




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs

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

DATE: March 20, 2015

SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum #19-15
Extension of the Deadline for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to Elect the
Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for School Year 2015-16

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 children in low income communities have access to healthy school meals. The CEP allows participating schools to offer healthy, free lunches and breakfasts to all students without requiring their families to complete individual applications. First rolled out in pilot states beginning in School Year (SY) 2011-12, the CEP became available for nationwide implementation this school year. As a result, in SY 2014-15, approximately 14,000 schools in more than 2,000 local educational agencies (LEAs) serving more than 6.4 million children elected to participate in the CEP for its ability to both reduce administrative burden and increase access to school meals for children in low income communities.

A 2014 Department of Agriculture (USDA) study of the 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 and one that requires careful consideration of many factors by the LEAs. For Connecticut LEAs, the decision process to elect to participate depends on the approval of governing bodies with administrative control of the LEA. Additionally, the LEAs may seek the support of various partners and stakeholders when considering CEP participation. Pursuant to the amendments made by HHFKA, the LEAs have until June 30, 2015, to elect to participate in the CEP. Because of the multiple benefits of the CEP and in light of the unique decision process involved in electing the CEP, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is extending the election deadline until August 31, 2015.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is encouraged by the remarkable CEP uptake among eligible LEAs and schools. However, there are still many eligible LEAs and schools that can benefit from the CEP participation. The FNS is extending the deadline to allow LEAs ample time to determine if CEP is a viable option in their schools. A similar deadline extension for SY

2014-15 facilitated a 22 percent overall increase in CEP elections, significantly increasing children's access to nutritious meals in high need schools.

Questions on the CEP may be directed to Allison Calhoun-White at allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov, or 860-807-2008.

Questions may also be directed to:

COUNTY ASSIGNMENTS	CONSULTANT	E-MAIL AND PHONE
Fairfield County	Fionnuala Brown	fionnuala.brown@ct.gov 860-807-2129
Hartford County (towns/cities beginning with A-R)	Teri Dandeneau	teri.dandeneau@ct.gov 860-807-2079
Hartford County (towns/cities beginning with S-W) Windham County	Susan Alston	susan.alston@ct.gov 860-807-2081
Litchfield County	Allison Calhoun-White	allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov 860-807-2008
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JF:acc

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