# Communicating with Families About Free School Meals July 11, 2023





**NEW YORK** 

# Agenda

- Why effective communication matters
- Key messages for families
- Action steps for families
- Strategies to spread the word
- Q&A
- Additional CEP support available

Including links to template letters/emails to families as well as sample website text, robocalls/robotext scripts, flyers and social media posts and graphics!





# Why effective communication matters



- Families are the drivers of kids eating school meals
- Schools need information from families to operate
- Schools can leverage effective communication to cultivate awareness and trust among families
- Priorities of effective communication:
  - 1. Messages that are family-centered (clear and targeted)
  - 2. Action steps for families



# Key messages for families

### 1. School meals are available at your child's school!

- CEP School: "All kids can eat!"
- Non-CEP School: "Meals are available to all. You may be eligible to receive meals at no cost"

### 2. School meals are great for kids and families!

- "Let us (the school) take care of breakfast and lunch while school is in session so you can skip the morning rush at home!"
- "School meals get students the nutrition they need to thrive in the classroom and beyond!"



# These toolkits can help you spread the message:

CEP Communications Toolkit School Meals Marketing Toolkit





# Action step for families

### **CEP School:** Submit household income forms

"Why submit a household income form? It's a win-win for schools & families. They help provide funding for your school to **support** student learning."

### non-CEP School: Submit F/RP applications

"Why submit a free or reduced school meal application? It's a win-win for schools & families. They help provide funding for schools and help reduce costs for families."

When families understand why, they are more likely to take action.

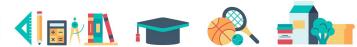
### It's more than a meal application.











School meal applications benefit schools & families.

Apply today!

### Resource:

School Meal Application Toolkit





# Strategies for spreading the word

- Brief, concise messages
- Link submitting the forms to what families value (what benefits the students)
- Reinforce multiple times through multiple pathways
- Diversify WHO is delivering the message encourage communications/messaging by the superintendent, principal, teachers, school lunch staff, etc.

Resource: School Meals Application Toolkit











# Stay connected for more support with CEP

- CEP Newsletter:
  - Catch up on previous newsletters <u>here</u>.
  - If you would like to receive this newsletter, email Francesca DiGiorgio.
- Webinar: Maximizing Participation under CEP Thursday, July 27 from 1:00 - 2:00 PM Register here
- CEP TA Survey: Fill out our <u>survey</u>. Help us understanding your needs and inform our ability to assist, including future webinars and technical assistance opportunities.



bit.ly/NYCEPSurvey



# Connect with our team

### For individualized assistance, at no cost, contact:

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# Appendix





# Overview of the Community Eligibility Provision

- Allows any eligible school, group of schools, or district with 40%+ "identified students" to provide breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students.
- New federal proposed rule to lower the eligibility threshold to 25%. Please note: This is not yet in effect.

### Resources:

- NYSED CEP Fact Sheet
- Hunger Solutions CEP Fact Sheet

# Households with students attending CEP schools were nearly



compared to households with students attending a school eligible for, but not participating in CEP.





# State Expansion of CEP

### **Enacted NYS FY24 Budget:**

- Amended NYS Education Law adding Section 925, Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) State Subsidy.
- Added \$134.6M

### **CEP State Subsidy:**

- Starting in the upcoming SY 2023-2024.
- Ensures all CEP meals are reimbursed at the free rate.
- Must be approved to participate in CEP in SY 2023-2024.

### **NYSED Resources:**

- NYSED Guidance: CEP State Subsidy
  - (This memo includes a <u>list of potentially eligible schools</u> who are not participating in CEP.)
- NYSED CEP and State Subsidy Webinar Recording
- NYSED CEP and State Subsidy Questions and Answers Resource





