

Determining Eligibility in the School Nutrition Programs and Summer Food Service Program

**Module 2:
Processing Applications**

Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs
September 2023

CSDE
CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Training Modules

- Module 1 Introduction to Application Certification and Verification
- Module 2 Processing Applications
- Module 3 Direct Certification
- Module 4 Test Your Knowledge About Processing Applications
- Module 5 Confidentiality and Disclosure
- Module 6 Verification
- Module 7 Completing the FNS 742 Verification Summary Report

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Eligibility-for-Free-and-Reduced-price-Meals-and-Free-Milk-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources>

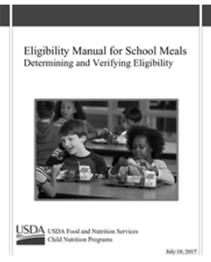
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USDA Resource

USDA's Eligibility Manual for School Meals

Last revision:
July 18, 2017



https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/USDA_eligibility_manual.pdf

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Module Topics

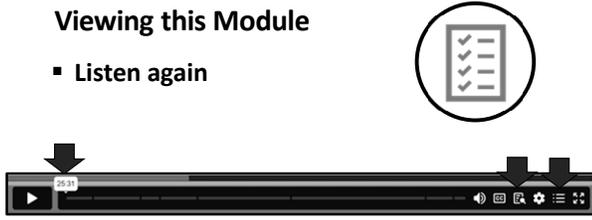
- Common acronyms and abbreviations
- Flagging applications
- Error-prone applications
- Notifying households about application process
- Application addenda
- System for receiving applications
- Processing timeframes
- Carryover of eligibility
- Transfer of eligibility
- Determining if application is complete
- Calculating income
- Foster children
- Handwritten case numbers
- Accountability of determining official
- Web-based applications
- Notifying households about eligibility status
- Verification for cause
- Benefit issuance document
- Claims consolidation process
- Independent review of applications
- Records retention
- Appeal procedures
- Civil rights responsibilities

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Recommendations for Viewing this Module

- Listen again



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Recommendations for Viewing this Module

- Listen again
- Take a break



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Common Acronyms and Abbreviations



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Common Acronyms and Abbreviations

CEP = Community Eligibility Provision
 DO = determining official
 DSS = Connecticut Department of Social Services
 HH = household
 IEG = USDA's income eligibility guidelines
 LEA = local educational agency
 SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
 SY = school year
 TFA = Temporary Family Assistance

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CSDE Resource

Common Acronyms and Abbreviations for Determining Eligibility in the School Nutrition Programs and Summer Food Service Program

Common Acronyms and Abbreviations in School Nutrition Programs	
0101	Administrative Code
0102	Administrative Code
0103	Administrative Code
0104	Administrative Code
0105	Administrative Code
0106	Administrative Code
0107	Administrative Code
0108	Administrative Code
0109	Administrative Code
0110	Administrative Code
0111	Administrative Code
0112	Administrative Code
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0193	Administrative Code
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0195	Administrative Code
0196	Administrative Code
0197	Administrative Code
0198	Administrative Code
0199	Administrative Code
0200	Administrative Code

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Acronyms_Abbreviations_Determining_Eligibility_SNP_SFSP.pdf

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Key Messages About Processing Applications



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Key Messages: Processing Applications

- LEA must have process in place prior to reviewing applications
- “Complete” applications depend on type of application
- Benefit issuance document is critical for ensuring each child receives correct benefit



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Flagging Applications



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Flagging Applications Based on Direct Certification: 4 categories



Direct Certification Applications

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Flagging Applications Based on Direct Certification: 4 categories

- 1 Free meals or milk through SNAP
 - Does not include letter method (DSS)
- 2 Free meals or milk through other programs
 - TFA, Medicaid free, homeless, runaway, foster, Head Start
- 3 Free meals or milk through SNAP (letter method)
- 4 Reduced-price meals through Medicaid

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Flagging Applications Not Based on Direct Certification: 3 categories



Free and Reduced Applications

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Flagging Applications Not Based on Direct Certification: 3 categories

