



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

May 5, 2017

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP): Application for School Year 2017-2018

This memorandum provides information, including required documentation, for local education agencies (LEAs) to apply for one or more schools to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for the 2017-2018 school year. The CEP of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) allows LEAs with a high percentage of directly certified low-income students to provide meals at no charge to all students without collecting meal applications. School divisions that meet the eligibility criteria outlined below may apply to participate in the CEP for one or more schools, group of schools, or divisionwide. Participation in Community Eligibility Provision a local decision that requires consideration of multiple factors, including the fiscal impact of this alternate provision for claiming reimbursement.

Superintendent's Memorandum No. 098-17, dated March 31, 2017, provided preliminary information, guidance, and the required annual notification of divisionwide eligibility for CEP for school year 2017-2018. All school divisions were required to submit a CEP Preliminary Data Collection Worksheet to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) by April 15, 2017. This data collection detailed the number of *identified students* (IS) directly certified as eligible to receive free meals as of April 1, 2017. A school, group of schools, or school division **must have** an identified student percentage (ISP) of at least forty percent of the students enrolled as the first eligibility criteria to participate in Community Eligibility Provision. The complete list of CEP eligible divisions and schools is available on the VDOE website at: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition/statistics/index.shtml>.

New in 2017-2018 - Medicaid Direct Certification for Free Meals: Students directly certified as eligible to receive free meals using the Medicaid direct certification (DC) data are to be included in the number of identified students IS reported for Community Eligibility Provision annually by April 1. The VDOE is in the process of obtaining a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to include the Medicaid DC free eligible students, determined through this final match, in the April 1 data for the 2017-2018 CEP application. **If your school division is considering participation in Community Eligibility Provision, or applying to participate in 2017-2018, and including Medicaid DC free students would increase the ISP by one percent or more,** please contact the SNP specialist assigned to your division or Dr. Sandy Curwood, Director, using the contact information at the end of this memo. You are encouraged to evaluate the April 1 identified students data, including the Medicaid direct certification free students, for your schools as soon as possible and before the June 30 CEP application deadline. Only Medicaid direct certification free eligible students may be included in the identified students report; Medicaid direct certification reduced price students are not considered part of the IS report because their eligibility status is not free. However, Medicaid direct certification reduced price students are eligible to receive meals at the reduced price.

Virginia is one of seven states participating in a demonstration project to directly certify students for free or reduced price meals using Medicaid income and household size data previously submitted to the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) by the household. The direct certification data files provided by Virginia Department of Education to LEAs via the SNPWeb system will include data for Medicaid Free and

Medicaid Reduced Price eligible students, effective with a data file for April 2017. **LEAs are required to conduct a final direct certification match for the 2016-2017 school year using this new data.** Virginia Department of Education conducted a webinar for local school nutrition program (SNP) staff on implementing direct certification with this new data on April 26, 2017.

Community Eligibility Provision Eligibility Requirements: To be eligible to participate in CEP, a school division, or one or more schools or group of schools in the division, must:

1. Participate in both the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP);
2. Have an *identified student percentage* (ISP) of 40 percent or greater as of April 1, 2017, (The 40 percent threshold may be determined for an individual school, a group of schools within the school division, or for all schools collectively (divisionwide). Grouping schools allows some schools to be below the 40 percent threshold as long as the aggregate percentage of the group meets at least 40 percent);
3. Agree to provide both breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students, and if the federal reimbursement is not sufficient to cover the meal costs, the LEA agrees to cover any meal cost beyond the reimbursement rate; and
4. Submit an application to participate in CEP and receive approval from VDOE.

Community Eligibility Provision Application Process for 2017-2018: The school division must submit the application for one or more schools, group of schools, or the entire division. Individual schools may not submit an application; all applications must be submitted by the local point of contact for the school nutrition program and with the authorization of the division superintendent. The Community Eligibility Provision application packets are due annually by **June 30**. Early submission of the application is encouraged.

The complete CEP application packet for 2017-2018 includes the following items:

1. [Attachment A - Addendum to the Annual Agreement](#)

Submit two copies with **original signatures** by U.S. Mail to:
Virginia Department of Education
Office of School Nutrition Programs
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120

2. [Attachment B - Application to Participate in the Community Eligibility Provision](#) - Submit the completed application (in Excel format) by email to SNPwebdoc@doe.virginia.gov.
3. [Attachment D – USDA CEP Federal Reimbursement Estimator](#) - Submit the completed estimator (in Excel format) by email to SNPwebdoc@doe.virginia.gov.
4. [Supporting Documents](#) - Submit the confidential list of directly certified students used to determine the April 1 number of IS reported in the Community Eligibility Provision application for each school, group of schools, or the division. This documentation is the list(s) of names of all students who were directly certified as eligible to receive free meals without an application as of April 1, 2017, and must be consistent with the numbers previously reported by the division in the April 1 CEP data collection workbook.

