

Determining Free and Reduced Price Meal Eligibility

Benefit Issuance and Direct Certification

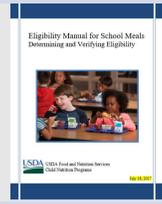
2022-2023



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REFERENCES FOR ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION:

- ❑ **Current Income Eligibility Guidelines**
- ❑ **Eligibility Manual for School Meals, Determining and Verifying Eligibility (July 2017) (EMSM)**



<http://www.fns.usda.gov/CND/governance/notices/iegs/EligibilityManual.pdf>



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Statutory and Regulatory Authority

Statutory authority for the Child Nutrition Programs includes the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (CNA). The statutory citations are, respectively, 42 United States Code 1751 et seq. and 42 United States Code 1771 et seq.

Regulatory authority is found, as follows, in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR):

- 7 CFR Part 210,
- 7 CFR Part 215,
- 7 CFR Part 220,
- 7 CFR Part 225,
- 7 CFR Part 226,
- 7 CFR Part 245



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The Policy Statement

Media Release

Application Packet



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Free and Reduced Price Meal Application Packet

- Make free/reduced price meal letters and applications available to each enrolled student;
- Only ONE HOUSEHOLD Application required per family.

APPLICATIONS MUST BE:

- Clear and simple in design
- Conform to federal requirements
- Approved by the State Agency



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Letters: General Information

- **When Can I Distribute Letters and Applications?**
 - No earlier than the beginning of the school year (Year Round School – June)
- **When can households apply?**
 - A household may apply for benefits at any time during the school year.
- **When is an application not necessary?**
 - No application is necessary if the household was notified by the SFA that all children have been directly certified.



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The letter to the household must also contain:

- The most current NDS

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/civil-rights/usda-nondiscrimination-statement-other-fns-programs>



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US Citizenship

United States citizenship or immigration status is not a condition of eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits.



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Foreign Language Translation Applications

- Non-English letters and applications must be available when a significant number of the population needs info in a language other than English.

FNS website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/translated-applications> contains samples of numerous translations



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Electronic and Scanned Applications:

- The SFA may also scan paper applications. When using electronic and scanned applications:
 - All disclosure restrictions must be met
 - <http://www.fns.usda.gov/update-electronic-transactions-child-nutrition-programs-1>
 - The system should include a statement explaining how to obtain a paper application
 - The process for scanning applications must meet all requirements.

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Electronic and Scanned Applications:

- The system must include a question or data field to indicate a child's Head Start, Migrant, Runaway, Foster, or Homeless status.
- The system may ask for a student identification number, household address, school, grade or a child's birth date.
- The SFA is encouraged to amend the electronic application to reflect the FNS prototype application.

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Disclaimer:

- USDA, FNS or the State Agency do not evaluate, recommend, approve, or endorse any software used for certification or verification purposes. There are no Federal specifications for software vendors.



DISCLAIMER

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F&R Applications - Processing Timeframe

- Applications for the new school year should be processed **IMMEDIATELY**
- What is the effective date of student eligibility?
 - The date the complete application is submitted and date stamped as received OR
 - The date the parent submits the application.
- The SFA must not delay approval of applications if the household fails to provide any information that is not required.

PROCESS IMMEDIATELY

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What is a complete application?

- **Income households:**
 - ✓ Names of ALL household members;
 - ✓ Last four digits of SS# of adult signing the application OR indication of no SS#;
 - ✓ Income identified by each household member, \$0, or if left blank it is an indication of none;
 - ✓ Adult signature.

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Incomplete Applications



If an application is missing **REQUIRED** information...

- You may contact the household by phone or in writing, document the details of the contact, date and initial the entry.
- **Exception: If application is missing adult signature, then it MUST be returned to the household.**

****Every reasonable effort should be made to obtain missing information, or clear up inconsistencies prior to denying an application.*

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Extending Benefits

Categorical eligibility for free benefits is extended to all children in a household when the application lists a valid Assistance Program's case number for any household member.



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The Basis of Eligibility

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The Basis of Eligibility

Eligibility



In this section, you will find information to determine:

- Household composition when making an income eligibility determination,
- Household reportable income
- Categorical eligibility

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Reimbursement

In order to claim Federal reimbursement for student meals, the SFA must have EITHER:

- an eligible Income application or Categorical Eligible application, or
- a list of Directly Certified students; or
- a list of Migrant, Homeless, or Runaway students; or
- a list of federally-funded Head Start students; or
- check Foster Child(ren); or
- an emergency application filed on behalf of the student

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Determining Eligibility Based on Income Applications

Compare the household size and the total household **GROSS** income to the applicable Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs).

