

Procedures for Processing Free and Reduced-price Applications with a SNAP or TFA Case Number

This document summarizes the procedures for processing applications for free or reduced-price meals or free milk in the [school nutrition programs](#) and free meals in the [Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#) when a parent/guardian provides a handwritten case number for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Family Assistance (TFA). For additional guidance, refer to “Module 2: Processing Applications” of the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) training program, [Determining Eligibility in the School Nutrition Programs and Summer Food Service Program](#).

If the determining official (DO) receives an application from a parent/guardian that includes a handwritten case number for SNAP or TFA, the DO must complete the steps below **before** approving the application. The DO must validate the handwritten SNAP or TFA case number unless the household application includes income, and this income supports a free determination.

1. Check the direct certification (DC) list to determine if the student in the household is directly certified. If the student is included on the DC list, process the application as free (or reduced-price if listed as RM on the DC list) and extend free or reduced-price benefits as applicable, to all students in the household who are enrolled in the school/district. The application is not subject to verification.
2. If the students cannot be directly certified (i.e., the names of students do not appear on the DC list), review the application for income if the parent/guardian included income on the application. If the income supports a free determination, process the application as free. Note that this application is subject to verification if it is selected as part of the formal verification process.
3. If income is not provided or the income makes the application denied, the application cannot be approved. The DO must send a [parent notification letter](#) to the household requesting that the parent/guardian supply proof from the Department of Social Services (DSS) of a TFA or SNAP Client ID Case Number. If the parent/guardian does not submit the required information, the application must be considered incomplete and remain denied.
4. If the application has income that is determined as reduced but also lists a SNAP or TFA case number, the DO must contact the household to request proof of a SNAP or TFA client ID number. If the parent/guardian does not provide any documentation, the application must be processed and reduced benefits must be extended.

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The DO must review the SNAP or TFA benefit letter to ensure that it meets the requirements below.

1. The letter is from DSS and is on DSS letterhead.
2. The date on the letter reflecting the eligibility for SNAP or TFA benefits is current.
3. The address on the letter is the same address as the household submitting the application. There must be some proof that the person receiving the benefit is living in the same household as the children.
4. The letter indicates a monetary amount associated with the SNAP benefit (refer to page 67 in the USDA's [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#)). This does not apply to TFA benefits.

Note: Some SNAP households may be eligible for “zero benefits.” However, Section 9(b)(12)(A)(i) of the NSLA restricts categorical eligibility for free school meals based on SNAP participation to children who are members of a household receiving assistance under SNAP. Therefore, a child who is a member of a household that is receiving “zero benefits” from SNAP is **not** categorically eligible for free meals based on SNAP participation. In these situations, the DO must determine a child’s eligibility for free school meals using any of the following methods:

- a. household income on a household application;
- b. the [direct certification list](#) through extended eligibility or other direct certification determinator, i.e., TFA, Medicaid, or foster child status; or
- c. the appropriate official (i.e., the homeless liaison or foster care point of contact) confirming that the child is homeless, runaway, or a foster.

As a reminder, determining a student’s eligibility using a DSS letter must be tracked separately for reporting purposes on the FNS 742 Verification Summary Report. Additionally, the Connecticut electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card, known as the Connecticut CONNECT card, cannot be used as proof of SNAP or TFA benefits because this card is issued for other programs that do not make a student eligible for free meals or milk.

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Resources

[Determining Eligibility in the School Nutrition Programs and Summer Food Service Program](#)

(CSDE's Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Free Milk in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/eligibility-for-free-and-reduced-price-meals-and-free-milk-in-school-nutrition-programs/determining-eligibility-training>

[Direct Certification for School Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/direct-certification>

[Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Free Milk in School Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/eligibility-for-free-and-reduced-price-meals-and-free-milk-in-school-nutrition-programs>

[Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#) (USDA):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/forms/freered/usda_eligibility_manual.pdf

[Parent and Guardian Notification Letters](#) ("Parent and Guardian Notification Letters" section of CSDE's Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Free Milk in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/eligibility-for-free-and-reduced-price-meals-and-free-milk-in-school-nutrition-programs/parent-and-guardian-notification-letters>

For more information, refer to the USDA's [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#) and visit the CSDE's [Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Milk in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/forms/freered/procedures_processing_free_reduced_applications_providing_snap_tfa_number.pdf.

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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

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