# SNP Memo #2023-2024-59

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**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA   
Department of Education**

DATE: March 7, 2024

TO: School Nutrition Program Directors, Supervisors, and Contact Persons

FROM: Sandra C. Curwood, PhD, RDN, ***Sandy***

## SUBJECT: April 2024 Identified Student Percentage Data Collection, Annual Required LEA Notifications, and VDOE Webinar

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) allows eligible local education agencies (LEAs) and participating schools with specific percentages of low-income households to offer school breakfast and lunch meals at no charge to all students without collecting meal applications. For more information on the federal final rule issued in September 2023 to lower the minimum threshold for CEP participation to 25 percent, please refer to [SNP Memo #2023-2024-29, *USDA CEP Final Rule Lowering the Minimum ISP for Participation*](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.virginia.gov%2Fhome%2Fshowpublisheddocument%2F50084%2F638321808429830000&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)*.* For more information on updated USDA guidance and resources for CEP, please refer to [SNP Memo #2023-2024-52, *Updated CEP Guidance and USDA Webinar.*](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.virginia.gov%2Fhome%2Fshowpublisheddocument%2F52627%2F638440239496970000&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

This memorandum has three purposes:

* to notify LEAs of a webinar offered by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs (SCNP) on **Thursday, April 18, 2024, from 3:00–4:30 p.m.**
* to provide detailed information to school food authorities (SFAs) on the required data reporting for the April 1, 2024, identified student percentage (ISP); and,
* to meet certain USDA notification requirements for LEAs potentially eligible and near eligible divisionwide for CEP and those with expiring CEP cycles.

### VDOE Webinar

[Register in advance for the webinar](https://doe-virginia-gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1KJeBE8LT8CsUZ3uwhc7EA" \l "/registration), *CEP Participation: Opportunities and Resources for School Year (SY) 2024-2025,* to be offered on Thursday, April 18, 2024, 3:00–4:30 p.m. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information about joining the webinar.

### Identified Students Definition and the Identified Student Percentage April 1 Reporting

Identified studentsare defined as students approved for **free** meals through means other than household meal applications. This includes students who are directly certified (DC) for free meals based on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or DC for **free** meals based on Medicaid income data. Identified students also includes students approved as **categorically free** eligible without an application through the LEA liaison because of their status as homeless, runaway, migrant, or foster care placement, and certain eligible Head Start students. Only students who are determined **free eligible** by one of these methods are reported as identified students; directly certified reduced-price students are not included.

All SFAs must report school-level data as of April 1, 2024, on the number of **free** directly certified and categorically **free** eligible students and the school membership to establish the ISP. **This ISP data is required for all schools and must be reported in the School Nutrition Program Web-based software (SNPWeb) *CEP Site Eligibility Report*.** Attachment A provides detailed instructions for the ISP report and required back-up documentation. An e-learning module for the April 1 ISP report is also available on the [VDOE-SCNP Rise.com e-learning portal](https://vdoe-school-nutrition.rise.com/login). If you are not registered as a learner in Rise, visit [the VDOE-SCNP Training and Resources webpage](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/school-operations-support-services/school-nutrition/training-resources) for information on how to enroll.

SFAs must report the ISP data as of April 1, 2024, for all schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program. If April 1 falls during spring break for your LEA and offices will be closed, the next business day after April 1 should be used to generate the data with an as of date of April 1. **The report deadline in SNPWeb is Monday, April 15, 2024, at 5:00 p.m**.

The **SFA must also follow the detailed instructions in Attachment A to create the complete, required, electronically formatted supporting documentation for the ISP and maintain that documentation locally** to support the publicly posted April 1 ISP report. **This same required supporting documentation will be submitted with the CEP application in June and validated by the VDOE.**

### Annual LEA Notification of Divisionwide CEP Eligibility and Expiring CEP Cycles

The VDOE is required to provide notification by April 15 annually to all LEAs with CEP eligibility that meets any of the criteria below. **Attachment B includes required notification** of:

* LEAs **potentially eligible** for divisionwide CEP with a calculated ISP of 25 percent or more;
* LEAs **nearly eligible** for divisionwide CEP with a calculated ISP between 15–24.99 percent;
* LEAs currently participating in CEP for any schools, regardless of divisionwide ISP (Attachment B, Notes 1 and 2) ; and
* LEAs currently participating in CEP that have reached the end of their four-year cycle and are required to reapply for a new CEP cycle in SY 2024–2025 for one or more schools (Attachment B, Note 3).

The required notification of **LEAs that may be eligible or near eligible to participate in CEP divisionwide** in Attachment B, Column C, uses projected eligibility based on LEA data previously submitted for other purposes. This calculated data is for notification only to encourage LEAs if it is financially viable, to prepare to apply for CEP divisionwide. **The reported April 1, 2024, ISP data for the SFA must be used in the CEP application and will determine divisionwide eligibility for SY 2024–2025.**

Please see Attachment C for information on how to report April 1 ISP data for schools already participating in CEP, schools not eligible for CEP, and schools with changing attendance boundaries.

### CEP Implementation, Guidance, and Application

CEP allows schools to provide meals at no cost to all enrolled students, eliminates the need for meal applications, and eliminates student meal debt. LEAs that meet the CEP eligibility threshold for a school, group of schools, or divisionwide are encouraged to evaluate CEP for the upcoming school year. For more information, the *February 2024 edition* of theUSDA[**Community Eligibility Provision: Planning and Implementation Guidance Manual**](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/SP08-2024a1.pdf)provides updated consolidated CEP guidance and best practices in one resource. CEP financial viability, applying for CEP, and resources for CEP implementation will be topics of the April 18 webinar.

At the beginning of May, a memorandum will be issued with information on how to apply for CEP for SY 2024–2025. The CEP application will be submitted in SNPWeb as part of the Annual SNP application packet. The electronically formatted supporting documentation for the April 1, 2024, ISP will be required with all CEP applications. The annual federal **deadline** to submit the **CEP application is June 30.**

If you have questions, please contact your assigned SNP regional specialist or Lynne Fellin, SNP Technical Advisor to the State Director, via email at [Lynne.Fellin@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Lynne.Fellin@doe.virginia.gov) or by telephone at (804) 418-4695.

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### Attachments

1. SNPWeb Community Eligibility Provision Site Eligibility Report Checklist 2024
2. April 2024 Required LEA Notifications of Potentially and Nearly Eligible CEP Divisionwide and Expiring CEP Four-Year Cycles
3. Reporting April 1 Data for Participating CEP Schools, Schools Not Eligible, and Others