2022-2023
INCOME ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS
EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2022 - APRIL 30, 2023

Household Size	ANNUAL		MONTHLY		TRICE PER QUARTER		EVERY TWO WEEKS		WEEKLY	
	Free	Reduced	Free	Reduced	Free	Reduced	Free	Reduced	Free	Reduced
1	17,067	20,162	1,422	1,681	127	1,401	408	467	348	404
2	23,883	28,019	1,984	2,335	165	1,942	578	653	488	562
3	30,699	35,896	2,546	2,983	213	2,485	773	872	652	752
4	37,515	43,773	3,108	3,645	259	3,038	978	1,117	832	952
5	44,331	51,250	3,670	4,295	305	3,532	1,183	1,352	992	1,152
6	51,147	58,728	4,232	4,957	351	4,087	1,388	1,587	1,192	1,392
7	57,963	66,206	4,794	5,519	397	4,581	1,593	1,822	1,392	1,592
8	64,779	73,684	5,356	6,081	443	5,075	1,798	2,024	1,592	1,792
9	71,595	81,162	5,918	6,643	489	5,569	1,993	2,229	1,592	1,992
10	78,411	88,640	6,480	7,205	535	6,063	2,198	2,454	1,592	2,192
11	85,227	96,118	7,042	7,767	581	6,557	2,393	2,659	1,592	2,392
12	92,043	103,596	7,604	8,329	627	7,051	2,598	2,915	1,592	2,592
13	98,859	111,074	8,166	8,891	673	7,545	2,793	3,170	1,592	2,792
14	105,675	118,552	8,728	9,453	719	8,039	2,998	3,426	1,592	2,992
15	112,491	126,030	9,290	10,015	765	8,533	3,193	3,681	1,592	3,192
16	119,307	133,508	9,852	10,577	811	9,027	3,398	3,937	1,592	3,392
17	126,123	140,986	10,414	11,139	857	9,521	3,593	4,192	1,592	3,592
18	132,939	148,464	10,976	11,701	903	10,015	3,798	4,448	1,592	3,792
19	139,755	155,942	11,538	12,263	949	10,509	3,993	4,703	1,592	3,992
20	146,571	163,420	12,100	12,825	995	11,003	4,198	4,959	1,592	4,192
21	153,387	170,898	12,662	13,387	1,041	11,497	4,393	5,214	1,592	4,392
22	160,203	178,376	13,224	13,949	1,087	11,991	4,598	5,470	1,592	4,592
23	167,019	185,854	13,786	14,511	1,133	12,485	4,793	5,725	1,592	4,792
24	173,835	193,332	14,348	15,073	1,179	12,979	4,998	5,981	1,592	4,992
25	180,651	200,810	14,910	15,635	1,225	13,473	5,193	6,237	1,592	5,192
26	187,467	208,288	15,472	16,197	1,271	13,967	5,398	6,492	1,592	5,392
27	194,283	215,766	16,034	16,759	1,317	14,461	5,593	6,748	1,592	5,592
28	201,099	223,244	16,596	17,321	1,363	14,955	5,798	7,003	1,592	5,792
29	207,915	230,722	17,158	17,883	1,409	15,449	5,993	7,259	1,592	5,992
30	214,731	238,200	17,720	18,445	1,455	15,943	6,198	7,514	1,592	6,192
31	221,547	245,678	18,282	19,007	1,501	16,437	6,393	7,770	1,592	6,392
32	228,363	253,156	18,844	19,569	1,547	16,931	6,598	8,025	1,592	6,592
33	235,179	260,634	19,406	20,131	1,593	17,425	6,793	8,281	1,592	6,792
34	241,995	268,112	19,968	20,693	1,639	17,919	6,998	8,536	1,592	6,992
35	248,811	275,590	20,530	21,255	1,685	18,413	7,193	8,792	1,592	7,192
36	255,627	283,068	21,092	21,817	1,731	18,907	7,398	9,047	1,592	7,392
37	262,443	290,546	21,654	22,379	1,777	19,401	7,593	9,303	1,592	7,592
38	269,259	298,024	22,216	22,941	1,823	19,895	7,798	9,558	1,592	7,792
39	276,075	305,502	22,778	23,503	1,869	20,389	7,993	9,813	1,592	7,992
40	282,891	312,980	23,340	24,065	1,915	20,883	8,198	10,069	1,592	8,192
41	289,707	320,458	23,902	24,627	1,961	21,377	8,393	10,324	1,592	8,392
42	296,523	327,936	24,464	25,189	2,007	21,871	8,598	10,580	1,592	8,592
43	303,339	335,414	25,026	25,751	2,053	22,365	8,793	10,835	1,592	8,792
44	310,155	342,892	25,588	26,313	2,100	22,859	8,998	11,091	1,592	8,992
