

What Application and Accountability system can I use?

Beginning School Year SY 2023 public school districts will offer meals to all public-school enrolled children at no cost with financial assistance from Maine. Private schools will receive no additional state money and can choose to still charge students.

Districts will have three different application and accountability options they can select from. If electing to use alternative methods CEP or SP2, the Sponsor's written intention to do so must be submitted and approved by Maine DOE Child Nutrition and must still meet Federal Regulations.

1. **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)** (if eligible)
 - a. To be eligible, at least 25% of enrolled students must be directly certified (2 decimal places, no rounding)
 - b. CEP is a four-year provision.
 - c. Meal Benefit Applications are not and may not be collected for any student and any reason for the duration of the CEP cycle
 - d. District must determine their eligibility to participate in CEP using April 1st direct certification numbers
 - e. District will need to submit an Agreement for the Community Eligibility Provision of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program in CNPWeb and get State Agency approval
 - f. State Agency will validate numbers based on documentation provided
 - g. CEP can be a school, group of schools or district as determined by district
 - h. School completes meal accountability at the point of service
 - i. Monthly claim for reimbursement form completed by entering total student meals served, and the system calculates Free, and Paid.
2. **Special Provision 2 (SP2)**
 - a. There are no minimum requirements to participate
 - b. Special Provision 2 is a 4-year provision
 - c. District official must notify the state in writing before 6/30 of year prior to starting, of their intent to participate
 - d. District will need to submit an Agreement for the Special Provision II of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program in CNPWeb and get State Agency approval
 - e. Year One of four (base year):
 - i. Households complete the Meal Benefit Application and submit to School Food Service Department
 - ii. School Food service Department official determines eligibility and notifies the family within 10 calendar days
 - iii. School completes meal accountability by student name and category at the point of service
 - iv. District completes annual Meal Benefit Applications verification process during year one of the four year cycle
 - v. Monthly claim for reimbursement form completed by entering student meal counts by eligibility category year one

- f. Years 2,3 and 4:
 - i. Meal Benefit Applications are not and may not be collected for any student for any reason
 - ii. Households do not need to be notified of eligibility
 - iii. School completes meal accountability by recording a simple count of total number meals served at the point of service
 - iv. District does not complete the Meal Benefit Applications verification process
 - v. Monthly claim for reimbursement is completed in CNPWeb by entering total student meals served. CNPWeb will calculate Free, Reduced, and Paid, by school using the **base year claiming percentage by meal type.**
 - g. During the Base Year of Special Provision II, a Meal Benefit Application review will be completed. Any application errors discovered during the Meal Benefit Application review process must be calculated back to beginning of the year.
 - h. Fiscal Action for application errors will be the district's responsibility.
- 3. Traditional Method**
- a. Parents complete the Meal Benefit Applications annually or if income decreases and submit to school.
 - b. School Food service Department official determines the eligibility and notifies the family within 10 calendar days
 - c. School completes the meal accountability by student name and category daily at the point of service
 - d. District completes annual Meal Benefit Applications verification process
 - e. Complete the monthly claim for reimbursement form by entering student meal counts by category
 - f. This method is the same that was used "pre-COVID"
 - g. Fiscal Action for application errors found during an Administrative Review will be the district's responsibility
- 4. ALL Methods**
- a. Release Public Service Announcement (PSA) indicating the district/school's approved method
 - b. A strong effort to market will be needed for the first two methods. Possible joint effort of other hunger advocates.
 - c. A district can select a mix of three methods by building
 - d. Starting SY 23, all Maine public schools will offer students a meal at no charge
 - e. Same procedure used for both breakfast and lunch
 - f. Private schools can elect these methods as well, but State funds are not available to help offset the costs.
- 5. Questions/Barriers**
- a. WHAT ABOUT AFTERSCHOOL SNACK PROGRAM?
 - b. Strongly encourage using electronic point of service (POS) to ensure program integrity for all methods?
 - c. Outside programs can use "Economic Status Indicated form"; not food service department responsibility.
 - d. WHAT ABOUT FISCAL ACTION