2025–2026

State	Total Adopting	25–39%			40–49%			50–59%			60%+		
		Eligible	Adopting	Percentage Adopting	Eligible	Adopting	Percentage Adopting	Eligible	Adopting	Percentage Adopting	Eligible	Adopting	Percentage Adopting
Alabama	1,187	73	7	9.6%	74	42	56.8%	206	182	88.3%	979	956	97.7%
Alaska	217	83	14	16.9%	90	71	78.9%	40	33	82.5%	109	99	90.8%
Arizona ⁵	1,065	231	13	5.6%	182	57	31.3%	280	226	80.7%	826	769	93.1%
Arkansas	279	226	3	1.3%	267	39	14.6%	309	148	47.9%	158	89	56.3%
California ^{3,4}	7,227	1,748	1,242	71.1%	2,189	2,026	92.6%	2,735	2,603	95.2%	1,473	1,338	90.8%
Colorado	1,424	631	595	94.3%	251	244	97.2%	200	197	98.5%	395	388	98.2%
Connecticut	511	158	31	19.6%	162	135	83.3%	104	99	95.2%	248	246	99.2%
Delaware	176	51	27	52.9%	81	78	96.3%	69	64	92.8%	12	7	58.3%
District of Columbia	199	11	6	54.5%	14	14	100.0%	10	9	90.0%	170	170	100.0%
Florida	2,667	497	90	18.1%	257	83	32.3%	823	680	82.6%	2,000	1,814	90.7%
Georgia	1,349	274	4	1.5%	140	22	15.7%	363	299	82.4%	1,044	1,024	98.1%
Hawaii	118	81	17	21.0%	29	29	100.0%	55	55	100.0%	17	17	100.0%
Idaho	114	232	0	0.0%	65	3	4.6%	38	20	52.6%	96	91	94.8%
Illinois ¹	2,346	N/A	32	N/A	N/A	262	N/A	N/A	461	N/A	N/A	1,591	N/A
Indiana	857	438	18	4.1%	394	135	34.3%	305	198	64.9%	549	506	92.2%
Iowa	264	426	13	3.1%	101	15	14.9%	162	132	81.5%	117	104	88.9%
Kansas	192	388	10	2.6%	167	41	24.6%	105	56	53.3%	165	85	51.5%
Kentucky	1,145	63	12	19.0%	138	131	94.9%	340	339	99.7%	667	663	99.4%
Louisiana	1,205	57	5	8.8%	169	155	91.7%	330	326	98.8%	719	719	100.0%
Maine	353	227	168	74.0%	145	123	84.8%	56	41	73.2%	29	21	72.4%
Maryland	720	272	2	0.7%	192	117	60.9%	176	152	86.4%	460	449	97.6%
Massachusetts	1,431	387	378	97.7%	217	215	99.1%	174	174	100.0%	669	664	99.3%
Michigan	2,703	599	448	74.8%	719	673	93.6%	542	502	92.6%	1,205	1,080	89.6%
Minnesota	497	567	72	12.7%	237	118	49.8%	187	121	64.7%	213	186	87.3%
Mississippi	281	216	8	3.7%	118	34	28.8%	147	118	80.3%	132	121	91.7%
Missouri ^{2,4}	505	218	82	37.6%	136	115	84.6%	111	96	86.5%	197	188	95.4%
Montana	256	240	49	20.4%	86	47	54.7%	53	39	73.6%	132	121	91.7%
Nebraska ^{2,3,4}	208	251	18	7.2%	106	55	51.9%	64	49	76.6%	90	82	91.1%
Nevada	523	81	26	32.1%	224	207	92.4%	264	262	99.2%	28	28	100.0%
New Hampshire	2	68	1	1.5%	22	1	4.5%	4	0	0.0%	2	0	0.0%
New Jersey	583	512	16	3.1%	316	45	14.2%	415	223	53.7%	427	299	70.0%
New Mexico	857	140	140	100.0%	335	335	100.0%	205	205	100.0%	177	177	100.0%
New York	4,507	902	891	98.8%	668	667	99.9%	405	402	99.3%	2,558	2,547	99.6%
North Carolina ^{3,5}	1,928	323	60	18.6%	208	100	48.1%	513	475	92.6%	1,299	1,292	99.5%
North Dakota	49	70	5	7.1%	21	10	47.6%	10	10	100.0%	24	24	100.0%
Ohio	1,766	584	193	33.0%	423	273	64.5%	385	329	85.5%	1,009	971	96.2%
Oklahoma	902	341	19	5.6%	263	94	35.7%	463	355	76.7%	555	434	78.2%
Oregon	1,206	364	363	99.7%	322	320	99.4%	331	329	99.4%	194	194	100.0%
Pennsylvania ^{3,4}	1,808	593	120	20.2%	559	273	48.8%	495	354	71.5%	1,224	1,039	84.9%
Rhode Island	120	61	2	3.3%	33	14	42.4%	30	21	70.0%	86	83	96.5%
South Carolina ³	1,023	48	6	12.5%	114	99	86.8%	278	270	97.1%	647	646	99.8%
South Dakota	98	56	1	1.8%	19	11	57.9%	23	19	82.6%	70	67	95.7%
Tennessee ^{2,3,4}	1,277	282	107	37.9%	264	216	81.8%	342	322	94.2%	617	604	97.9%
Texas	4,932	1,238	70	5.7%	1,120	577	51.5%	1,679	1,399	83.3%	3,142	2,886	91.9%
Utah	67	30	10	33.3%	19	19	100.0%	41	32	78.0%	6	6	100.0%
Vermont ³	298	85	83	97.6%	115	115	100.0%	81	81	100.0%	18	18	100.0%
Virginia	1,242	262	42	16.0%	410	396	96.6%	381	381	100.0%	423	423	100.0%
Washington	1,330	291	4	1.4%	1,021	1,006	98.5%	169	167	98.8%	154	153	99.4%
West Virginia	621	49	33	67.3%	104	83	79.8%	403	389	96.5%	143	116	81.1%
Wisconsin	663	602	17	2.8%	330	171	51.8%	166	138	83.1%	349	337	96.6%
Wyoming	64	126	27	21.4%	51	26	51.0%	14	1	7.1%	15	10	66.7%
U.S. Total	55,362	15,753	5,600	35.5%	13,687	10,137	74.1%	15,081	13,583	90.1%	26,038	25,942	99.6%

