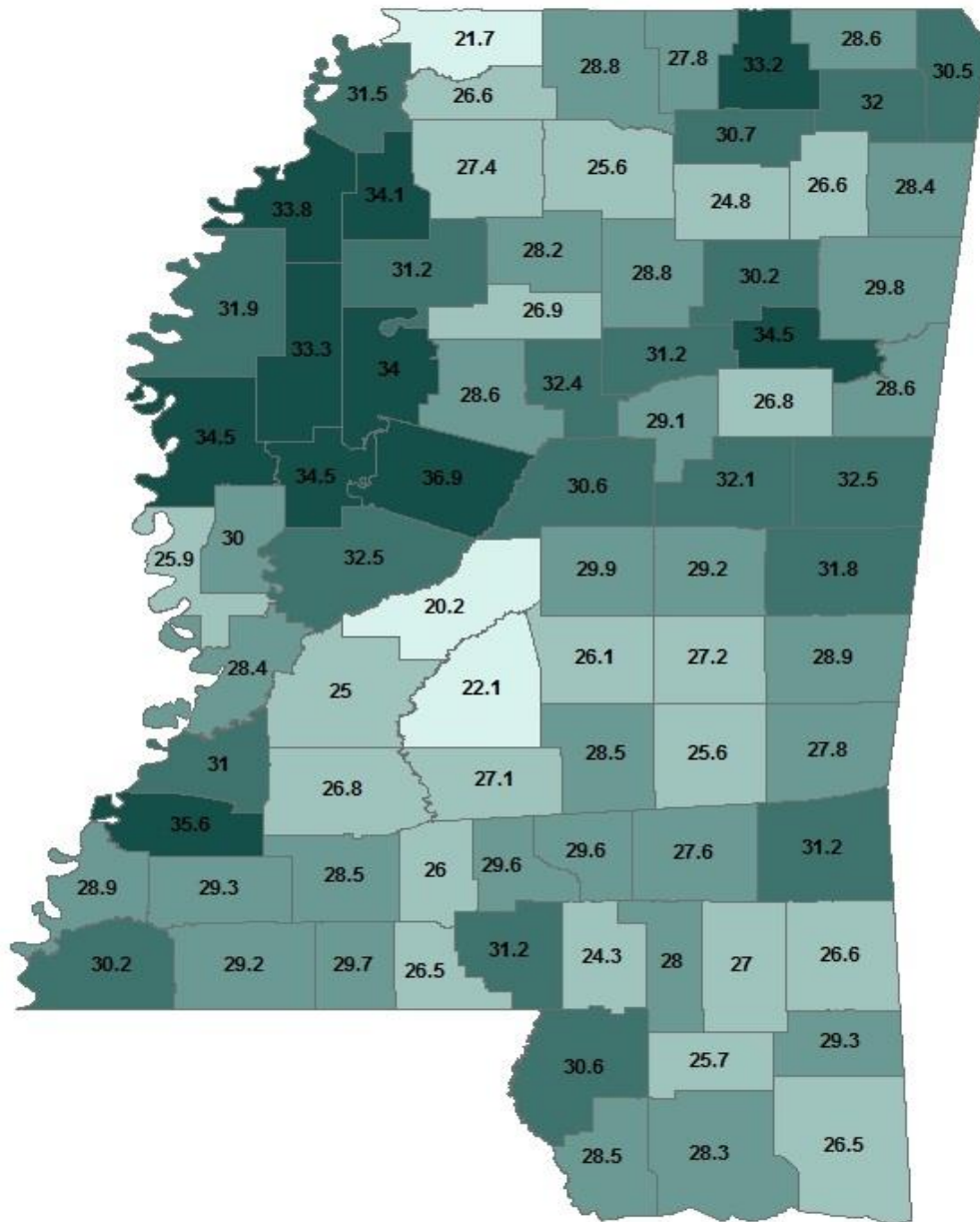


A School-Based Strategy to Improve Food Access in High Poverty Communities: Mississippi's Implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision

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Mississippi Statistics

- Mississippi is among top 5 states with highest food insecure children (29%)
- Mississippi has the highest child poverty rate (34.7%)
- Mississippi has the highest number of obese youth between ages 10 and 17 (21%)
- Mississippians ranks 1st with the least consumption of fruits (50.8%) and vegetables (32.3%) less than once daily



Child Food Insecurity Rates, Mississippi (2013)



Community Eligibility Provision

- The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 funds free lunch programs and child nutrition programs along with setting new nutrition standards for schools.
- The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) provides free lunch and breakfast to all students without collecting applications.
- CEP uses information from other programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Temporary Assistance Program for Needy Families (TANF) to determine eligibility.
- Schools and districts with 40% of students who are in foster care or Head Start, are homeless, migrant or living in households that receive SNAP/Food Stamps, TANF cash assistance or the Food Distribution on Indian Reservation benefits are eligible.

Benefits of CEP

- Lessens administrative work—schools no longer have to collect and verify school meal applications and can focus on feeding children.
- Increases participation—in the initial pilot states, schools that implemented the provision for two years increased breakfast participation by 25 percent and lunch participation by 13 percent.
- Facilitates implementation of alternative breakfast service models—when schools don't have to collect fees or count each meal served by fee category, it simplifies implementation of breakfast in the classroom and “grab and go” service models that can boost participation further.
- Improves the financial viability of school nutrition programs—when participation increases, school districts can take advantage of economies of scale, and reinvest additional revenue to improve nutrition quality and provide staff training.
- Eliminates unpaid meal fees—when all children eat at no charge, the school district does not have to collect unpaid fees from families.
- Schools with identified student percentage (ISP) of 60% or higher will have 100% of their meals served reimbursed at the free rate.

CEP Pilot Study

- In schools that implemented CEP in the 2011-2012 school year in Illinois, Kentucky and Michigan:
- Breakfast participation increased 25 percent, from 44 percent in October 2010 to 56 percent in October 2012
- Lunch participation increased 13 percent, from 69 percent in October 2010 to 78 percent in October 2012
- For school districts that implement CEP district-wide in 2011-2012 in Detroit Public Schools,
- Breakfast participation increased by 15 percent, or 7,400 additional students per day
- Lunch participation increased by 30 percent, or nearly 14,000 additional students per day.

Implementation of CEP 2014-2015 School Year

- 13, 819 schools
- 2, 218 school districts
- 6.4 Million children are enrolled in CEP Schools
- 257 Mississippi schools adopted CEP
- 42 School districts participation
- 136,095 Mississippi children are enrolled in CEP

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