

Webinar Questions and Answers

Building Success: What You Need to Know about Processing Applications

August 27, 2020

Question	Answer
1. If a child is full pay and later determined through DC to be FS or FM, are we required to make the child free based on the date of DC (and not prior)?	You would make the child eligible for free benefits through direct certification based on the date he/she was directly certified.
2. Can last year's application be used if it was dated after July 1st?	For this school year (SY) yes, since there were no significant changes in the application template. However, this is not recommended since USDA frequently makes annual updates to their application template and using an older form could mean that you are out of compliance with USDA's updates.
3. This is for online application services. The software requires parent account and unique activation code. Is this valid?	You need to work with your software company to determine why this is necessary. You do not want to create barriers when parents try to apply for free or reduced-price meals.
4. Clarification on last question: I have a POS system that allows you to fill out an application on-line but it requires a parent account and an activation code. I have told them that they can't have parent sign-in to an account in order to fill out an application on-line and that they should be able to fill it out without signing in. Am I correct?	Refer to Q3. Sometimes software companies may require this with the assumption that the household (HH) has already created a payment account for their child's paid meals or a la carte sales. Again, there should be no barriers to applying for meals.

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5. What is the determination on an application where a parent has identified the child as Foster but they are not on the DC list or a district provided list	When a parent/guardian submits an application and checks off that a child is a foster child, the foster child is determined as free and you do not need to validate that child's foster child status prior to approving the application. This is not considered direct certification because an application was submitted and a state agency did not make the determination. Also, you do not have to verify the household (HH) for cause unless you have reason to believe that the HH has intentionally left out their income. Refer to page 25 in the USDA's <i>Eligibility Manual for School Meals</i> .
6. Can applications and all that goes with it go home via email or does it have to be a hard copy?	Please refer to the CSDE's handout <i>Important Points for Notifying Parents of a Child's Free or Reduced-price Eligibility</i> .
7. I may have missed this... Does Direct Certification from last year carry over for 30 school days?	Yes. The carryover status of direct certification is the same as with an application.
8. AHhhhh my audio went out! What was the answer for email or hardcopy? Sorry!!	Refer to Q6.
9. Do families who are going to pay cash for lunch need to fill out applications? For example, I have a family that knows they don't meet the eligibility requirements but they want to make sure they can use MySchoolBucks to preload funds for their child.	MySchool Bucks should be for anyone regardless of their eligibility. A family does not have to complete an application for free or reduced-price meals unless they choose to.

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10. You talked about operating days. This year with the hybrid plan, should we use a four day week for the 30 day grace?	Operating days are those days in which meals are served to the students. Therefore, if you are serving meals to the students five days a week, then you would have five operating days.
11. Can the application and all addendums be sent home through school messenger email if the school is trying not to have paper go back and forth due to the pandemic? Does the form need to be fillable and be able for the parent to sign the form if the school currently isn't using a web-based application?	Please refer to the answer in Q6. The application form and applicable materials do not have to be fillable forms.
12. What if in the list received one student was free SNAP and a sibling with another last name had RM? They are both FS?	Correct. The code of FS (SNAP) is above any other status.
13. Direct Certification: If we are providing on the go meals for distant learners who qualify for free meals, we need to provide meals for all the children in the household whether they attend school or not? Toddlers, etc.?	No. Under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program regulations, meals are only for those children that are enrolled in the school.
14. When working with our IT department for reporting purposes, do we need a signed disclosure release form from the IT person we're working with?	No. However, you want to make sure that you share the USDA confidentiality regulations regarding disclosure with them so they fully understand that they cannot release a child's free and reduced-price eligibility data to anyone unless it is covered by the USDA regulations.

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15. For the public release, do we have to do all three of the items checked under required. I'm just not sure how we would know that somebody was going to be having layoffs.	No. However, you should try to send it out to as many media outlets as possible to ensure that the community knows how to apply for benefits in your district.
16. If a child is RM through DC then a parent sends in an application and qualifies for free does the application over rule the DC	Yes. An application that is determined to be free based on income and household size does over rule the RM status.
17. Reminder for SNAP letters to check the date of the form! Many parents provide old/outdated forms.	Great Reminder! When you validate an application that has a handwritten case number, make sure the DSS letter that the parent/guardian submits is for the current school year and shows a dollar amount that is associated with their SNAP/TFA benefits.
18. When using an online application system, do we need to print out each application for our files?	No. However, you need to make sure that auditors will be able to access the system in order to review applications if requested.
19. If there is no income listed on the application can you ask the signer if that is correct?	No. When no income is provided for any of the adult household members, the application is still considered complete. Note: If local officials have knowledge or available information suggesting a household has intentionally misreported its income, including by leaving the income fields blank, the LEA must verify the household's application for cause. For more information, see Verification for Cause on page 99 in the Eligibility Manual for School Meals.
20. Can the Determining Official also be homeless liaison?	Yes.