- 1 Applications and students determined eligible for free meals or milk based on income and HH size
- 2 Applications and students determined eligible for reduced meals based on income and HH size
- 3 Error-prone applications

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Error-prone Applications

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Error-prone Applications

Applications with a total HH income that falls within \$100 monthly or \$1,200 annually of the income eligibility guidelines for that HH size

Terms to Know

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Error-prone Applications

- Only for LEAs required to do Standard Sample Size verification
- Must check software programs to ensure they correctly calculate error-prone applications



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Example of Error-prone Application

Annual income on application (HH of 2): \$ 25,000
 USDA free IEG for HH of 2: \$ 25,636

Income Guidelines for Child Nutrition Programs: July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024*											
Free meals					Reduced-price meals						
Household size	Annual gross income	Monthly gross income	Twice per month	Every two weeks gross income	Weekly gross income	Household Size	Annual gross income	Monthly gross income	Twice per month	Every two weeks gross income	Weekly gross income
1	18,954	1,580	790	729	365	1	26,973	2,248	1,124	1,038	519
2	25,636	2,137	1,069	986	493	2	36,482	3,041	1,521	1,404	702

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/Income_Guidelines_SNP.pdf

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Example of Error-prone Application

Annual income on application (HH of 2): \$ 25,000
 USDA free IEG for HH of 2: \$ 25,636
 Difference: \$ 636

Error prone = within \$1,200

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Determining Error-prone with Different Income Frequencies

Dollar amount	Within IEG
\$1,200	per year
\$100	per month
\$50	Twice per month
\$46	every two weeks
\$23	every week

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Notifying Households



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Timing of Notification

- Required to provide HHs with application materials



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Timing of Notification



- Cannot send home application materials at end of current SY for next SY

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Timing of Notification



- Cannot distribute application materials for new SY at Kindergarten or preschool orientation in spring

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Timing of Notification



- Destroy all outdated forms
- Update websites

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Timing of Notification



- Destroy all outdated forms
- Update websites

Cannot accept or process applications submitted prior to July 1

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Distribution of Application Materials

- Sent by U.S. mail
- Emailed to parents/guardians
- Included in information packets provided to students



If use only paper applications, must include application and instructions with FAQ parent/guardian letter

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Distribution of Application Materials

- Public Media Release
- District/school website
- School office
- Local library
- School menus



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Application Materials on Websites

- Is the website user friendly?
- Is it easy for parents/guardians to find the application?
- How many “clicks” does it take to get to the application?

Tip: Ask someone who is not familiar with the website try to access the application

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CSDE Resource

Guidance for Notifying Parents of a Child's Eligibility for Free or Reduced-price Meals



https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/Guidance_Notifying_Parents_Child_Eligibility_Free_Reduced_Meals.pdf

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Examples of Notification Requirements

Beginning of school year	Must distribute application materials to parents/guardians by postal service or e-mail or include in information packets provided to students
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https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/Guidance_Notifying_Parents_Child_Eligibility_Free_Reduced_Meals.pdf

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Examples of Notification Requirements

Throughout school year	<p>New students enrolling after start of school year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Must provide application materials when students enroll ▪ Must check direct certification list to determine if student is directly certified
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https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/Guidance_Notifying_Parents_Child_Eligibility_Free_Reduced_Meals.pdf

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Application Addenda

- Addendum A: Sharing Information with Other Programs
- Addendum B: Access Health CT Husky Health Insurance
- Addendum C: Information on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Eligibility-for-Free-and-Reduced-price-Meals-and-Free-Milk-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents/Addenda>

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Addendum A: Sharing Information with Other Programs



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Addendum A: Sharing Information with Other Programs

Specifics of applicable programs or services

Title of person with access to student's name and eligibility status

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Addendum B: Access Health CT Husky Health Insurance

Check your options and avoid cost! Get started at AccessHealthCT.com

Does Your Family Need Health Insurance?

