



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program's Seamless Summer Option and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

**FROM:** John Frassinelli, Chief  
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

**DATE:** June 26, 2014

**SUBJECT:** **Operational Memorandum #40-14 and #04-14-SFSP**  
Area Eligibility Using Census Data

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide new information regarding the availability of census data used to establish area eligibility in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Summer Seamless Option (SSO). This memorandum includes recently clarified flexibility in using census data for area eligibility determinations.

The Secretary may use census data in determining area eligibility for the SFSP and CACFP, as authorized by the National School Lunch Act [42 USC 1761(a)(1)(A)(II) and 1766(f)(3)(A)(ii)(I)(aa)]. Under existing CACFP and SFSP regulations, census data may be used to determine area eligibility for CACFP day care homes and certain SFSP and SSO sites. Eligibility is established when census data indicate that at least 50 percent of the children residing in the area are members of households that meet the income standards for free or reduced-price meals [7 CFR 225.6(c)(3)(B) and 226.15(f)]. Previous policy guidance identified the Census Block Groups (CBGs) to be the geographical unit used to assess eligibility for CACFP, SFSP, and SSO when using census data [CACFP 07-2012, SFSP 09-2012, *Eligibility Based on Census Data: 2012 Data Release*, February 13, 2013].

Occasionally, a potential CACFP day care home, SFSP or SSO site is determined not to be area eligible, but is located immediately adjacent to an eligible area. This proximity suggests that the children residing in the area from which the homes or site would most likely draw participants would have a likelihood of similar census demographics. In recognizing that likelihood and allowing additional flexibility in the use of census data to establish area eligibility, we can ensure area eligibility determinations accurately identify areas in which poor economic conditions exist. Therefore, CACFP day care homes, SFSP and SSO sites may be determined area eligible using either CBG's or Census Tracts. Census Tracts are geographical units that consist of one or more CBGs.

Additionally, based on analysis of the proposed location, with both State agency and Regional Office approval, up to three adjacent CBGs may be averaged, using a weighted average, to determine eligibility. In all CBGs being averaged, at least 40 percent of children must be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Census Tracts may not be combined.

Therefore, using these flexibilities, CACFP day care homes, SFSP and SSO sites are considered area eligible if:

- 50 percent or more of the children in a CBG are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals;
- 50 percent or more of the children in a Census Tract are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals; or
- the percentage of children eligible for free or reduced-price meals in up to three adjacent CBGs when averaged is 50 percent or more, provided that at least 40 percent of children in each of the combined CBGs are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, as described above.

**Data Availability**

Census Tract and CBG data is now available through the Food and Nutrition Service [Area Eligibility Mapper](#).

Instructions for determining eligibility using these data are provided in the same folder as the data. The instructions offer two different tools to determine eligibility:

1. The FNS Area Eligibility Mapper.
2. A map developed by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC).

The FRAC map is constructed from the same data files and may be used to determine eligibility.

Questions may be directed to:

COUNTY ASSIGNMENTS	CONSULTANT	E-MAIL AND PHONE
Fairfield County	Fionnuala Brown	<a href="mailto:fionnuala.brown@ct.gov">fionnuala.brown@ct.gov</a> 860-807-2129
Hartford County (towns/cities beginning with A-R)	Teri Dandeneau	<a href="mailto:teri.dandeneau@ct.gov">teri.dandeneau@ct.gov</a> 860-807-2079
Hartford County (towns/cities beginning with S-W) Windham County	Susan Alston	<a href="mailto:susan.alston@ct.gov">susan.alston@ct.gov</a> 860-807-2081
Litchfield County	Allison Calhoun-White	<a href="mailto:allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov">allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov</a> 860-807-2008
Middlesex County Tolland County	Andy Paul	<a href="mailto:andrew.paul@ct.gov">andrew.paul@ct.gov</a> 860-807-2048
New Haven County	Jackie Schipke	<a href="mailto:jackie.schipke@ct.gov">jackie.schipke@ct.gov</a> 860-807-2123
New London County	Monica Pacheco	<a href="mailto:monica.pacheco@ct.gov">monica.pacheco@ct.gov</a> 860-807-2073