45	316,971	350,370	26,150	26,875	2,146	23,353	9,193	11,346	1,592	9,192
46	323,787	357,848	26,712	27,437	2,192	23,847	9,398	11,602	1,592	9,392
47	330,603	365,326	27,274	27,999	2,238	24,341	9,593	11,857	1,592	9,592
48	337,419	372,804	27,836	28,561	2,284	24,835	9,798	12,113	1,592	9,792
49	344,235	380,282	28,398	29,123	2,330	25,329	9,993	12,368	1,592	9,992
50	351,051	387,760	28,960	29,685	2,376	25,823	10,198	12,624	1,592	10,192
51	357,867	395,238	29,522	30,247	2,422	26,317	10,393	12,879	1,592	10,392
52	364,683	402,716	30,084	30,809	2,468	26,811	10,598	13,135	1,592	10,592
53	371,499	410,194	30,646	31,371	2,514	27,305	10,793	13,390	1,592	10,792
54	378,315	417,672	31,208	31,933	2,560	27,799	10,998	13,646	1,592	10,992
55	385,131	425,150	31,770	32,495	2,606	28,293	11,193	13,901	1,592	11,192
56	391,947	432,628	32,332	33,057	2,652	28,787	11,398	14,157	1,592	11,392
57	398,763	440,106	32,894	33,619	2,698	29,281	11,593	14,412	1,592	11,592
58	405,579	447,584	33,456	34,181	2,744	29,775	11,798	14,668	1,592	11,792
59	412,395	455,062	34,018	34,743	2,790	30,269	11,993	14,923	1,592	11,992
60	419,211	462,540	34,580	35,305	2,836	30,763	12,198	15,179	1,592	12,192
61	426,027	470,018	35,142	35,867	2,882	31,257	12,393	15,434	1,592	12,392
62	432,843	477,496	35,704	36,429	2,928	31,751	12,598	15,690	1,592	12,592
63	439,659	484,974	36,266	36,991	2,974	32,245	12,793	15,945	1,592	12,792
64	446,475	492,452	36,828	37,553	3,020	32,739	12,998	16,201	1,592	12,992
65	453,291	499,930	37,390	38,115	3,066	33,233	13,193	16,456	1,592	13,192
66	460,107	507,408	37,952	38,677	3,112	33,727	13,398	16,712	1,592	13,392
67	466,923	514,886	38,514	39,239	3,158	34,221	13,593	16,967	1,592	13,592
68	473,739	522,364	39,076	39,801	3,204	34,715	13,798	17,223	1,592	13,792
69	480,555	529,842	39,638	40,363	3,250	35,209	13,993	17,478	1,592	13,992
70	487,371	537,320	40,200	40,925	3,296	35,703	14,198	17,734	1,592	14,192
71	494,187	544,798	40,762	41,487	3,342	36,197	14,393	17,989	1,592	14,392
72	501,003	552,276	41,324	42,049	3,388	36,691	14,598	18,245	1,592	14,592
73	507,819	559,754	41,886	42,611	3,434	37,185	14,793	18,500	1,592	14,792
74	514,635	567,232	42,448	43,173	3,480	37,679	14,998	18,756	1,592	14,992
75	521,451	574,710	43,010	43,735	3,526	38,173	15,193	19,011	1,592	15,192
76	528,267	582,188	43,572	44,297	3,572	38,667	15,398	19,267	1,592	15,392
77	535,083	589,666	44,134	44,859	3,618	39,161	15,593	19,522	1,592	15,592
78	541,899	597,144	44,696	45,421	3,664	39,655	15,798	19,778	1,592	15,792
79	548,715	604,622	45,258	45,983	3,710	40,149	15,993	20,033	1,592	15,992
80	555,531	612,100	45,820	46,545	3,756	40,643	16,198	20,289	1,592	16,192
81	562,347	619,578	46,382	47,107	3,802	41,137	16,393	20,544	1,592	16,392
82	569,163	627,056	46,944	47,669	3,848	41,631	16,598	20,800	1,592	16,592
83	575,979	634,534	47,506	48,231	3,894	42,125	16,793	21,055	1,592	16,792
84	582,795	642,012	48,068	48,793	3,940	42,619	16,998	21,311	1,592	16,992
85	589,611	649,490	48,630	49,355	3,986	43,113	17,193	21,566	1,592	17,192
86	596,427	656,968	49,192	49,917	4,032	43,607	17,398	21,822	1,592	17,392
87	603,243	664,446	49,754	50,479	4,078	44,101	17,593	22,077	1,592	17,592
88	610,059	671,924	50,316	51,041	4,124	44,595	17,798			