- Illinois did not provide ISP data in their eligibility file.
- Individual ISP was used for CEP-participating schools in two states — Nebraska and Tennessee. Therefore, these states may have schools indicated in ISP categories that do not accurately reflect the ISP used to determine federal reimbursements.
- ISP data was missing from schools in eight states. California reported 13 participating schools without an ISP; Missouri reported two participating schools without an ISP; Nebraska reported three participating schools without an ISP; North Carolina reported one participating school without an ISP; Pennsylvania reported one participating school without an ISP; South Carolina reported two participating schools without an ISP; Tennessee reported 12 participating schools without an ISP; and Vermont reported one participating school without an ISP. These schools were excluded from this table; therefore, the total number of participating schools indicated in each ISP category is less than the total number of schools adopting CEP statewide.
- Five states reported schools with ISPs below 25 percent: California, Missouri, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. Schools below 25 percent ISP were excluded from analysis for this table; therefore, the total number of participating schools indicated in each ISP category is less than the total number of schools adopting CEP statewide.
- Two states reported ISP values using suppressed or range-based values rather than exact numeric values. Arizona reported one school with an ISP value of “≥98%,” which was included in the 60% or higher ISP category. North Carolina reported 752 schools with ISP values of “62.5 and above,” which were included in the 60% or higher ISP category.

Table 4: Student Enrollment in CEP Schools, School Years (SY) 2014–2015 through 2025–2026^{1–12}

