

How to Apply to Become a Sponsor in School Meal Programs

Federal school nutrition programs in California are administered by the California Department of Education (CDE), Nutrition Services Division. To apply to participate in these programs, you will need to contact the CDE's School Nutrition Programs Unit at 916-322-1450 or 800-952-5609, option 2. You will be directed to a School Nutrition Programs Analyst who will help get you started and send you the forms needed by your district/agency to apply for the program.

The Child Nutrition Information and Payment System (CNIPS) is a Web-based system for administering the federal and state nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Food Distribution Program, Special Milk Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and the Seamless Summer Feeding Option Program. This system significantly streamlines, simplifies, and modernizes the ways in which local educational agencies (LEAs/sponsors) administer these programs. Applications, site changes, claims for reimbursement, and other administrative actions are submitted in CNIPS. The CNIPS Web page contains more information about the system and can be accessed at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/cn/#snp>.

A CNIPS tutorial is available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/cn/snptraining.asp>. This training page offers introductory "how-to" videos to acquaint you with the CNIPS system.

For more information on the School Nutrition Programs (SNP) Application Process see the Quick Reference Guide to the [SNP Application Process](#).

After you have reviewed the information contained in the Quick Reference Guide, try the "[Apply Your Knowledge](#)" self-check.

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