

MEMORANDUM

TO: Food Service Managers, Business Managers, Approving Officials
FROM: Rosie Krueger, Director of Child Nutrition Programs
SUBJECT: Instructions for the Community Eligibility (Direct Certification) Report
DATE: June 18, 2021

Community Eligibility Report Due June 30, 2021

The annual Community Eligibility Provision Data Collection, formerly known as the Community Eligibility Report is now open in the new [Harvest system](#). Normally, these reports are due in April, however USDA extended the report deadline, per [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #82 Nationwide Waiver of Community Eligibility Provision Deadlines in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program](#). This year, the report must be entered by **June 30, 2021**. Please enter your report before noon on June 30th, to allow us to meet the deadline for state agencies to publish the data, which is also on June 30th. The report was opened for submission on June 18, 2021.

Each School Food Authority (SFA) must report site-level enrollment and the number of Directly Certified Students at each site. Normally, the information entered must be as of April 1. For this year only, information from any date between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 may be used. SFAs should select information from a date which has the highest percentage of directly certified students compared to total enrollment. In most cases, the later June dates will be the most favorable. This information is used to monitor a site, or group of sites', eligibility to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) during the following year. CEP is one way that schools may offer "Universal Meals" at no charge to students. All schools normally participating in the National School Lunch Program must report this information even if they do not wish to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision.

Sites, and groups of sites, planning to start CEP next year must have an Identified Student Percentage (ISP; number of Directly Certified Students divided by number of enrolled students) of at least 40%. Schools currently participating in CEP that have increased their Identified Student Percentage may re-establish their numbers to receive a higher level of reimbursement for the next school year.

Upon submitting the report, the Harvest system will show whether sites in the SFA are eligible or near-eligible. Once all SFAs have submitted this report, the Vermont Agency of Education



(AOE) will publish the list of schools and SFAs that are eligible or are near-eligible. At that point, we will provide additional materials to those SFAs wishing to enroll in CEP for the following school year.

Note for School Year 2021-2022 Operation

We are currently awaiting further guidance from USDA about whether SFAs will be able to start a CEP cycle with this year's data, but still participate in the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) during school year 2021-2022. Reimbursement rates will be higher under the SSO although meals are provided at no charge to students under both CEP and SSO. It is also unclear how operating SFSP in the second half of School Year 2019-2020 and all of School Year 2020-2021, and SSO in School Year 2021-2022, will impact those schools who are in the midst of their CEP cycles. We will share guidance from USDA on School Year 2021-2022 operations as soon as we receive it.

Steps to Complete the Report

If you are the person in your SFA who is responsible for entering information into the AOE's child nutrition system, please complete the following steps no later than noon on **Wednesday, June 30, 2021**.

1. Gather site-level total enrollment and the total number of Directly Certified Students for each site. This should be as of June 2021 (unless another date earlier in the year is more favorable).

Enrollment numbers should include all students who would have had access to meals through the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program if that program was operating normally, as it would have before COVID-19. Pre-K students should only be included if they normally would have had access to at least one meal through these programs.

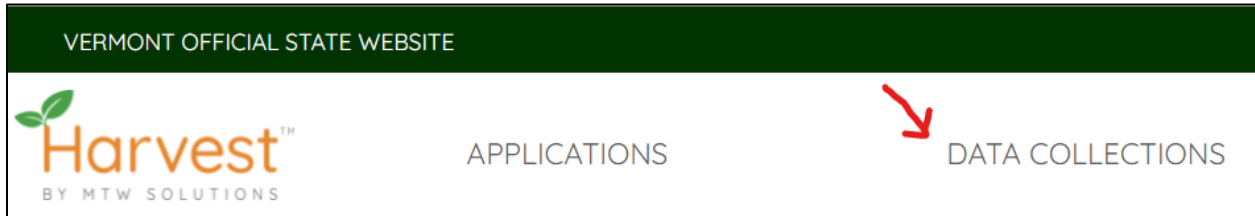
The list of Directly Certified students should include students from the following sources:

- Students who appear on the direct certification list from the Agency of Education at any point during the school year, and any other students in those listed students' household. Updated lists are available monthly for public schools in AOE's edFusion system. A new list is usually available around the 20th of each month. Make sure you have received the June 2021 list from your data manager. Independent schools will need to complete the [Independent School Direct Cert Status Form](#) to receive their most current list.
- Students who have been identified as homeless/runaway by the school homeless liaison or by a shelter official.
- Students identified as Migrant by the Migrant Education Program.
- State-Placed Foster students identified by DCF or by AOE.

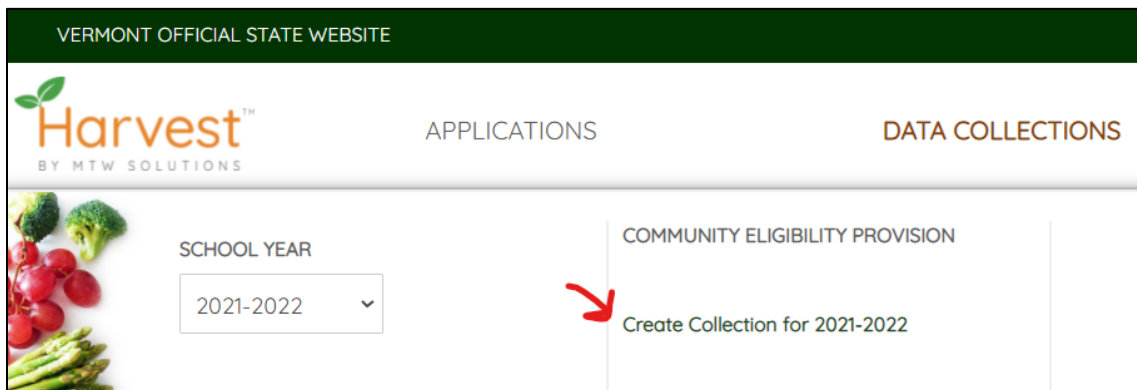
- Head Start students identified by the Head Start Program (if students in the program receive meals).

Again, Pre-K students should only be included in these numbers if they have access to the meals program. Both Enrollment and Directly Certified numbers should be as of June 2021 (unless you choose to use another date between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021). Students who were on your lists earlier in the year but have moved out of the SFA before this point should not be included.

2. Open “Data Collections” on your Harvest homepage, which can be reached at: <https://harvest.education.vermont.gov/Main>



3. Under the “Community Eligibility Provision” header, select “Create Collection for 2021-2022”.



4. In the “Contact Info” tab, enter in the “Contact Information for the Individual Completing the Report” and then hit “Save”.

Contact Info

CONTACT INFORMATION OF INDIVIDUAL COMPLETING REPORT

First Name Last Name

Email

Phone Extension

Alternate Phone Title

5. In the “CEP Data” tab, for each site, enter the current number of Directly Certified Students via 3SquaresVT in the “3SquaresVT Certified Students” box. This is the number of children who have a “Yes” in the “SNAP” column on your direct certification list from AOE, and any other children in their household.
6. Enter the number of all other types of Directly Certified Students in the “Other Certified Students” box.
7. The “Total” box will auto-populate with the combined information from these two boxes.

Note: This is different from past reports, where only one number of directly certified students was entered.

8. Enter the current total enrollment for the site in the “Total Enrollment” box and then hit “Save”. Please be sure that data is reported for all of your sites.

Site #	Site Name	3SquaresVT Certified Students	Other Certified Students*	Total	Total Enrollment
0066	Bellows Free Academy USD	0	0	0	0
0287	Fairfield Center School	0	0	0	0
0744	SOAR Learning Center	0	0	0	0
0769	St. Albans City Elementary Schoo	0	0	0	0
0773	St. Albans Town Educational Cent	0	0	0	0
	TOTALS	0	0	0	0

9. The system will display the Identified Student Percentage (ISP) calculated for each site and indicate whether your sites are eligible or near-eligible for CEP. Please take note of

this information. If you have schools that are eligible or near-eligible, please see the next section of this memo.