Check your options and avoid cost! Get started at AccessHealthCT.com

Check your options and avoid cost! Get started at AccessHealthCT.com

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Addendum C: Information on SNAP

Required

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System for Receiving Applications

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System for Receiving Applications

- Directly from parents/students?
- School's administrative assistant?
- LEA's online application system?
- Email?
- Fax?
- All methods?

Location must ensure confidentiality

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System for Receiving Applications

- Date stamp all new applications when received
- Contact HH if more information is needed
 - Document all contact

Only contact adult who signed the application

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Application Sections to Check

- Income frequency
- Adult HH member signature
- Last 4 digits of Social Security number or "No SSN" box checked
- Complete "For School Use Only" section on application



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System for Filing Applications

- Alphabetical order OR
- Assigned number
 - Next to applicable student's name on benefit issuance document



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Processing Timeframes

- Must process and notify family within 10 operating days of receiving application
- Whenever possible, process immediately

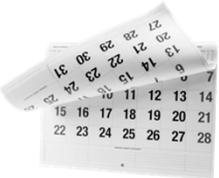


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Processing Timeframes

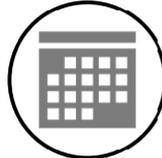
- Notify HH immediately if decrease in benefits from previous year
- Must allow adequate notice to HH



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Carryover of Eligibility



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Normal Carryover Status

- Student's eligibility from previous SY (before July 1) carries over for
 - up to 30 operating days into new SY
 - OR until new eligibility determination

30 operating days begins on first operating day of school



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Normal Carryover Status

- Cannot delay processing of applications
- Remind HH that meal or milk benefits will end
- Cannot temporarily approve application



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Normal Carryover Status

- Eligibility expires at end of 30-day carryover if
 - new application not submitted OR
 - direct certification determination not made

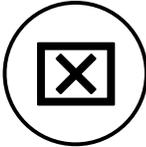


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Normal Carryover Status

- Cannot send notice of denial or notice of adverse action
 - Parent/guardian does not have right to appeal a discontinuation of benefits due to expiration of carryover period



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Normal Carryover Status

Children Moving to New School/District

- New LEA may use former LEA's eligibility determination from previous SY
 - Up to 30 operating days
- No liability for accuracy of previous LEA's determination



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Normal Carryover Status

CEP School to Non-CEP School

- Eligible for free meals
 - for up to 30 operating days OR
 - until new eligibility determination is made for current SY

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Transfer of Eligibility

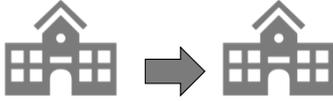


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Transfer of Eligibility

- Occurs when a child moves to another school during SY
- Two types
 1. Transfer within same LEA
 2. Transfer between LEAs



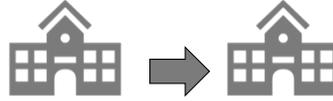
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Transfer Within LEA

- New school must accept eligibility determination from former school

Reminder: Eligibility remains in effect for remainder of SY and up to 30 operating days into next SY

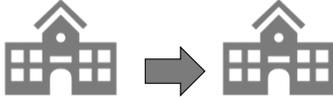


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Transfer Between LEAs

- New LEA may accept eligibility determination from former LEA
- Retain written documentation of eligibility determination by former LEA
 - Secure email is sufficient

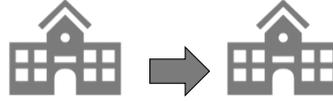


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Document All Transfers

- For transfers within LEA, note transfer date on application



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Document All Transfers

- For transfers within LEA, note transfer date on application
- Update point of service for all transfers



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Point of Service

Point in food service operation where staff can make an accurate determination that a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid meal has been served to an eligible child

Terms to Know

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Methods for Point-of-service Meal Counts

1. A computerized software program (point-of-sale system)
 - ID card with a code
 - Designated student ID pin number
 - Digital biometric fingerprint

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Methods for Point-of-service Meal Counts

2. Roster of students discreetly coded as free, reduced, and paid

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Methods for Point-of-service Meal Counts

3. Tickets discreetly coded as free, reduced, or paid

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Methods for Point-of-service Meal Counts

- Must prevent overt identification

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Overt Identification

Any action that may result in a child being recognized as eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals or free milk

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CSDE Resource

Carryover versus Transfer of a Child's Meal Eligibility in the School Nutrition Programs

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/Carryover_versus_Transfer_of_Child_Eligibility_SNP.pdf

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Time for a Break?