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21. Civil rights complaints: who is typically listed as the contact person	It varies from district to district. Whoever is selected for this role is required to have the annual Civil Rights training and should be familiar with the district/school's Civil Right Complaint Procedures for School Nutrition Programs .
22. If a child is directly certified as OT and then comes up as FM do you change and then allow all children in household to benefit.	No. Remember, that verification through Medicaid is always the last resort and even though FM would extend free meals to all children in the household. If a child is directly certified as OT, they would remain as OT. Refer to 87 in the PowerPoint: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Medicaid match should never overlay an existing direct certification match with another allowable program category (e.g., SNAP, TFA or OT); and • Districts must identify a Medicaid match only when the child does not match with SNAP, TFA, or OT.
23. If you have a child on the DC list with a different code from their siblings do you extend the highest benefit to the lower designated siblings?	Yes. Remember that FS (SNAP) rules over any other direct certification designation.
24. Each year I receive an application along with a copy of a letter stating the benefits the student receives from the state. Free school meals is listed on this letter. The student doesn't show up on the direct certified list until later in the school year. Can I accept this benefits letter to approve free meals?	You can only accept the letter if it is from DSS or DCF and if it is for the current school year.

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25. Is Medicaid benefits those who are on Husky? Or some other program?	It is HUSKY; however, not all children receiving Medicaid will be eligible for free meals and show up on the DC list due to the different income guidelines used for Medicaid than the income guidelines used for the Child Nutrition Programs. Remember, the only way that a child is directly certified as FM (Free Medicaid) and RM (Reduced Medicaid) is if their name shows up on the DC list. The parent/guardian cannot submit a letter.
26. If a student shows up in the direct cert list and the parent sends in an application, can we throw out the application?	No. Keep the application on file for audit purposes.
27. Wanted to clarify... I'm a secretary and I am the determining official - Should I be the one signing off on the application or should it be an administrator?	The person who is processing the applications is the determining official. You can sign off on the applications if you are the determining official. I would recommend discussing with your principal.
28. What is an FNS 742?	The FNS 742 Verification Summary Report is an annual report that USDA requires all sponsors of the National Scholl Lunch Program to complete. It provides information to USDA regarding the verification process that is conducted each year in October and November.
29. Is there a link for the verification webinar you mentioned?	You should have received the School Lunch Tray on Wednesday, August 26. The flyer and link were provided. If no, please contact your school nutrition county consultant.
30. Can we have addendum C and the F & R application on the school website in lieu of sending it home in paper form?	No. It must sent to the households. Refer to Q6 above.

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31. Who is our homeless liaison?	You would need to check with your Administrators. They should know. You can also refer to the CSDE Homeless Liaison website (note that it has not been updated for SY 20-21 yet.)
32. Is it possible for a family to have a robust income, be on husky and still receive free or reduced benefits?	It is possible. However, you do not always know the circumstances of a family (layoffs, etc.). Remember, you can always verify for cause if there is a question regarding the application.
33. In joint custody - if one parent completes the application and does not qualify for free or reduced meals and the other parent applies and qualifies for free meals. How do we handle that?	Refer to page 23 in the USDA's <i>Eligibility Manual for School Meals</i> .
34. We received a request from UCONN Early College Program to verify the status of students that self-identified as free or reduced. Am I correct that we need to track down the parent information for these students and request permission that we share this information?	Please contact your state nutrition county consultant.
35. Do you still mark a student free/reduced and send a letter home if a family refuses services each year?	If a family has been determined as free or reduced and informs you that they do not want to receive benefits, you still need to notify them of their eligibility. You cannot assume that, since they refused benefits last year, they will do so this year. Circumstances change.
36. Just to confirm Medicaid is extendable to the household.	If a child is determined to be eligible for free or reduced price meals via being directly certified as FM or RM, then

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	yes, this eligibility would extend to all children in the household. Refer to slide 83 in your PowerPoint handout.
37. On application if you don't have birthdate or address and we have children with the same name, how do we distinguish them?	Remember that you can always contact the person who signed the application to get clarification.
38. Is an email from homeless liaison sufficient?	Yes. The determining official can accept an email from the Homeless liaison as proof that the child is homeless. Make sure you print off and keep it with the records for audit purposes.
39. I am not familiar with the logistics of our point of sales system, One Source Horizons. How can I ensure the income guidelines are updated and accurate for each new school year for the purpose of entering income applications?	You must work with your software company annually to ensure that the Income Guidelines and all forms are updated on an annual basis.
40. What if a child's last name is misspelled on the DC list?	There is not much you can do since this is on the DSS side.
41. If we have a distant learner that has opted for a to-go lunch and is not a free or reduced child, are we to charge the family for a full priced lunch?	Yes.

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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's Training for School Nutrition Programs webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's 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/Training/Building_Success_Processing_Applications_QA.pdf.

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