State	Enrollment												Change
	SY 2014–2015	SY 2015–2016	SY 2016–2017	SY 2017–2018	SY 2018–2019	SY 2019–2020	SY 2020–2021	SY 2021–2022	SY 2022–2023	SY 2023–2024	SY 2024–2025	SY 2025–2026	SY 2024–2025 to SY 2025–2026
Alabama	180,789	196,802	195,853	208,748	208,929	208,068	101,387	222,189	240,153	478,063	553,390	562,249	8,859
Alaska	27,666	29,234	34,106	36,575	37,244	36,560	38,089	33,465	35,400	36,569	38,622	42,353	3,731
Arizona	30,763	55,048	94,229	116,488	145,273	178,535	193,750	171,028	187,541	193,395	487,011	501,623	14,612
Arkansas	791	20,060	55,605	71,475	80,732	91,510	104,128	103,678	99,022	96,630	73,281	110,677	37,396
California	113,513	435,900	748,533	799,646	1,690,225	1,944,304	2,207,703	2,174,949	3,524,445	3,640,659	4,200,999	4,329,675	128,676
Colorado	12,455	34,920	36,198	39,244	39,950	39,028	40,165	33,404	33,798	217,348	580,959	593,684	12,725
Connecticut	66,524	105,547	110,322	118,067	151,552	175,155	208,824	206,444	233,711	237,123	251,217	244,011	-7,206
Delaware	46,096	50,837	56,306	58,154	62,920	61,047	61,156	58,917	65,164	65,265	80,610	93,980	13,370
District of Columbia	47,013	51,524	56,143	58,085	62,424	61,909	65,025	62,651	65,187	69,270	77,090	79,044	1,954
Florida	274,071	474,006	579,138	705,602	858,135	872,443	913,549	933,123	1,787,164	2,111,632	2,169,720	1,937,084	-232,636
Georgia	354,038	420,383	467,411	472,296	490,319	510,532	494,963	524,495	521,529	523,175	796,831	827,780	30,949
Hawaii	2,640	4,650	20,150	28,750	28,994	27,747	33,120	48,964	47,228	47,812	49,164	50,049	885
Idaho	18,828	32,299	33,058	33,898	28,876	21,953	21,646	22,852	17,142	21,726	25,055	38,386	13,331
Illinois	552,751	672,831	685,101	725,241	731,062	762,195	804,574	793,894	870,519	920,203	965,047	941,155	-23,892
Indiana	96,604	117,187	127,405	136,855	172,969	224,192	247,399	241,398	282,269	354,967	401,103	421,921	20,818
Iowa	32,103	46,021	50,589	53,880	67,192	81,424	83,660	83,234	107,405	114,818	122,946	122,385	-561
Kansas	5,992	19,641	22,661	25,722	26,338	26,038	13,563	10,912	9,648	51,981	59,002	62,497	3,495
Kentucky	279,144	385,043	436,419	479,450	501,059	522,512	539,460	532,628	549,813	584,417	600,027	587,699	-12,328
Louisiana	146,141	217,496	341,492	455,318	399,190	493,727	523,957	518,791	554,714	600,242	604,231	594,241	-9,990
Maine	5,284	17,977	20,411	20,435	23,733	19,975	Not Reported	Not Reported	21,882	22,053	33,795	102,821	69,026
Maryland	7,624	94,496	99,484	103,814	106,218	102,788	171,613	173,972	171,905	272,093	392,075	403,497	11,422
Massachusetts	134,071	200,948	238,872	260,364	282,030	301,465	274,211	330,684	389,055	517,861	631,248	656,210	24,962
Michigan	266,249	275,579	273,071	287,801	418,447	466,540	544,806	541,554	586,515	902,079	1,044,014	1,049,640	5,626
Minnesota	20,688	49,944	57,003	57,957	63,057	51,818	53,982	50,873	54,787	134,943	202,642	204,133	1,491
Mississippi	136,095	148,781	151,815	147,677	164,297	145,097	162,110	158,523	149,486	161,554	102,959	96,983	-5,976
Missouri	106,126	111,319	121,962	134,996	139,884	143,692	142,542	142,654	134,522	139,800	138,565	157,846	19,281
Montana	15,802	21,161	23,290	26,180	24,777	21,741	22,340	20,656	26,032	25,897	44,710	41,987	-2,723
Nebraska	180	2,425	4,277	7,411	7,276	6,173	12,100	12,090	67,351	70,821	92,254	79,562	-12,692
Nevada	7,917	15,970	71,345	95,001	100,957	218,746	293,179	271,504	362,578	365,431	383,714	349,819	-33,895
New Hampshire	0	644	1,125	1,082	1,100	652	621	0	569	727	607	432	-175
New Jersey	99,840	107,277	127,108	140,199	153,533	144,312	143,586	143,264	148,078	156,709	144,466	260,303	115,837
New Mexico	119,300	149,057	164,569	177,388	175,756	186,116	187,301	176,450	220,400	256,065	285,778	283,067	-2,711
New York	505,859	528,748	603,795	1,586,981	1,646,409	1,742,005	1,719,661	1,755,995	1,739,621	2,356,379	2,413,377	2,462,326	48,949
North Carolina	310,850	357,307	367,705	433,204	418,820	455,237	463,666	415,375	458,418	803,238	949,368	970,693	21,325
North Dakota	5,284	5,661	5,698	6,039	6,525	7,424	9,420	9,420	8,893	9,043	9,163	11,566	2,403
Ohio	305,451	354,727	363,860	397,594	409,467	410,400	412,116	416,274	431,250	415,865	684,387	733,611	49,224
Oklahoma	43,433	66,323	104,162	148,994	152,695	154,078	99,447	123,293	124,882	131,917	275,690	290,418	14,728
Oregon	103,601	129,635	130,336	129,766	122,553	133,615	240,052	245,362	277,613	293,812	486,657	499,772	13,115
Pennsylvania	327,573	394,630	426,984	470,275	509,073	540,877	565,014	556,188	704,553	801,618	859,396	856,412	-2,984

