

# Important Reminders for Completing Direct Certification

This document provides important reminders regarding the direct certification (DC) process for school nutrition programs. For technical questions about accessing the system or data collection efforts, please contact the direct certification Help Desk at 860-713-6681. For questions about free and reduced-price application processing and DC regulations, please refer to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) *Eligibility Manual for School Meals*, or contact your school nutrition programs [county consultant](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).



## Direct Certification Contact Person

- Only one person per local educational agency (LEA) may be the DC contact with access to the [DC Web Application Sign In](#). For information regarding the DC process, see *The New Look of Direct Certification Webinar* and *PowerPoint presentation*.
- To determine the LEA's DC contact, refer to the [School Child Nutrition Programs Direct Certification Contact List](#).
- If the DC contact changes, notify Glenda Stuckey at [glenda.stuckey@ct.gov](mailto:glenda.stuckey@ct.gov) with the name, e-mail address and phone number of the new contact. Also **notify the food service director** so that the online agreement can be updated with the new contact information. The online agreement requires the name and contact information of the LEA's DC contact. When the CSDE has received and processed the new contact request, the new contact will receive a confirmation e-mail with instructions on how to set up a user ID and password.

## Interschool Agreement

- If the district has an interschool agreement with a **public** school and is claiming those meals or assisting with the processing of the school's free and reduced-price meal applications, the district may request (with the other district/school's approval) a login ID and password from the CSDE to access the district's DC database.
- If the district has an interschool agreement with a **private** school and is claiming those meals or assisting with the processing of the school's free and reduced-price meal applications, the district must work with the private school to gain access to their DC information. Private schools have a different process for obtaining DC data. For more information, see the CSDE's guide, *Direct Certification Manual for Private Schools*.

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## Accessing DC List

- Accessing the DC system is **not** optional. All LEAs that are collecting and approving free and reduced-price meal applications must access the DC website **at least once weekly**. The information is updated on Monday, unless it is a holiday. The database should be accessed on Wednesdays to allow the information to be completely updated. If you have questions regarding accessing the information, please contact the Help Desk at 860-713-6681.

## Case Management

- Students that were not matched at the CSDE/Department of Social Services level are placed in Case Management on the DC website. LEAs must access Case Management **weekly** to determine if any students in the LEA are directly certified. Note: If a student is matched, print a copy of the page **prior** to pressing the “Save Match” button. This will provide evidence that the student was matched through this process, and will be a reference point if the selection was made in error and needs to be reversed. ***If you made an error in matching a student, you must contact the Help Desk at 860-713-6681 and ask to open a ticket to reverse the process.***

## Statewide Search

- The “State Wide Search” button allows the DC contact to do a statewide search for a student that is not listed under the district. If the “State Wide Search” locates a student, you must **print a copy of the screen** prior to adding the student to your district’s DC list. This provides proof that the child was found in the DC system.

## DC List Codes

- The “Benefit Source” column on the DC spreadsheet shows the codes for each type of DC. It is important that the determining official use these codes when recording a student as being directly certified as free or reduced. This will help to ensure that students are included in the appropriate section on the FNS 742 Verification Collection Report. The USDA wants to know which students are directly certified as “FS,” “AF,” “OT,” and “RM”. In addition, the LEA must extend free benefits to all children in the household if a child is listed as “FS” or “AF” on the DC list. If a child is listed as “RM,” reduced-price benefits must be extended to all children in the household. Lastly, if a child is listed as “OT,” benefits are **not** extended to all children in the household.

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## Extending Eligibility

- An additional feature within the “State Wide Search” tab is the ability to search by the **Authorized Unit (AU) Number**. The AU is a data element that can be found on the “Review Matched” report and represents the unique number for a **household**. This AU Number will be shared by each child within the same household. It is therefore a good way to track households with multiple last names, and to track siblings within the household that attend different schools within the district (see example below).

Records shown below have been matched to the PSIS SASID module and Direct Certification databases. Status on the Direct Certification has been set to Certified.  
Benefit Source Key: FS=SNAP; AF=TFA (or TANF); OT=Foster, Homeless, Runaway, Head Start, Pre K Even Start.  
Note: A child in the Other (OT) benefit source category DOES NOT automatically determine that additional children in the same household qualify for benefits.

SASID	Client Number	Last Name	First Name	MI	DOB	Street Number	Street	City	Zip Addr	Au Num	Benefit Source	Date Certified	School Name
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## Resources

Direct Certification for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Direct-Certification>

Direct Certification Manual for Private Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/DirectCert/DirectCertificationManual\\_PrivateSchools.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/DirectCert/DirectCertificationManual_PrivateSchools.pdf)

Eligibility Manual for School Meals (USDA):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/USDA\\_eligibility\\_manual.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/USDA_eligibility_manual.pdf)

Interschool Agreements (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Forms-School-Nutrition-Programs/Interschool-Agreements>

School Child Nutrition Programs Direct Certification Contact List (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/DirectCert/DirectCertificationContacts.pdf>

The New Look of Direct Certification PowerPoint Presentation (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/DirectCert/DirectCertificationWebinar.pdf>

The New Look of Direct Certification Webinar (CSDE):

<https://www.ctvideo.ct.gov/SDE/DirectCertWindows.wmv>

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**Questions? Contact the Help Desk at 860-713-6681.**



For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Direct Certification for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/DirectCert/DirectCertificationReminders.pdf>.

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To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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