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Determining if Application is Complete



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Complete Applications

- “Complete” depends on type of application
 - Section 4 of USDA’s Eligibility Manual for School Meals



https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/USDA_eligibility_manual.pdf

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Complete Applications

Considerations

- Missing income information
- Missing information that is not required
- Questionable applications



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Missing Income Information

- Cannot enter information in income field
- Applications with blank income fields are considered complete if all other areas are completed accurately



Blank income field = no income

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Missing Information that is Not Required

- Cannot delay application approval if HH fails to provide information that is not required
 - Street address
 - Student ID
 - Birth date

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Determining Benefit Eligibility for Children in the School Nutrition Programs and Summer Food Service Program
 Module 2: Processing Applications

USDA Resource

USDA Memo SP 50-2011, CACFP 27-2011 and SFSP 20-2011: Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications – Requests for Additional Information

USDA

DATE: September 20, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR: SP 20-2011, CACFP 27-2011, SFSP 20-2011

SUBJECT: Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications – Requests for Additional Information

TO: Regional Directors, Special Nutrition Programs, All Regions

FROM: State Director, Child Nutrition Programs, All States

The memorandum requests to question receipt from Regional Offices. These requests will be for additional information if it is requested. Applications for the free and reduced-price meal benefit that require the applicant to provide information that is not required for a standard application for eligibility for the school nutrition programs (SNPs), although it is required for a standard application for the summer food service program (SFSFP), should be considered as a request for additional information. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide additional information to Regional Offices regarding the information that is required for a standard application for the free and reduced-price meal benefit and to provide information regarding the information that is required for a standard application for the summer food service program (SFSFP).

The purpose of the application for free and reduced-price meal benefit is to determine if a student is eligible for school meal benefits based on income or categorical eligibility. In some instances, it is necessary to request additional information on applications of categorical eligibility to verify the applicant's eligibility. This information will be shared for the purpose of providing such benefits, and it does not constitute an application for SNAP participation.

Following USDA's release date for other programs on the application for free and reduced-price meal benefit is intended to provide a template for LAs to their administrative units regarding the availability of other meal benefits and other program information. This template is intended to be used as a guide for the information that is required for a standard application for the free and reduced-price meal benefit. If other information is needed to verify the applicant's eligibility, the information will be shared for the purpose of providing such benefits, and it does not constitute an application for SNAP participation.

USDA

DATE: September 20, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR: SP 20-2011, CACFP 27-2011, SFSP 20-2011

SUBJECT: Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications – Requests for Additional Information

TO: Regional Directors, Special Nutrition Programs, All Regions

FROM: State Director, Child Nutrition Programs, All States

https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP50_CACFP27_SFSP20-2011os.pdf

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Questionable Applications

- **Cannot process if**
 - missing required information
 - contain inconsistent information
 - considered incomplete



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Questionable Applications

- **Contact HH for clarification**
 - Speak only to adult who signed application



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Calculating Income



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Income Conversion

How listed on application	Income conversion required?
Multiple frequencies of income	Yes
All income is same frequency	No

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Income Conversion

How to Annualize Income	
Income frequency	Multiply by
Weekly	52
Bi-weekly income (received every 2 weeks)	26
Semi-monthly income (received twice per month)	24
Monthly	12

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Calculating Income: Example 1

A. Child Income
Sometimes children in the household earn income. Please include the TOTAL gross income (before taxes and deductions) earned by all Child Household Members listed in STEP 1 here.

B. All Adult Household Members (Anyone who is living with you and shares income and expenses, even if not related, including you.)
List all Household Members not listed in STEP 1 (including yourself) even if they do not receive income. For each Household Member listed, if they do receive income, report total gross income (before taxes and deductions) for each source in whole dollars (no cents) only. If they do not receive income from any source, write '0'. If you enter '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report.