JF:tdd

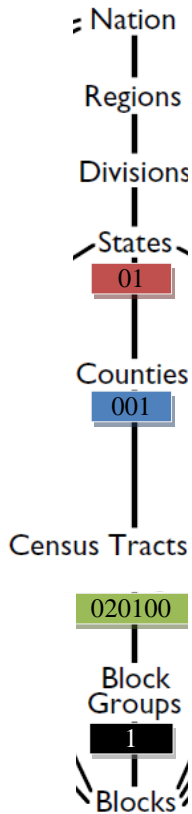
**Attachment**

This is a numbered Operational Memorandum that contains important program information. Please read carefully and retain in a binder for future reference. Operational Memoranda are posted on the Connecticut State Department of Education’s Child Nutrition Web site at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320676>.

# Instructions for Determining Eligibility Based on Census Data

## Step 1: Become familiar with the census data format

### About the 2010 Census Block Group



Every 10 years, the Census updates the area-based measures such as census tracts, blocks and block groups. CACFP, SFSP and SSO use both census tracts and block groups to determine area eligibility.

The ideal size of a CBG is around 1500 homes but vary by region and area characteristics. Contrary to the name, CBGs are not usually shaped like rectangles; rather they can take any shape. The graphic on the left shows the relationship of CBGs to other geographical areas and the components of the GEOID.

Every CBG in the country is numerated, meaning it has a unique number assigned to it. This number is called the GEOID.

### What information is in the GEOID?

The GEOID contains 12 digits. Each position in the GEOID signifies a different level of geographical area. Every digit is important, even the first zero. This is important to remember when importing these data, because some programs drop the first zero. There is more information below about how to import the data correctly.

Here is an example of a GEOID from Autauga County, Alabama:

010010201001

- **STATE:** The first 2 characters are the State code
- **COUNTY:** The next 3 characters are the county code
- **TRACT:** The next 6 characters are the census tract code
- **BLOCK GROUP:** The last character is the census block group code

## Step 2: Determine eligibility

Below are instructions for two options to determine eligibility. State agencies, sponsoring organizations, and individuals may use either tool.

1. The FNS Map. This map includes an address search that will return eligibility information as well as other demographics. This map also includes zoom capabilities and map comparison for identifying areas of need.
2. The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) Map. These tools provide another method of identifying eligibility. There is one map for CACFP and one for SFSP and SSO but either map may be used to determine eligibility for both programs.

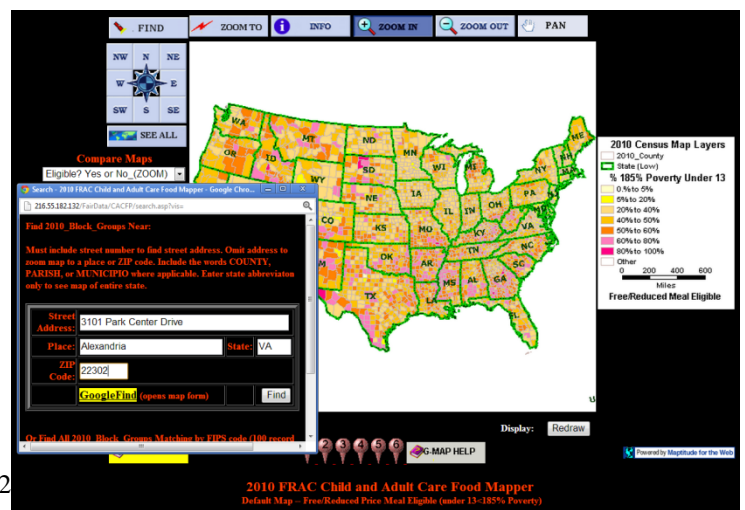
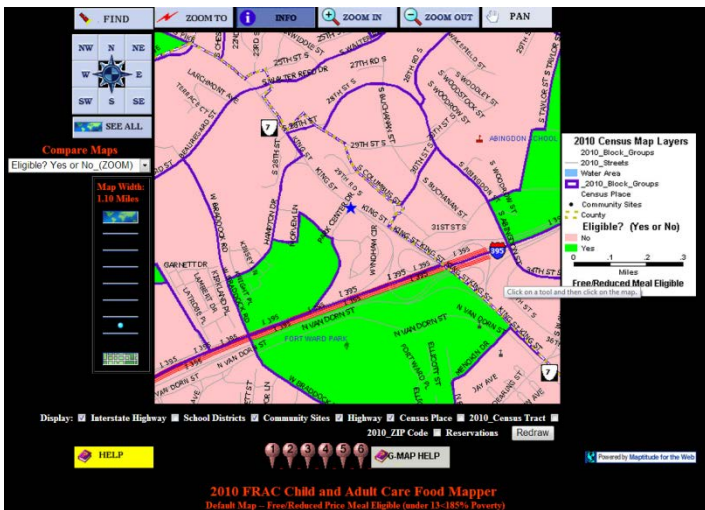
### Step 2, Option 1: Determining eligibility using the FNS Area Eligibility Mapper