Determining Household Composition (Special Situations)

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Household Compositions

Adopted Child	An adopted child for whom a household has accepted legal responsibility is considered to be a member of the household.
Child Attending An Institution/RCCI	A child who attends, but does not reside, in an institution is considered a member of the household in which the child is a resident.

Illinois State Board of Education PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Household Compositions

Child Residing In An Institution/RCCI	A child who is a resident of a non-participating institution and attends a participating school during the week, or a child who resides in a participating RCCI, is considered a household of one.
Child Away At School	A child who is temporarily away at school (e.g., attending boarding school or college) is included as a member of the household.

Illinois State Board of Education PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Household Compositions

Child Living With One Parent, Relative or Friend	In the case where a child resides with one parent or a relative, the child is considered to be a member of the household.
Families With Joint Custody	When joint custody has been awarded and the child physically changes residence, the child is considered part of the household where the child resides.

Public Instruction

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Household Compositions

Emancipated Child	A child living alone or as a separate economic unit is considered to be a household of one.
Child Paying Room and Board	In most situations, these children are not considered to be a household of one and are instead included in the larger household for purposes of determining eligibility.

Public Instruction

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Household Compositions

Foreign Exchange Student	A foreign exchange student is considered to be a member of the household (the "host household") in which the foreign exchange student resides.
Foster Child	A foster child is a child whose care and placement is the responsibility of an agency that administers a State plan

Public Instruction

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Household Compositions

Family Members Living Apart	Family members who are living apart on a temporary basis are considered household members.
Deployed Service Personnel	Members of the armed services who are activated or deployed in support of any military combat operation are counted as household members.

Arkansas Department of PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Determining Household Income (Reportable)

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Determining Reportable Income

- **Income** is any money (Before Deductions) received on a recurring basis, including earnings, pensions, and child or spousal support.
- **Gross Earned Income** means all money earned before such deductions as income taxes, employee's Social Security taxes, insurance premiums, and bonds.
- **Current income** means the gross income received by a household, before deductions, for the current month

Arkansas Department of PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Each Household Must Provide:

- Total amount of current gross income.
- Report in whole dollars only.
- Income earned or received by adults and enrolled students must be identified with the individual who received it and the source.



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Indication of NO Income

- Each household member who does not have income should also be identified. Household members must be asked to report their status as "zero income" earners.
- When no income is provided for any of the adult household members, the application is still considered complete.



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Determining Household Income (By Category and Description)

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Income Eligibility

The SFA compares household size and income to the current Income Eligibility Guidelines –

- If multiple incomes with different pay frequencies are listed on application, LEA must annualize all income received by the household by multiplying:

Weekly	X 52
Bi-Weekly Income (every 2 weeks)	X 26
Semi-Monthly (twice a month)	X 24
Monthly (once a month)	X 12

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Earnings From Work:

- Wages, salaries, tips;
- Net income from self-owned business including farms;
- Strike benefits, unemployment compensation, and worker's compensation; and
- Military basic pay and cash bonuses and allowances for off-base housing, food, and clothing

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Other Income:

- Unemployment benefits;
- Worker's compensation;
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
- Regular cash assistance from State or local govt;
- Alimony payments;
- Child support payments;
- Veteran's benefits;
- Adoption assistance payments.