Table 4: Student Enrollment in CEP Schools, School Years (SY) 2014–2015 through 2025–2026^{1–12} (continued)

State	Enrollment												Change
	SY 2014–2015	SY 2015–2016	SY 2016–2017	SY 2017–2018	SY 2018–2019	SY 2019–2020	SY 2020–2021	SY 2021–2022	SY 2022–2023	SY 2023–2024	SY 2024–2025	SY 2025–2026	SY 2024–2025 to SY 2025–2026
Rhode Island	838	6,531	10,350	16,675	18,043	30,915	32,220	31,774	37,426	37,284	56,457	52,180	-4,277
South Carolina	111,453	173,364	201,587	235,711	249,036	255,006	265,027	254,439	240,894	570,148	602,988	622,686	19,698
South Dakota	13,056	14,626	15,981	15,499	19,409	18,332	20,310	20,824	15,661	15,532	15,540	15,478	-62
Tennessee	417,165	436,821	428,424	437,641	389,163	382,428	367,184	362,507	362,551	385,722	571,198	561,370	-9,828
Texas	941,262	1,015,384	984,976	1,184,559	1,566,088	1,873,513	2,111,019	2,088,076	2,343,402	2,600,579	2,720,652	2,764,449	43,797
Utah	7,019	8,565	8,880	12,353	20,148	20,900	19,194	15,159	19,066	27,133	27,133	24,968	-2,165
Vermont	7,386	12,751	13,508	13,946	13,768	12,053	12,239	13,045	21,019	51,371	71,420	72,206	786
Virginia	42,911	99,404	119,051	156,687	204,610	241,056	385,041	512,500	567,126	638,489	711,583	708,448	-3,135
Washington	53,369	69,432	75,357	95,514	110,815	126,278	158,518	195,397	545,548	579,899	602,614	607,173	4,559
West Virginia	124,978	145,057	177,875	195,075	208,960	209,566	212,362	225,803	216,667	226,092	238,455	237,186	-1,269
Wisconsin	133,232	146,330	156,519	158,325	165,513	172,782	188,219	189,098	204,917	226,678	240,832	235,528	-5,304
Wyoming	1,255	1,255	1,370	1,500	1,886	1,931	2,043	1,928	1,854	3,138	9,443	12,241	2,798
U.S. Total	6,663,073	8,531,558	9,701,469	11,780,137	13,677,429	14,936,390	15,987,261	16,231,697	19,886,373	23,565,265	27,179,485	27,565,504	386,019

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). 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.

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). 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.

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). 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.

6 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.

7 Data for the 2020–2021 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2020–2021* (Food Research & Action Center, June 2021). 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, one school in Washington.

8 Data for the 2021–2022 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2021–2022* (Food Research & Action Center, June 2022). Some schools did not provide student enrollment information for the 2021–2022 school year: 17 schools in Alabama, three schools in Alaska, one school in Colorado, one school in Idaho, two schools in Kentucky, four schools in Louisiana, one school in Maryland, one school in Montana, one school in North Carolina, two schools in Oregon, three schools in Tennessee. Maine did not report student enrollment data for the 2020–2021 or 2021–2022 school years.

9 Data for the 2022–2023 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2022–2023* (Food Research & Action Center, May 2023). Some schools did not provide student enrollment information for the 2022–2023 school year: 62 schools in Alabama, 11 schools in Arizona, one school in Nevada, one school in New Mexico, 29 schools in New York, 40 schools in South Carolina.