Site #	Site Name	3SquaresVT Certified Students	Other Certified Students*	Total	Total Enrollment	ISP	Eligible for CEP?	Potentially Eligible
0066	Bellows Free Academy USD	140	38	178	874	20.37	N	
0287	Fairfield Center School	20	6	26	263	9.89	N	
0744	SOAR Learning Center	20	11	31	76	40.79	Y	
0769	St. Albans City Elementary School	300	35	335	746	44.91	Y	
0773	St. Albans Town Educational Cent	100	57	157	792	19.82	N	
TOTALS		580	147	727	2751	26.43	N	

10. In the “Submit” tab, check that box to attest that all information is correct and complete and then hit “Accept and Submit”.

Contact Info
CEP Data
Submit

Submit

I attest that all information here is correct and complete.

Submission of this CEP data will be automatically accepted without AOE review. However, this does not constitute approval of the data submitted or approval to begin a CEP cycle. Additional steps are needed before this data may be used to start a CEP cycle.

Accept & Submit >

Information for Eligible and Near-Eligible SFAs

The Community Eligibility Provision, or CEP, is a four-year program which allows all students to eat meals at no charge. CEP does not require the distribution, approval, and verification of meal applications. It increases meal participation and reduces the efforts required to collect unpaid meal balances. Schools earn free meal reimbursement for meals based on their direct certification percentage multiplied by 1.6, and then paid meal reimbursement for the remaining meals. Schools or groups of schools with a 62.5%, or higher rate of Direct Certification earn free reimbursement for all meals served. To calculate your estimated reimbursement under CEP, please see the [CEP Monthly Federal Reimbursement Estimator](#). Schools that are near-eligible should take extra care to check the June direct certification list available from AOE to see if additional students are newly directly certified this month – these students may push the site or SFA into eligibility. If not eligible this year, these schools may become eligible in subsequent years.

To participate, SFAs must take the following steps:

- Notify the AOE in writing by **September 30, 2021** that they plan to participate in CEP. A template letter including the required information is available from AOE.
- Submit back-up documentation to AOE showing the names of all students enrolled as of the CEP reporting date (June 30 for 2021, unless more favorable data from another date between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 is chosen) and the names of all students identified as directly certified as of that date. This documentation must

show that at least 40% of the enrolled students were identified as Directly Certified through one of the means identified on page 2 of this memo.

- Complete and submit the [CEP Amendment to the Free and Reduced Policy Statement](#).
- Do not collect applications or charge for meals. Notify households that the school is participating in CEP.

For more information on operating CEP, please see the USDA's [CEP Resource Center](#).

Information for Schools in the Fourth Year of CEP

The following schools are currently in their fourth year of CEP:

- Bennington Elementary School
- Monument Elementary School
- Molly Stark School
- Mount Anthony Union Middle School
- Mt. Anthony UHS #14
- Sacred Heart School
- Woodford Hollow School
- OnPoint Elementary at Congress St.
- Pownal Elementary School
- Shaftsbury Elementary School
- Early Education Program
- Baird
- King Street Youth Center
- Centerpoint School
- The St. Johnsbury School
- SOAR Learning Center

Schools who were in their fourth year of CEP may start a new CEP cycle if their reported Identified Student Percentage (ISP) this year is 40% or more. Schools in the fourth year of CEP with a current ISP of 30 to 40% may continue CEP in a grace year, with a new, lower claiming percentage based on the current ISP. Schools in the fourth year of CEP with a current ISP below 30% may not continue with CEP. Instead, they may either return to operating a pricing program, or consider operating Provision 2.

Questions?

Contact Rosie Krueger at mary.krueger@vermont.gov or 802-828-1589, or Jen Hutchinson at jennifer.hutchinson@vermont.gov.