Important Note: Confidential direct certification documentation must be uploaded by the division to the secure **Single Sign-on for Web Systems (SSWS) dropbox** and sent to the Virginia Department of Education SNP specialist assigned to your division. Instructions to upload the confidential file to the dropbox are provided in Attachment C. This confidential documentation must not be sent by email or

any method other than the SSWS dropbox, as the confidentiality and security of the information could be breached.

The VDOE staff will review the CEP application to ensure the school/group/division meets the minimum identified student percentage; participates in both the NSLP and SBP; and, has a record of administering the USDA school nutrition programs in accordance with federal and state regulations, including maintaining an appropriate and timely financial reporting system.

School divisions should analyze the fiscal impact of implementing Community Eligibility Provision on the local school nutrition program. Financial consideration should be based on the anticipated level of federal reimbursement and other non-federal support that may be available to pay for any meal costs in excess of the projected federal reimbursement that will be using the CEP alternative. If the federal reimbursement received is not sufficient to cover the costs of providing breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge, non-federal funds must be used to offset the difference. School divisions should use the USDA Community Eligibility Provision Federal Reimbursement Calculator, which is Attachment D to this memorandum, to project the monthly federal Community Eligibility Provision reimbursement that will be received. The division should also assess the current net cash resources of the school nutrition program and the projected meal costs to determine if non-federal funds will be required to support the school nutrition program in Community Eligibility Provision schools and identify the source and amount of non-federal funds that will be used for the 2017-2018 school year and beyond to support Community Eligibility Provision costs.

The identified student percentage, as submitted on the Community Eligibility Provision application for each school site, will be validated by VDOE staff, using the documentation submitted, and prior to final Community Eligibility Provision approval and before the first claim for reimbursement is filed to ensure the integrity of the data. This validated ISP will be used for all other programs that use identified student percentage as an indicator of socioeconomic status.

Considerations for other programs that use individual student free and reduced eligibility:

Superintendent's Memorandum 104-14 addressed the topic of economically disadvantaged student identification for accountability purposes with SOL testing in schools using CEP when Virginia schools began to participate in the 2013-2014 school year. Virginia Department of Education determined schools would identify only those students determined eligible by direct certification in the non-base years as economically disadvantaged for tracking SOL accountability results in CEP schools. The memorandum is available at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2014/104-14.shtml. Questions about the identification of the economically disadvantaged subgroup in participating CEP schools or the identification of Title I schools in divisions participating in CEP should be directed to Dr. Lynn Sodat, Director, Office of Program Administration and Accountability, at (804) 371-2934 or lynn.sodat@doe.virginia.gov.

To comply with this policy and provide the required economically disadvantaged information for individual students as available, SNP staff in Community Eligibility Provision participating school divisions should continue to conduct direct certification for all eligible students each year, including those in Community Eligibility Provision schools. The listing of SNAP/TANF/Medicaid eligible students provided by Virginia Department of Education/Virginia Department of Social Services in SNPWeb, as well as the homeless, migrant, runaway, foster child, and Head Start data from the school division liaison(s), should continue to be used to conduct direct certification. The students in Community Eligibility Provision schools who are directly certified each year should be identified as economically disadvantaged in the division's student enrollment database, even though direct certification status will not be used by the school nutrition program to claim meals for individual students in Community Eligibility Provision schools by category.

In divisions where some schools participate in Community Eligibility Provision and others continue to collect household applications, there may be students in CEP schools who are determined free or reduced price eligible because they are a member of a household where a household application was used to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meals for students attending a non-CEP school. The eligibility from the household application should be used to identify the student in the CEP school as economically disadvantaged in the student enrollment database for other purposes, such as accountability reports for SOL testing, but should not be used to determine eligibility for meals or to claim meals by category for the student who attends a CEP school.

For schools in a Community Eligibility Provision division that do not participate in Community Eligibility Provision, any student who is determined free or reduced price eligible by either direct certification or application should be identified as economically disadvantaged in the student enrollment database. This procedure was in place for all schools prior to CEP implementation and remains the same in the non-Community Eligibility Provision schools.

For other programs, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA Part B) and other child nutrition programs, the validated ISP times the 1.6 multiplier (the claiming percentage for meals reimbursed at the free rate) is used to determine the free and reduced price eligibility percentage for CEP schools. This number aligns more closely with the free and reduced price percentage used for non-CEP schools. The annual October 31 free and reduced price eligibility report, posted on the Virginia Department of Education website at <http://doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition/statistics/index.shtml>, should be used for this purpose as it reports the calculated claiming percentage for all schools using the validated ISP.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the Virginia Department of Education SNP specialist assigned to your division, or Sandy Curwood, PhD, RDN, Director, Office of School Nutrition Programs by email at sandra.curwood@doe.virginia.gov or by phone at (804) 225-2074.

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Attachments:

- A. [Addendum to the Annual Agreement for the CEP](#) (PDF)
- B. [Application to Participate in the CEP 2017-2018](#) (Excel)
- C. [Instructions for Uploading a File to the SSWS Dropbox](#) (PDF)
- D. [D. USDA CEP Federal Reimbursement Estimator 2017-2018](#) (Excel)