Meal Application and Data Management Process for the Special Milk Program

School Year 2026-27

Instructions

Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) participating in the Special Milk Program (SMP) pricing program as free milk sponsors are required to complete this form. Free milk SMP sponsors are defined as sponsors that collect and process free and reduced-price milk applications to determine eligibility for free milk benefits.

LEAs who process applications that are written on paper must complete section 1. LEAs that use a web-based application must complete sections 1 and 2. Upload this form with the LEA's policy statement to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Child Nutrition Program (CNP) Online Application and Claiming System. **Do not mail this form to the CSDE.**

LEA name: _____

Agreement number: _____

Section 1

1. Describe the LEA's application approval procedures. Include information regarding how the LEA addresses each procedure below.

    a. **Notifies** the households (e.g., via email, letter, etc.) and **collects** the applications:

    _____

    b. **Reviews** the applications. Indicate how many determining officials (DOs) review the applications. If there are multiple DOs, indicate how the district ensures that all DOs are consistent with their review and approval process.

    _____

c. **Approves** the applications (including how the district ensures that the applications are approved in a timely manner):

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d. **Notifies** the households of the final determination:

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2. Describe the process for ensuring that the electronic or manual point-of-sale (POS) system at the point of service (e.g., the end of the serving line) has the most up-to-date status of a student's eligibility. For guidance on the point-of-service requirements, refer to the CSDE's *Overview of Meal Counting and Claiming Process for Connecticut School Nutrition Programs*.

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a. If the DO does not have access to an electronic POS system, describe how the manual system ensures that a student's current eligibility status is reflected at the point of service:

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3. Describe the direct certification procedures below.

    a. The process and frequency for retrieving and updating the direct certification list:

    b. The process and frequency for updating the benefit issuance document (e.g., the master list of eligible students) to include the direct certification information:

    c. If the DO is **not** the direct certification contact, the process and frequency for sharing the direct certification information with the DO:

4. Indicate the LEA's procedures for the disclosure of children's free and reduced-price eligibility information (refer to the CSDE's form, *Disclosure Release Request for Free or Reduced Eligibility Status of Students in the School Nutrition Programs*). Indicate parties and organizations to whom you provide student eligibility data. **The LEA must review and comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) disclosure requirements (**7 CFR 245.6 (f-k)**).**

5. How accessible are the free and reduced-price materials on the district's website? For example, how many clicks does it take to get to the free and reduced-price materials?

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6. Does the LEA use web-based applications? **Note:** A web-based application is part of a software program that allows the parent/guardian to complete and submit the entire application online and therefore avoid using the paper application.

   ☐ Yes: Complete all questions in section 2 below.

   ☐ No: Do not complete section 2 below. This document is complete.

Section 2: Web-based applications

This section applies only to LEAs that use web-based applications. Review the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Implementing Web-based Applications*, and answer all questions below:

1. Indicate the software program used and who is responsible for ensuring that the web-based application is updated annually and complies with the federal regulations.

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2. Indicate the designated person responsible for overseeing and testing the web-based application process within the district.

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3. Is the CSDE's parent/guardian letter, *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Free School Milk* provided at the beginning of the web-based application? **Note:** Parents/guardians must be able to review this information as part of the process of applying for free milk benefits. English and Spanish versions of this document are available under "Parent/Guardian Letters" in the "Forms" section of the CSDE's Special Milk Program webpage.
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

4. Does the parent/guardian letter, *Frequently Asked Questions About Free School Milk,* inform the household how to access the system to apply for benefits and explain how to obtain and submit a paper application?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

5. Does the web-based application provide the instructions "How to Apply for Free and Reduced-price School Meals and Summer EBT" on pages 3 and 4 of the *Application for Free and Reduced-price School Meals or Free Milk and Summer EBT*? **Note:** English and Spanish versions of this form are available in the "Family Application" section of the CSDE's Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Free Milk in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

6. Check all items below that are provided in the web-based application.
   - ☐ The reduced-price income guidelines for school meals (or the free income guidelines for Special Milk Program applications) for the current school year. Refer to the "Income Guidelines for School Nutrition Programs" of the CSDE's Income Guidelines for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.
   - ☐ The "Children's Racial and Ethnic Identities" section from page 2 of the current *Application for Free and Reduced-price School Meals or Free Milk and Summer EBT.*
   - ☐ The parent certification statement found before the signature (i.e., "I certify (promise)…")
     in Step 4 of the current *Application for Free and Reduced-price School Meals or Free Milk and Summer EBT.*
   - ☐ The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and the current USDA nondiscrimination statement on page 2 of the current *Application for Free and Reduced-price School Meals or Free Milk and Summer EBT.*

7. Did the district test the web-based process to ensure it is operating correctly?
   - ☐ Yes: Complete question 8 below.
   - ☐ No: Skip to question 9.

8. Check all "mock" household applications completed by the district.
   - ☐ A household with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits?
   - ☐ A household with Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) benefits
   - ☐ A household with a homeless/runaway child
   - ☐ A household with Head Start children
   - ☐ A household with a foster child
   - ☐ A household with no income
   - ☐ A mixed household (e.g., a household that has a foster child and a child that is not a foster child).
   - ☐ Checking off that someone in the household is receiving SNAP or TFA benefits and then entering a case number.

9. Describe what happens if a household does not provide the **non-required** information that the district has selected to request, e.g., date of birth, school, grade, student ID, email, phone, middle initial, and address.

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10. Describe what happens if a household does not complete the last four digits of the social security number or check the "no social security box."

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11. Describe what happens if a household does not provide an adult signature.

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12. The web-based application cannot contain any language that does not pertain to Connecticut. Does the web-based application contain any of the following language?

    a. Migrant (**Note:** Connecticut does not have a Migrant Education Program).
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

    b. Permission to share Medicaid data (**Note:** LEAs do not need permission to use Medicaid data since Connecticut participates in the USDA Medicaid Demonstration Grant and eligibility through Medicaid is done via direct certification.)
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

    c. FDPIR (**Note:** Connecticut does not have a Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.)
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

    d. FITAP (**Note:** Connecticut does not have a Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program.)
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

    e. TANF: TANF is a federal term. Connecticut uses the term “TFA” (Temporary Family Assistance).
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

13. Does the district's web-based application accommodate English Learners?
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

14. Are the instructions on how to access the application materials provided in any applicable foreign language?
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

15. Are taglines used to assist English Learners if they have questions? Refer to the CSDE's resources, *Taglines and Providing Meaningful Access to the Child Nutrition Programs* and *Sample Taglines Form for Child Nutrition Programs*.
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

16. Are all web-based and other free and reduced-price forms on the district's website updated for the upcoming school year?
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

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For more information on the SMP, visit the CSDE's Special Milk Program webpage or contact the SMP 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/ mealcount/smp_milk_application_data_management_process.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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