Student Eligibility for Free or Reduced-price Meal Benefits Through the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (S-EBT) Program

The S-EBT is a permanent, nationwide program that began in summer 2024. It was established under the Consolidated Appropriations Act passed in December 2022. The S-EBT gives families with children extra benefits, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), to help pay for food in the summer. S-EBT benefits can also determine a student to be eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Households that submit an application for free or reduced-price meals/S-EBT and are approved for S-EBT benefits *may* also be eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) includes these students in the Direct Certification Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (DC/S-EBT) list of the CSDE's Direct Certification (DC) web application to help local educational agencies (LEAs) identify students eligible through S-EBT. S-EBT students are indicated by the codes below on the DC/S-EBT list.

- FE = Free S-EBT: Free benefits do not extend to all children in the household.
- RE = Reduced S-EBT: Reduced-price benefits do not extend to all children in the household.

LEAs should notify and work with their point-of-sales (POS) software company regarding these changes and the two new categories.

> Although FE and RE students will appear in the DC web application, they are not considered directly certified because their eligibility was determined through a household-submitted application rather than automatic data matching.

Requirements and Guidance

- LEAs are required to issue a parent/guardian notification letter to households where a student has been determined eligible based on a FE or RE status. The parent/guardian notification letters are available in the "Parent and Guardian Notification Letters" section of the CSDE's Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Free Milk in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
- The FE or RE codes are **not** considered to be directly certified since an application was submitted.

- A student with a code of FE cannot count toward a school's Identified Student Percentage (ISP) for the purposes of the Community Eligibility Program.
- Students with FE or RE codes are not subject to LEA verification and are not part of the verification pool selected on October 1.
- FE and RE free and reduced-price eligibility do not automatically extend to other children in the household. There may be cases where a sibling's name does not appear on the DC/S-EBT list, even though they live in the same household as a student identified as FE or RE on the list. In such situations, free or reduced-price benefits must not be automatically applied to the sibling whose name is missing. When this occurs, the determining official should contact the CSDE's S-EBT Coordinator for guidance (refer to "Questions" in this document).
- S-EBT letters cannot be used as documentation for free or reduced-price eligibility if the household's NSLP application was selected for verification. This is because an S-EBT letter does not always confer eligibility for free and reduced-price lunches due to differences in requirements for providing social security number information.

Hierarchy of Eligibility

As a reminder, a hierarchy of benefits applies to the DC/S-EBT list. For more information regarding direct certification refer to the CSDE's resource, *Important Reminders for Completing Direct Certification*.

1. **FS =SNAP benefits:** Free benefits extend to all children in the household.
2. **AF = Temporary Family Assistance (TFA):** Free benefits extend to all children in the household.
3. **OT = foster child:** Free benefits do **not** extend to all children in the household.
4. **FM = free Medicaid:** Free benefits extend to all children in the household.
5. **RM = reduced Medicaid:** Reduced-price benefits extend to all children in the household.

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Note: Since FE and RE determinations are S-EBT applications, they are not part of the hierarchy.

Important Reminder

Do not send any student personal information via email. Only the SASID number and date of birth are permitted to be shared through email.

Questions

Questions regarding S-EBT and student free and reduced-price meal benefits may be directed to the CSDE's S-EBT Coordinator, David Donovan, at david.donovan@ct.gov or 860-807-2013.

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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Direct Certification for School Nutrition Programs webpage and S-EBT 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/directcert/eligibility_fr_meals_through_sebt.pdf.

Student Eligibility for Free or Reduced-price Meal Benefits Through the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (S-EBT) Program

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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Student Eligibility for Free or Reduced-price Meal Benefits Through the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (S-EBT) Program

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