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Determining Household Income
(Special Situations)



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Special Situations

Seasonal Workers	The household may project its annual rate of income, and report this amount as its current income.
Self-Employed	Self-employed persons may use last year's income as a basis to project their current year's net income, unless their current net income provides a more accurate measure.

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Special Situations

Income from Wages and Self Employment	Income must be listed separately
Income From Rental Property	For households with rental properties, income includes money derived from the rental of rooms, apartments, homes and other leases

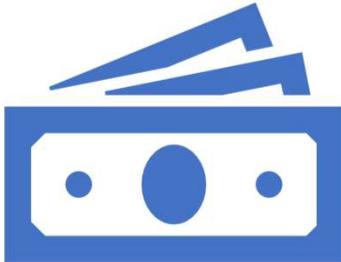
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Special Situations	
Military Benefits	For non-deployed service members, income includes benefits paid directly to the service member, such as food, clothing allowances and housing allowances.
Foster Child's Income	The foster child may be included as a household member and any personal income received by the foster child is reportable

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Special Situations	
Child's Income	Infrequent earnings, such as income from occasional baby-sitting or mowing lawns, are not counted as income and should not be listed on the application.
Alimony and Child Support	Any money received by a household in the form of alimony or child support is considered income to the receiving household.
Garnished Wages and Bankruptcy	In the case of garnished wages and income ordered to be used in a specified manner, the total gross income must be considered regardless of whatever portions are garnished or used to pay creditors.

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Income Exclusions	
	

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Income Exclusions



- Any cash income or value of benefits excluded by statute, such as the value of benefits under FNS (SNAP);
- Payments received from a foster care agency or court for the care of foster children;
- Student financial assistance provided for the costs of attendance at an educational institution
- Infrequent earnings received on an irregular basis, such as payment for occasional baby-sitting or yard work.

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Determining Categorical Eligibility



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Assistance Program Participants

- A child that is a member of a household that receives benefits from an Assistance Program is categorically eligible for free meals or milk.
- SFAs are required to use direct certification to identify children receiving benefits.
- When using an application, SFAs must give households the opportunity to provide SNAP/FNS, Work First/TANF, or FDPIR case numbers or identifiers

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Assistance Program Participants (By Application)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a household submits an application indicating an Assistance Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicable programs must be indicated • The case number must be recognized as belonging to an Assistance Program. • The child must be given free meals. • The SFA official should compare the applications with case numbers to the direct certification list
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Other Source Categorically Eligible Program Participants	
Other Source Categorical Eligibility of one child does not convey free meal benefits to other children in the household.	SFA must confirm the child(ren)'s status before meal benefits can be provided.

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What do you do when...	
Direct Certification Matches	
When a match is found: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application must be disregarded; • The family must be placed on the direct certification list; and • Categorical eligibility must be extended to all children in the household 	When a match is not found: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LEA should contact the household for further clarification; or • Verify the application for cause.

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The Direct Certification Process

Acceptable Methods for Identifying Assistance Program Eligible Students

- Submission of a household application that indicates a case number for any household (see *Assessing Completeness of Categorically Eligible Applications*);
- A letter from an Assistance Program agency official or a letter provided to the household, which in turn, the household provides to the school;
- List of eligible children exchanged between an LEA and local Assistance Program officials, including a signature and the date; and
- Completion of an application by a local school official with direct knowledge of the child's status.

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Other Source Categorical Eligibility Descriptions

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Other Source Categorical Eligibility

- The following are acceptable methods for identifying Other Source Categorical Eligible children:
 - A household application indicating "Other Source Categorical Eligibility"
 - A form letter from an Other Source Categorical Eligible Agency
 - A signed and dated list of eligible children exchanged between the Other Source Categorical Eligible officials and the LEA.

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Other Source Categorical Eligibility (Migrant Education Program - MEP)

Acceptable documentation for MEP participation includes:

- List of names of participating children;
- Effective dates and the signature of a MEP official; or
- A letter from an MEP official or local educational liaison provided by the household, to the school which confirms the child currently participates in MEP.