10 Data for the 2023–2024 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2023–2024* (Food Research & Action Center, December 2024). Some schools did not provide student enrollment information for the 2023–2024 school year: six schools in Alabama, one school in Alaska, two schools in Arkansas, 10 schools in California, four schools in Colorado, two schools in Delaware, one school in Illinois, 188 schools in Louisiana, one school in Massachusetts, two schools in Maryland, one school in Michigan, one school in Missouri, 32 schools in New Mexico, seven schools in Oregon, one school in Pennsylvania, four schools in South Carolina, 34 schools in Texas, 13 schools in Vermont, and two schools in Virginia.

11 Data for the 2024–2025 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2024–2025* (Food Research & Action Center, June 2025). Some schools did not provide student enrollment information for the 2024–2025 school year: seven schools in Alabama, one school in Arizona, 40 schools in California, three schools in Delaware, five schools in Florida, one school in Iowa, four schools in Louisiana, 13 schools in Maine, two schools in Maryland, seven schools in Massachusetts, 43 schools in Missouri, one school in Montana, one school in Nevada, two schools in New Jersey, one school in New Mexico, one school in Oklahoma, 97 schools in Oregon, three schools in Pennsylvania, 12 schools in South Carolina, 11 schools in Tennessee, 17 schools in Texas, four schools in West Virginia, and one school in Wyoming. Illinois' and Louisiana's 2023–2024 enrollment data was updated in this report.

12 Data for the 2025–2026 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2025–2026* (Food Research & Action Center, June 2026). Some schools did not provide student enrollment information for the 2025–2026 school year: 36 schools in Alabama, eight schools in Arizona, 40 schools in California, three schools in Colorado, one school in Florida, five schools in Georgia, two schools in Idaho, one school in Illinois, one school in Iowa, 14 schools in Massachusetts, two schools in Missouri, three schools in Nebraska, one school in Nevada, 19 schools in New York, 25 schools in Oregon, 22 schools in South Carolina, 10 schools in Tennessee, 29 schools in Texas, six schools in Vermont, four schools in Virginia, and seven schools in West Virginia. In three states, enrollment was reported using suppressed values rather than exact counts. Kansas reported three schools with enrollment values of “<10”; Washington reported 14 participating schools with enrollment values listed as “Identified N < 10”; and Utah reported five participating schools with enrollment values of “N<20.” For table calculations, the median value was used for each suppressed range: 5 for Kansas and Washington, and 10 for Utah.

Table 5: Number of Schools Adopting the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for School Years (SY) 2014–2015 through 2025–2026^{1–11}