Go to: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/areaeligibility>

1. To find by address, enter the address in the “Find address or place” box in the top right.
2. Zoom in and out of the map using the (+) and (-) signs, respectively.
3. In the resulting map, the red highlighted color indicates eligibility as noted in the map layer key.
4. A larger map is available by clicking “View Larger Map” at the bottom of the screen.

### Step 2, Option2: Determining eligibility using the 2014 FRAC Summer Food Mapper

1. Go to either FRAC map:
  - a. CACFP <http://216.55.182.132/FairData/CACFP/map.asp?command=scope&map=0>
  - b. SFSP and SSO <http://216.55.182.132/FairData/SummerFood/map.asp?command=scope&map=0>
2. To find by address, click on “Find” and enter the address.
3. In resulting map, the highlighted color indicates eligibility as indicated in the map layer key.
4. If an address falls on a border between an eligible and ineligible CBG, click on the blue star and then INFO and scroll in the “2010 Block Group Information” window to “Eligible? (Yes or No).



### Step 2, Option 3: Combining CBGs:

With both State agency and FNS Regional Office (RO) approval, areas that are ineligible using the method above may be eligible through a third method. Up to three adjacent CBGs where at least 40 percent or more of the children in each CBG are eligible for free or reduced-price meals may be combined to determine eligibility. If combining the adjacent CBGs results in a weighted average of 50 percent or more free and reduced-price eligible, the CBG can be considered eligible.

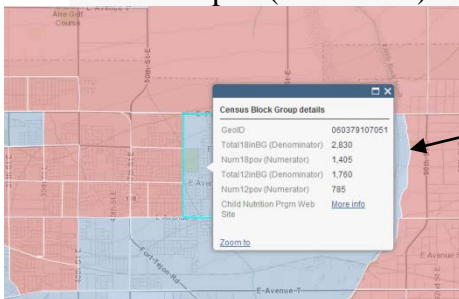
Averaging adjacent CBGs is meant to address pockets of poverty near census eligible CBGs. In other words, this method allows for the area around a day care home or summer site to be expanded to address nearby areas of high need.

In order to properly calculate the weighted average, it is important that:

- Only up to three CBGs are averaged, and one of these must include the CBG where the day care home or summer site is located.
- All CBGs included in the weighted average have 40 percent or more children eligible for free or reduced-price meals
- The CBGs are adjacent to, or share a border with the CBG where the day care home or summer site is located.
- Either data for CACFP (0-12 year olds) or SFSP and SSO (0-18 year olds) is used to determine the weighted average. Either of these numerators and denominators may be used to determine eligibility using the weighted average but the same data set must be used across CBGs.

### Instructions for using the FNS Mapper:

1. Follow the instructions above to find the location of the day care home or SFSP or SSO site.
2. Click on the ineligible CBG and determine if at least 40 percent or more of the children in each of the CBGs to be combined are eligible for free and reduced-price meals by dividing either:
  - a. the Num18pov (Numerator) /Total18inBG (Denominator); or
  - b. the Num12pov (Numerator)/ Total12inBG (Denominator)



These fields represent the number of 0-18 year olds and the number of 0-12 year olds in the CBG

3. If at least 40 percent or more of the children in each of the combined CBGs are eligible for free and reduced-price meals, then proceed with the weighted average by:
  - a. Adding the numerators for the CBG where the site is located, and up to two additional adjacent CBG's with over 40 percent free or reduced-price eligibility. Determine if the adjacent CBGs have at least 40 percent eligibility by using the method in step 2 above.
  - b. Adding the denominators in the same way.
  - c. Dividing the sum of the numerators by the sum of the denominators and multiplying by 100%. If that percentage is 50 percent or above the CBG can be considered area eligible with FNS RO and State agency approval.

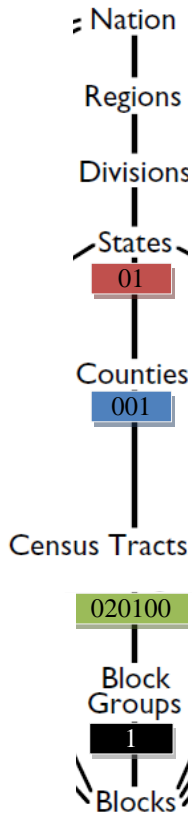
**Example:**

Palmdale, California				
CBG GEOID	Numerator (Num18Pov)	Denominator (Total18inBG)	Percentage (Numerator/Denominator) x 100% *must be at least 40%)	
60379107051	1,405	2,830	x 100%	49.65%
60379107131	435	680	x 100%	63.97%
60379107141	855	955	x 100%	89.53%
Total	Sum of Numerators (1405+435+855)	Sum of Denominators (2830+680+955)	Weighted average percent = (Sum of Numerators)/(Sum of Denominators) x 100%	
	2,695	4,465	x 100%	60.36%

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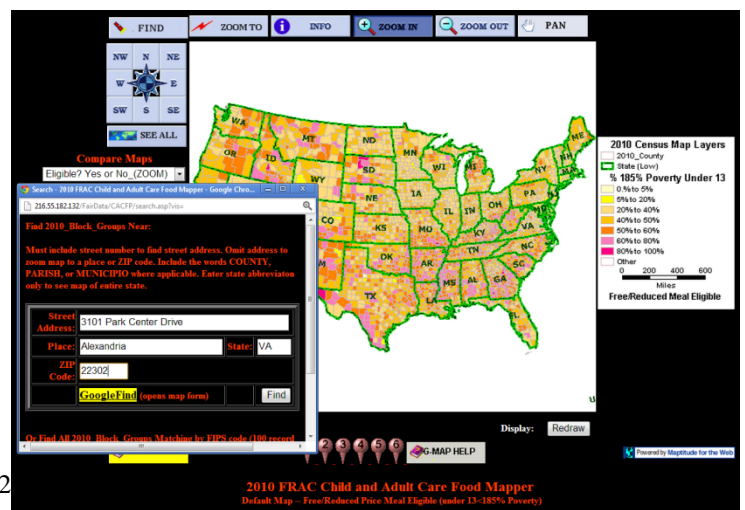
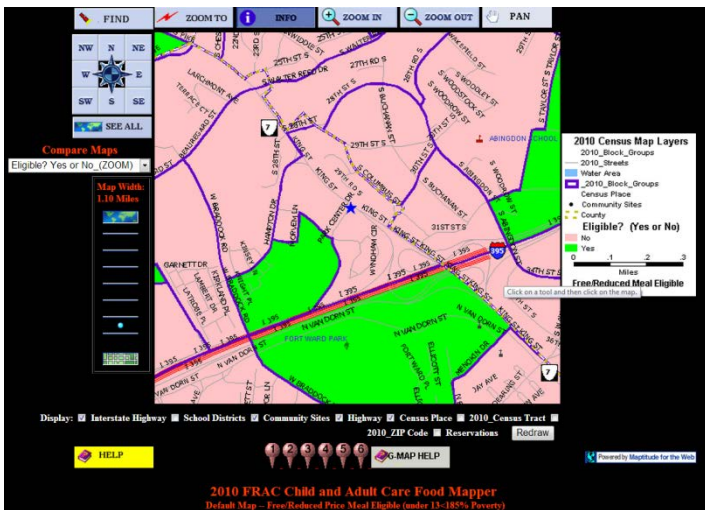
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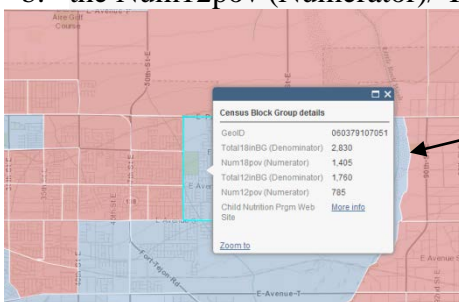
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