

Survey Results:

Benefits of Direct Certification with Medicaid



California districts have a new opportunity to increase district funding, support low-income students, and strengthen their school meal programs. The opportunity, Direct Certification with Medicaid (DC-M), automatically enrolls students in the school meal program through a confidential, seamless, and paperless process using Medicaid data. The statewide opportunity comes after the program was successfully piloted in 14 California districts. California Food Policy Advocates surveyed these districts to learn more about their experience with the program.

Respondents reported a variety of benefits of DC-M to their district, nutrition services department, and students, including:¹

DISTRICTS	NUTRITION SERVICES	STUDENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in district funding through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) from increased enrollment in free and low-cost meals• Decrease in unpaid meal balances (which frees up district funds to be invested back into schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased support from district leadership for the meal programs• Reduced administrative burden and cost savings due to fewer applications needing to be processed and verified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More low-income students benefitted from nutritious meals due to increased enrollment and participation in the meal programs. (Eating school meals supports student health, attendance, and academic success.²)

Universally Free Meals & the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

“*In San Diego Unified, 18 more schools can now provide free meals to all students using CEP thanks to Direct Certification with Medicaid.*” –Jennifer Marrone, Business Manager, San Diego Unified Food & Nutrition Services

High-poverty schools can be fully reimbursed for providing breakfast and lunch free of charge to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). DC-M has helped schools qualify for CEP, by increasing the number of students directly certified for meals. Providing universally free meals **eliminates unpaid meal balances, increases participation in the meal program, and ensures more kids are nourished and ready to learn!** Learn more about the benefits of universal free meals at bit.ly/FreeMealsForAll

How to get started

It's easy! Direct Certification with Medicaid is now available in CALPADS.³ To get started, watch the California Department of Education's short training videos at cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/directcert.asp.

“*Direct Certification with Medicaid has been an easy process that has allowed our district to certify more students which is a benefit.*” – Marissa Curry, Director of Nutrition Services, Red Bluff Joint Union High School District

¹ Survey results are available at http://cfpa.net/ChildNutrition/ChildNutrition_CFPAPublications/MDCSurvey-Summary-2017.pdf

² California Food Policy Advocates. "Research Summary: School Nutrition and Academic Achievement." Available at http://cfpa.net/ChildNutrition/Education%20Reform/CFPA_LCAP_Research%20Summary%20and%20Overview_FINAL_16_12_06.pdf

³ California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS)