



Communicating with Families About Free School Meals

July 11, 2023



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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](#)

Q & A



Stay connected for more support with CEP

- **CEP Newsletter:**
 - Catch up on previous newsletters [here](#).
 - 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 [survey](#). 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 [list of potentially eligible schools](#) who are not participating in CEP.)
- [NYSED CEP and State Subsidy Webinar Recording](#)
- [NYSED CEP and State Subsidy Questions and Answers Resource](#)

