

Carryover versus Transfer of a Child's Meal Eligibility in the School Nutrition Programs

This document summarizes the differences between carrying over a child's eligibility status and transferring a child's eligibility status for the purposes of providing free and reduced-price meals in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs. The school nutrition programs include the [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#), [School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#), [Special Milk Program \(SMP\)](#), [Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\)](#) of the NSLP, and [Seamless Summer Option \(SSO\)](#) of the NSLP.

For more information, refer to the USDA's [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#) and visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Milk in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Note: Free and reduced-price meal applications are approved for the entire school year and up to 30 operating days in the next school year, unless the initial determination by the determining official was incorrect or the household was verified and documentation does not support the level of benefits originally approved for the household.



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Carryover of Previous Year's Eligibility

The LEA may carry over a child's eligibility status for the first 30 operating days (i.e., those days on which reimbursable meals or milk are provided by a school or another program sponsor) or until the LEA makes a new eligibility determination for the current school year, whichever comes first. Carryover allows students to continue receiving school meal benefits while families complete and submit, and schools process, applications. **The carryover period is not intended to delay the processing of applications.**

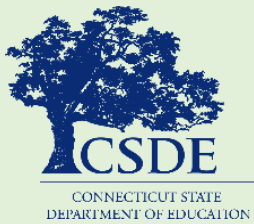
Note: The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) refers to a special alternative provision implemented in some schools that allows all students to have meals free of charge. For more information about the CEP and for a list of Connecticut sites participating in CEP, visit the CSDE's [CEP](#) webpage.

| Within the local educational agency (LEA) | When moving to a new LEA |
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| Carryover of eligibility within a LEA is mandatory, whether a child is continuing in the same school or will attend a different school within the same LEA . This also applies if the child is directly certified for free or reduced-price meals. | <p>For children who move to a new LEA, at the beginning of the new school year or during the summer months, the new LEA may use the former LEA's eligibility determination from the previous school year and carry over the eligibility status for up to 30 operating days, or until the LEA makes a new determination, whichever comes first. The new LEA may accept the former LEA's eligibility determination during the carryover period without incurring liability for the accuracy of the determination.</p> <p>This exception is only for the carryover period at the beginning of the new school year or during the summer.</p> |
| If a child is newly enrolled in the LEA, but resides in a household where another child (e.g., a sibling) was approved through direct certification or through an application in the previous year, carry over the sibling's eligibility for free or reduced-price benefits. | |
| If a child in kindergarten was enrolled in a federally funded Head Start program under the jurisdiction of the same LEA during the previous school year, carry over the free eligibility. | |
| If a child attended a CEP school and moves to a non-CEP school, the LEA may carry over free eligibility for 30 operating days, or until the LEA makes a new eligibility determination for the current school year, whichever comes first. | When children move from a school participating in the CEP to a non-CEP school in a different LEA at the beginning of the new school year , LEAs may carry over free meal eligibility from the CEP school and offer free reimbursable meals for up to 30 operating days, or until the LEA makes a new eligibility determination for the current school year, whichever comes first. |

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| Transfer of a Child's Eligibility | |
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| <p>Unlike carryover, which occurs at the start of a new school year, transfer of eligibility occurs when a child moves to another school during the school year. When a child transfers to another school, the determining official must note the transfer date on the application and the school food authority must update the point of service (POS) to include the new student's information. If the LEA has an application on file and any change occurs after the initial approval for the current school year, the determining official must: 1) note the change; 2) write the date of the change on the application; and 3) implement the change by updating rosters or other methods used at the POS, as necessary.</p> | |
| When transferring within the LEA | When transferring between LEAs |
| <p>Eligibility for free and reduced-price meal benefits must transfer to schools within the same LEA.</p> | <p>When a student transfers to a new LEA, the new LEA is permitted to accept the eligibility determination from the student's former LEA. The USDA strongly encourages LEAs and schools to accept the former LEA's eligibility determination. This helps ease the new student's transition and ensures there is no break in the student's meal access.</p> <p>The new LEA should retain written documentation of the eligibility determination made by the former LEA. An e-mail from the former LEA stating the eligibility status is sufficient.</p> <p>While the new LEA is not liable for the accuracy of the former LEA's determination, the accepting LEA should review the application for arithmetic errors and compare the income and household size to the applicable Income Eligibility Guidelines to ensure that the correct level of benefits was assigned. If the accepting or new LEA determines that an arithmetic error occurred, the accepting LEA must notify the household that they must submit a new application in order to determine benefits.</p> |
| <p>A child transferring within the same LEA from a CEP school to a non-CEP school must be given free reimbursable meals for up to 30 operating days, or until the LEA makes a new eligibility determination, whichever comes first.</p> | |

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For more information, review the USDA's publication, *Eligibility Manual for School Meals*, and visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Milk in 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/Forms/FreeRed/Carryover_versus_Transfer_of_Child_Eligibility_SNP.pdf.

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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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