# NO KID HUNGRY®

# Title I Education Funding

## What is Title I Funding?

- This federal education funding is allocated to states "to provide all children significant opportunity to receive **a fair, equitable, and high-quality education**, and to close educational achievement gaps." (Elementary & Secondary Education Act, ESEA, Section 1001)

- Each year, states distribute about **$15 billion** in Title I funding to school districts. Funding can be used to support extra instruction, materials, afterschool/summer programming, etc.

- The amount of Title I funding that each state or school district receives is based on the **US census poverty data** for school-age children and is **not** based on free and reduced-price school meal data.

> ⭐ **Universal Free School Meals & Title 1 Funding** ⭐
>
> - Serving healthy school meals to all students at no cost with the **Community Eligibility Provision** (CEP), or other similar options, **does not** impact the amount of Title 1 funding that a state or school district receives.
> - Free and reduced-price school meal data is **not used** to determine how much Title 1 funding each school district receives.
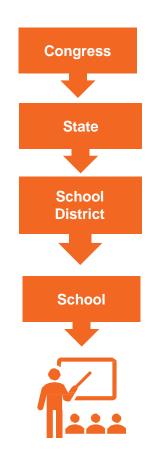
## How do Schools Receive Title I Funding?

- The **federal government** allocates Title I education funds to states based on US census child poverty data and the cost of education in each state. **States** give Title I funds to **school districts** using formulas that are also based on US census child poverty data.

- **School districts** distribute their funding to individual schools based on school poverty levels. Using one or more of the allowable poverty measures (see options on next page), the school district **ranks** schools to determine Title I eligibility.

## What are the Options for Measuring School Poverty and Ranking Schools?

- The number of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals is the most commonly used option for measuring school poverty and ranking individual schools for Title I funding.

- However, the federal government allows school districts to use one or more of several other poverty measures, including data sources that already exist and that tend to be more accurate and reliable. The number of students eligible for **Medicaid** and the count of **identified students** are two of these options.

- Additional options include census data, alternative household income forms, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participation data. All options are detailed on the next page.

**Congress**

↓

**State**

↓

**School District**

↓

**School**

↓

# School Level Poverty Measurement Options for Within-District Distribution of Title I Funding

School districts distribute their Title I funding to individual schools based on school poverty levels. Using one, or a combination of two or more of these allowable poverty measures (below), the school district ranks their schools. This ranking determines each school's eligibility to receive Title I funds. For additional information, please see www2.ed.gov/documents/essa-act-of-1965.pdf.

## ☐ Identified Students ★ Promising Practice ★

Identified students are directly certified for free or reduced-price meals by the direct certification data matching process between student rosters and enrollment in means-tested programs. Identified students include those in households with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), and in some states, Medicaid. In addition, students identified as experiencing homelessness, in foster care, migrant, in Head Start, or runaway are also included. Advantages of using this data to distribute Title I funding to schools include that **this data is reliable, verified, and already available to schools**.

## ☐ Students Eligible for Medicaid ★ Promising Practice ★

Medicaid is the public health insurance program for people in low-income households. Including Medicaid data in school poverty measurements is recommended for several reasons, including that the data is **reliable, verified, and already available**. Medicaid enrollment also includes millions of additional children, including income-eligible students that do not meet the more restrictive citizenship requirements for SNAP.

## ☐ Census Poverty Data

The number of school-age children, ages 5-17, that are living in households below the federal poverty level, as counted in the most recent US census.

## ☐ School Meal Application Data - Not Recommended -

Districts can use data collected on free and reduced-price school meal applications and/or an alternative household income form to identify students eligible for free meals (below 130% of the federal poverty level) or reduced-price (between 130-185% of the federal poverty level) meals. (Source: SP54-2016, question 77, https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP54-2016os.pdf). While this is the most commonly used option, collecting and processing school meal applications is costly and time-intensive. An additional disadvantage of using school meal application data to allocate education funding includes that applications collect self-reported income data, and since forms are optional, not all eligible students are counted.

## ☐ Students Receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The TANF program provides cash assistance for families with children.

## ☐ Secondary Schools Only: Poverty Data in Feeder Schools

In addition to the options above, secondary schools may determine their poverty level by calculating the average number of "economically disadvantaged" students in their feeder elementary schools. For more information, see section 1113(a)(5)(B)(ii) of the ESEA.