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Other Source Categorical Eligibility (Runaway and Homeless-RHYA)

- Programs under the runaway and homeless youth act (RHYA)
- Acceptable documentation for RHYA participation includes:
 - List of names of participating children;
 - Effective dates and the signature of an RHYA official; or
 - A letter from a RHYA official or homeless liaison provided by the household to the school

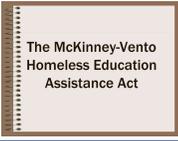


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Other Source Categorical Eligibility (McKinney – Vento Homeless Assistance Act)

A student is considered homeless if they are

- Lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence
- Identified as residing in a homeless shelter by an official of the shelter



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McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Acceptable Documentation Obtained from LEA Homeless Liaison

- List of names of homeless children
- Effective dates and signature of a homeless liaison
- A letter from a homeless liaison provided by the household to the school

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Homelessness Due to Disaster

CHILDREN DETERMINED TO BE HOMELESS DUE TO DISASTER ARE CATEGORICALLY ELIGIBLE FOR FREE MEALS

Maintain their eligibility status for the entire year and up to 30 days in the next school year.

SP 46-2014, CACFP 12-2014, SFSP 18-2014: Disaster Response, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster-response-0>

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Foster Children

A foster child is a child whose care and placement is the responsibility of a State or local welfare agency

A child may still be considered a foster child if placed with relatives provided the placement is made by the State or local foster care system or courts.

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Foster Children

Acceptable documentation include:

- An application that indicates the child’s status as a foster child
- An electronic or computer match directly to the SFA indicating the status of the child as a foster child without further application;
- A letter from the State or local welfare agency or court confirming the child’s status as a foster child;
- A list of children in foster care from the welfare agency or court.

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Households That Fail to Apply (Emergency Situations ONLY)

When local officials complete an application for a student, the following conditions apply:

The Application must contain:

- Documentation of the circumstance and the best known reason the child is eligible
- Child(ren)’s name(s), school(s), grade(s), home address, etc., and
- Signature of the school official completing the application.



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Households That Fail to Apply (Emergency Situations ONLY)

More info...

- Names of household members, SS#, adult signature need NOT be secured;
- Application is excluded from verification;
- Household **MUST** be notified of eligibility



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Carryover of Previous Year's Eligibility

- A student's eligibility from the previous school year **carries over** for up to 30 operating days into the new school year OR
- Until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first!
- Does not delay processing applications, SFAs still have 10 days to process application once submitted.

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Carryover WITHIN an SFA

When a student moves to a new school, the SFA must carryover eligibility

- Children with approved applications on file the previous year
- Children who are newly enrolled in the LEA but reside in a household where another child (i.e. sibling) has an approved application
- Children directly certified for free meal benefits the previous year

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Carryover WITHIN an SFA

When a student moves to a new school, the SFA must carryover eligibility

- Children determined Other Source Categorically Eligible for free benefits in the previous school year; and
- Children in kindergarten who were enrolled in Head Start under the jurisdiction of the same LEA during the previous school year.

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Carryover BETWEEN SFAs

The new SFA is encouraged to use the former SFA's eligibility determination from the previous school year and carry over the child's eligibility status.

The new SFA may accept the former SFA's eligibility determination during the carryover period without incurring liability for the accuracy of the determination.

Carryover between SFAs is strongly encouraged so students' access to school meals is not disrupted.

Public Instruction

66

Carryover FROM CEP SCHOOL

At the State Agency’s discretion, children may carry over free meal eligibility from the provision school and be offered free reimbursable meals for up to 30 operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made for the current school year, whichever comes first.

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Transfer of Eligibility

Unlike carryover, which occurs at the start of a new school year, transfer of eligibility applies when a child transfers to another school during the school year.

When a child transfers to another school, the date of the transfer must be noted on the application and the point of service must be updated to include the new student’s information.

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Transferring Within An SFA



- When a child transfers to a new school within the same SFA, the new school must accept the eligibility determination from the child’s former school, if the child has an individual eligibility determination.

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Transferring within an SFA

Non-Provision School → **Non-Provision School**

Eligibility for free and reduced price meal benefits for children from non-Provision and non-CEP schools must transfer to schools within the same SFA.

Provision 1, 2 or 3 or CEP School → **Non-Provision Schools**

A child transferring within the same SFA from a Provision 1, 2, 3 or CEP school to a non-Provision school must be given free reimbursable meals for up to 10 operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first.