State	Adopting												Change
	SY 2014–2015	SY 2015–2016	SY 2016–2017	SY 2017–2018	SY 2018–2019	SY 2019–2020	SY 2020–2021	SY 2021–2022	SY 2022–2023	SY 2023–2024	SY 2024–2025	SY 2025–2026	SY 2024–2025 to SY 2025–2026
Alabama	347	392	391	425	444	445	454	490	536	1,013	1,133	1,187	54
Alaska	123	137	174	213	208	208	216	208	211	217	228	217	-11
Arizona	73	133	227	296	372	446	500	493	508	522	1,029	1,065	36
Arkansas	4	57	139	178	201	229	255	259	250	239	185	279	94
California	208	651	1,070	1,311	2,833	3,275	3,777	3,730	6,150	6,425	7,226	7,227	1
Colorado	34	82	91	101	105	105	108	100	106	588	1,357	1,424	67
Connecticut	133	212	228	241	307	364	426	420	483	492	518	511	-7
Delaware	95	108	117	116	212	116	166	114	127	131	159	176	17
District of Columbia	96	107	115	116	119	115	116	183	180	189	202	199	-3
Florida	548	831	1,001	1,142	1,356	1,374	1,440	1,462	2,542	2,887	2,956	2,667	-289
Georgia	589	700	768	787	818	834	819	873	873	892	1,275	1,349	74
Hawaii	6	25	43	65	69	68	80	106	106	106	115	118	3
Idaho	50	88	92	92	82	61	62	64	61	60	75	114	39
Illinois	1,041	1,322	1,363	1,499	1,541	1,588	1,693	1,823	2,087	2,344	2,393	2,346	-47
Indiana	214	253	283	287	362	462	515	506	593	735	817	857	40
Iowa	78	110	119	123	156	176	177	176	221	244	266	264	-2
Kansas	18	64	69	72	75	70	44	31	34	145	177	192	15
Kentucky	611	804	888	948	984	1,028	1,060	1,061	1,092	1,135	1,157	1,145	-12
Louisiana	335	484	741	968	1,016	1,029	1,087	1,095	1,177	1,238	1,230	1,205	-25
Maine	21	59	72	71	87	73	73	75	77	79	114	353	239
Maryland	25	227	228	242	242	238	364	357	355	651	700	720	20
Massachusetts	294	462	525	574	613	685	720	718	846	1,123	1,375	1,431	56
Michigan	625	662	652	715	1,105	1,259	1,466	1,468	1,638	2,391	2,697	2,703	6
Minnesota	56	125	153	154	163	146	153	150	160	375	495	497	2
Mississippi	257	298	333	342	410	337	390	376	370	396	268	281	13
Missouri	298	330	367	402	420	427	432	433	416	427	444	505	61
Montana	93	127	138	158	157	150	154	147	167	163	250	256	6
Nebraska	2	9	15	26	26	26	43	45	151	167	216	208	-8
Nevada	13	36	122	153	167	316	399	388	501	519	553	523	-30
New Hampshire	0	2	3	3	4	3	3	0	3	4	3	2	-1
New Jersey	197	227	270	306	331	319	315	319	321	365	343	583	240
New Mexico	343	429	487	535	546	568	574	556	667	825	857	857	0
New York	1,246	1,351	1,561	3,381	3,565	3,481	3,633	3,021	3,051	4,200	4,325	4,507	182
North Carolina	648	752	787	914	882	941	955	879	974	1,625	1,895	1,928	33
North Dakota	23	24	25	26	29	31	37	37	37	38	41	49	8
Ohio	739	842	918	998	998	1,022	1,025	1,062	1,141	1,082	1,653	1,766	113
Oklahoma	100	184	301	413	427	408	306	326	384	389	846	902	56
Oregon	262	340	346	344	341	353	622	588	709	740	1,190	1,206	16
Pennsylvania	646	795	861	959	1,031	1,112	1,171	1,172	1,478	1,712	1,827	1,808	-19

Table 5: Number of Schools Adopting the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for School Years (SY) 2014–2015 through 2025–2026^{1–11} (continued)

State	Adopting												Change
	SY 2014–2015	SY 2015–2016	SY 2016–2017	SY 2017–2018	SY 2018–2019	SY 2019–2020	SY 2020–2021	SY 2021–2022	SY 2022–2023	SY 2023–2024	SY 2024–2025	SY 2025–2026	SY 2024–2025 to SY 2025–2026
Rhode Island	1	10	21	34	37	58	61	61	68	76	120	120	0
South Carolina	226	348	412	471	515	531	531	538	546	965	1,006	1,023	17
South Dakota	142	109	124	89	97	97	102	110	100	100	103	98	-5
Tennessee	862	924	909	914	836	840	831	845	877	886	1,295	1,277	-18
Texas	1,477	1,665	1,678	2,070	2,716	3,250	3,700	3,740	4,231	4,638	4,834	4,932	98
Utah	22	28	29	35	52	51	54	42	50	68	68	67	-1
Vermont	32	56	60	68	62	53	56	59	92	215	293	298	5
Virginia	87	206	255	341	428	511	782	1,008	1,086	1,189	1,253	1,242	-11
Washington	122	172	193	232	273	314	394	482	1,213	1,292	1,311	1,330	19
West Virginia	369	428	492	518	540	545	558	593	585	606	626	621	-5
Wisconsin	348	381	415	422	438	468	494	498	591	647	686	663	-23
Wyoming	5	5	7	10	11	14	14	13	13	24	49	64	15
U.S. Total	14,184	18,173	20,678	24,900	28,809	30,620	33,407	33,300	40,235	47,579	54,234	55,362	1,128

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 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).

7 Data for the 2020–2021 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2020–2021* (Food Research & Action Center, June 2021).

8 Data for the 2021–2022 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2021–2022* (Food Research & Action Center, June 2022).

9 Data for the 2022–2023 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2022–2023* (Food Research & Action Center, May 2023).

10 Data for the 2023–2024 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2023–2024* (Food Research & Action Center, June 2024). Louisiana provided updated data for the 2023–2024 school year, which decreased the number of participating schools by 187 than previously reported.

11 Data for the 2024–2025 school year are from *Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools, School Year 2024–2025* (Food Research & Action Center, June 2025).



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