



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Sponsors of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs

**FROM:** John Frassinelli, Chief  
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

**DATE:** April 27, 2015

**SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum #21-15**  
Extension of the Deadline for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to Submit  
Applications to Elect the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Frassinelli".

One important goal of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) is to ensure that children have access to the nutrition they need to grow into healthy adults. The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), as authorized by amendments made in HHFKA Section 11(a)(1)(F), of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA), 42 USC 1759a(a)(1)(F), is a powerful tool to ensure that children in low-income communities have access to healthy school meals. The CEP allows participating schools to offer healthy lunches and breakfasts at no cost to all students, without requiring their families to complete individual applications.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) piloted the CEP in states beginning in school year 2011-12. The CEP became available for nationwide implementation this school year. In school year 2014-15, approximately 14,000 schools in more than 2,000 LEAs serving more than 6.4 million children elected to participate in the CEP. These LEAs recognized the CEP's ability to reduce administrative burden and increase access to school meals for children in low-income communities.

A 2014 USDA study of CEP implementation in the pilot states recognized several benefits. The study provided strong support for the CEP as an error reduction strategy. Participating schools had significantly fewer certification errors than non-CEP schools. The study also indicated that participating schools demonstrated increased participation in their lunch and breakfast programs, experienced revenue gains and decreased administrative costs.

Participation in the CEP is a local decision. It requires careful consideration of many factors by LEAs. For Connecticut LEAs, the participation decision process depends on the approval of governing bodies with administrative control of the LEA. Additionally, LEAs may seek the support of various partners and stakeholders when considering CEP participation.

Pursuant to the amendments made by the HHFKA, LEAs have until June 30, 2015, to elect to participate in CEP for school year 2015-16. However, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is extending the election deadline to **August 31, 2015**, due to the multiple benefits of CEP and the unique decision process involved in electing the CEP.

The USDA has several resources to assist LEAs with the decision to elect the CEP. The [USDA CEP Web page](#) includes the Department of Education Title I Guidance, questions and answers, and tools to assist LEAs as they consider implementing this important provision. In March 2014, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) launched a dedicated [CEP Web page](#) with additional information and resources. The CSDE CEP Web page includes lists of eligible and potentially eligible LEAs and schools (recently updated with CEP data for school year 2014-15), application information (CEP Policy Statement Addendum) and the CEP Participation Worksheet.

The CSDE strongly encourages those schools and LEAs that have not yet elected the CEP to review these resources and carefully consider the positive impact that the CEP can have in their communities. The CSDE joins the USDA in its commitment to providing healthy school meals to all school children.

Questions may be directed to Allison Calhoun-White at 860-807-2008 or [allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov](mailto:allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov).

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