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Transferring Between SFAs

Non-Provision School → **Non-Provision School**

Eligibility for free and reduced price meal benefits for children from non-Provision schools may transfer from the former SFA to the new SFA. The new school will not incur liability for the accuracy of the former determination

Provision 1, 2 or 3 or CEP School → **Non-Provision School**

Effective July 2019, SFAs must provide free reimbursable meals for 10 operating days for a child who transfers to a different SFA from a Provision 1, 2, 3, or CEP school to a non-Provision school in another SFA.



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Application Processing TimeFrame

- According to 7 CFR 245.6(c)(6)(i), within 10 operating days of receipt of the application:
 - An eligibility determination must be made
 - The family must be notified of its status, and
 - The status must be implemented.



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Complete Applications

- The LEA must not delay approval of applications if the household fails to provide any non-essential information.
- As stated at 7 CFR 245.6(a)(1), the information requested in the application should be limited to information required to demonstrate that a household does (or does not) meet the eligibility criteria for free and reduced-price meals.

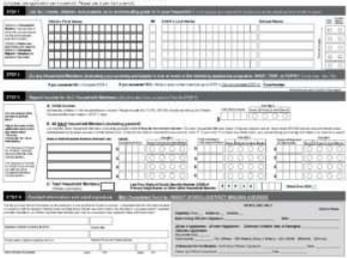


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Independent Review of Applications

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Independent Review of Applications



- The second review must be conducted by an independent individual or entity that did not make the original eligibility determination.
- The second review must determine whether the application is complete.

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Approved Applications

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Notification of Application Approval

- Households must be notified, either in writing or verbally, of their eligibility status as approved for free or reduced-price benefits.
- Determining officials must record the eligibility determination
- Recording this information will depend on the LEA's application method:

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Denied Applications

- If a household provides an incomplete application or does not meet the eligibility criteria for free or reduced priced benefits, the application must be denied.
- The notification must advise the household of the reason for denial of benefits



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Denied Applications



- Determining officials must record the eligibility determination and notification in an easily referenced format that includes the:
 - Denial date;
 - Reason for denial;
 - Date the denial notice was sent; and
 - Signature or initials of the determining official (may be electronic, where applicable).

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Notice of Adverse Action



- All currently certified households for whom benefits are to be reduced or terminated must be given 10 calendar days' written notice
- The first day of the advance notice period is the day the notice is sent.
- The SFA cannot notify the household of adverse action by phone only.

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Notice of Adverse Action

- A notice of adverse action must advise the household of the following:
 - Change in benefits;
 - An appeal must be filed within the 10 calendar days advance notice period to ensure continued benefits while awaiting a hearing and decision;
 - The household may reapply for benefits at any time during the school year

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Appeals and Hearing Procedures

- A household may appeal either the denial of benefits or the level of benefits
- The household may also request a conference with an appropriate LEA or school food service official prior to a formal hearing.

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Appeals and Hearing Procedures
(7 CFR 245.7)



84

Benefits During An Appeal

When a household appeals a reduction or termination of benefits within the 10-calendar day advance notice period, the SFA must continue to provide the benefits for which the child was originally approved, until a final determination is made. The SFA may continue to claim reimbursement at that level during this period.



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Benefits During An Appeal

When a household does not request an appeal during the 10 calendar day advance notice period, benefits must be reduced or terminated no later than 10 operating days after the notice period. If the hearing official rules that benefits must be reduced, the actual reduction or termination of benefits must take place no later than 10 operating days after the hearing official's decision.



86

Determining Eligibility Special Situations



87

Applications - Different Eligibility Types

- In mixed households, Other Source Categorically Eligible children must receive free benefits, even if the other children listed on the application are determined ineligible or eligible for reduced price benefits.



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Applications - Residents of RCCIs

- Each child residing in an RCCI is considered a household of one. The documentation sheet must be signed by an appropriate official and include:
 - Child's name
 - Personal income received by the child,
 - Child's date of birth,
 - Date of admission/release
 - Official's title



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Reviewing applications based on income

- To be considered complete, an application must include all required information. Any application that is missing required information, contains inconsistent information, or is unclear is considered an incomplete application and should not be processed.
- Any missing information on the application must be provided by the household.

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How do I determine if an income application is complete?

- A complete income-based application must provide:
 - Names of all household members;
 - Amount, source, and frequency of current income
 - Signature of an adult household member; and
 - Last four digits of the Social Security Number
 - or an indication that no adult household member has a Social Security Number.

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Income Conversions

No Income Conversion Required: If a household has only one source of income, or if all sources are received in the same frequency, the LEA takes the sum of all income sources and compares the household's total income to the IEGs.

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Determining Eligibility (Applications Based On Income)

- It is the responsibility of the Determining Official to compute the household's total current income and compare the total amount to the appropriate IEGs.
- Determining officials must:
 - Determine reportable income.
 - Approval of applications, if appropriate
 - Obtain missing information, if possible.

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Is The Application Complete?

Case Number Application:	Other Categorical Eligibility Application	Foster Child Application:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names of the children for whom the application is made; SNAP/FNS, WorkFirst/TANF or FDIIR case number or identifier for the children or any household member listed on the application; and Signature of the adult household member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names of children for whom application is made; Indication of child's categorical eligibility status; and Signature of adult household member. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of the foster child; Indication of the child's foster care status; and Signature of an adult household member.

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Determining Eligibility for Categorically Eligible Applications

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Eligibility (Case Numbers)

The determining official must assure that the Assistance Program case number or other identifier, consistent with the identifiers used for the program in that State, are valid. Determining officials need to be familiar with the format of valid case numbers or other identifiers.

Note: Only the case number may be used to determine eligibility. For example, the electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card number used by SNAP may not be used to establish categorical eligibility.

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Eligibility (Other Source Categorical)

- Unlike categorical eligibility under Assistance Programs, which extends eligibility to all children in the household, Other Source Categorical Eligibility must be determined **individually for each child**.
- (Foster children, however, do not require confirmation of eligibility status prior to receiving benefits).

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Reviewing Direct Certification Assistance Programs

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Mandatory SNAP/FNS Direct Certification

- All SFAs must directly certify children who are members of households receiving SNAP/FNS benefits. If the child is determined eligible for free benefits through both an application and through direct certification, the application must be disregarded, and the child will be considered directly certified.

Work First/TANF and FDPIR Direct Certification

- SFAs are encouraged to conduct direct certification with Work First/TANF and FDPIR.

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Frequency of Direct Certification Efforts

- **Direct Certification Matches:** SFAs operating standard counting and claiming must conduct Direct Certification with FNS (SNAP) a minimum of three times during the school year.
 - Beginning of the school year;
 - Three months after the beginning of the school year; and
 - Six months after the beginning of the school year.



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Notification of Eligibility

- The SFA must notify the household about eligibility established through Direct Certification. The notification must include the following information:
 - The child is eligible for free benefits;
 - No further application is necessary;
 - An explanation of extended eligibility; and
 - How to notify the SFA if free benefits for directly certified children are not wanted.



101

Record Retention



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Applications

- All free and reduced-price applications must be kept on file for a minimum of three years after the final claim is submitted.
- Any application that was disregarded because all children in the household were determined categorically eligible through direct certification must be retained.
- Applications may be maintained at the school, the SFA, or another central location.



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Applications

Applications may be maintained at the school, the LEA, or another central location. Additionally, a list of eligible children by type must be maintained at the school. The LEA must ensure that:

- Changes in eligibility status are accurately and promptly recorded
- Adequate documentation for these transfers or changes is retained with the applications for 3 years.

Files must be kept longer if they are required by an audit; such files must be retained until resolution of the issues raised by the audit.

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CEP Retention



SFAs and schools operating CEP must retain records used in the development of the Identified Student Percentage (ISP) during the entire period the CEP is in effect.



All CEP records must be retained for three years after submission of the final claim for reimbursement. Records must continue to be retained if any audit findings from the period during which the records were in use remain outstanding.

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Direct Certification Documents

- LEAs must keep documentation for direct certification on file for a minimum of three years after submission of the final claim for reimbursement for the fiscal year to which the records apply.
- Documentation may be maintained either at the school or at a central location. A list of eligible children must be maintained at the school.

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CONFIDENTIALITY



BE AWARE...You can be fined up to \$1000 or imprisoned for 1 year, or both, for publishing, divulging, disclosing, or making known in any manner or extent not authorized by Federal law, any eligibility information.

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Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-CRISCRN%20ComplaintForm-0508-0002-505-11-28-17.pdf>. From any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax:
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email:
program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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**THANK YOU
FOR PARTICIPATING
IN TODAY'S PRESENTATION!**

If you have any questions, please contact your Zone
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