Name of Adult Household Member (Print Full Name)	Earnings from Work	Child Support/Alimony	Public Assistance	Retirement, Pensions, Annuities	Investment, All Other Income
Parent A	\$ 500				
Parent B		\$ 350			
Child A					
Child B					

Total Household Members (Children and Adults - Step 1 & Step 2) **4** Last Four Digits of Social Security Number of Primary Wage Earner or Other A&A Household Member **X X X X** Check if no social security number

Parent A \$500 per month
Parent B \$350 per month
Total \$850 per month

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Calculating Income: Example 1

Income Guidelines for Child Nutrition Programs: July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024*

Free meals						Reduced-price meals					
Household size	Annual gross income	Monthly gross income	Twice per month	Every two weeks gross income	Weekly gross income	Household Size	Annual gross income	Monthly gross income	Twice per month	Every two weeks gross income	Weekly gross income
1	18,954	1,580	790	720	365	1	26,973	2,248	1,124	1,038	519
2	25,636	2,137	1,069	986	493	2	36,482	3,041	1,521	1,404	702
3	32,318	2,694	1,347	1,243	622	3	45,991	3,833	1,917	1,769	885
4	39,000	3,250	1,625	1,500	750	4	55,500	4,625	2,313	2,135	1,068

Parent A \$500 per month
Parent B \$350 per month
Total \$850 per month **Eligible for free meals**

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Calculating Income: Example 2

A. Child Income
Sometimes children in the household earn income. Please include the TOTAL gross income (before taxes and deductions) earned by all Child Household Members listed in STEP 1 here.

B. All Adult Household Members (Anyone who is living with you and shares income and expenses, even if not related, including you.)
List all Household Members not listed in STEP 1 (including yourself) even if they do not receive income. For each Household Member listed, if they do receive income, report total gross income (before taxes and deductions) for each source in whole dollars (no cents) only. If they do not receive income from any source, write '0'. If you enter '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report.

Name of Adult Household Member (Print Full Name)	Earnings from Work	Child Support/Alimony	Public Assistance	Retirement, Pensions, Annuities	Investment, All Other Income
Parent A	\$ 1,500				
Parent B		\$ 305			
Child A					
Child B					

Total Household Members (Children and Adults - Step 1 & Step 2) **5** Last Four Digits of Social Security Number of Primary Wage Earner or Other A&A Household Member **X X X X** Check if no social security number

Parent	Income	Frequency	Multiply by	Annual Income
A	\$1,500	monthly	12	\$18,000
B	\$305	weekly	52	\$15,860
Total				\$33,860

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Calculating Income: Example 2

Income Guidelines for Child Nutrition Programs: July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024*

Free meals						Reduced-price meals					
Household size	Annual gross income	Monthly gross income	Twice per month	Every two weeks gross income	Weekly gross income	Household Size	Annual gross income	Monthly gross income	Twice per month	Every two weeks gross income	Weekly gross income
1	18,954	1,580	790	720	365	1	26,973	2,248	1,124	1,038	519
2	25,636	2,137	1,069	986	493	2	36,482	3,041	1,521	1,404	702
3	32,318	2,694	1,347	1,243	622	3	45,991	3,833	1,917	1,769	885
4	39,000	3,250	1,625	1,500	750	4	55,500	4,625	2,313	2,135	1,068
5	45,682	3,807	1,904	1,757	879	5	65,009	5,418	2,709	2,501	1,251

\$33,860 annually **Eligible for free meals**

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/Income_SNP.pdf

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Foster Children



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Foster Child's Eligibility for Free Benefits

1. HH submits application
2. Direct certification



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HH Submits Application for Foster Child



- Foster child box is checked

STEP 1 List ALL children who are infants and students up to and including grade 12. If more spaces are required for additional names, attach this sheet of paper.

Child's First Name	MI	Child's Last Name	School	Grade	Student?	Yes	No	Foster?	Yes	No
A		Child	ABC Elem.	3	X			X		
B		Child	XYZ High	10	X					

- Applications are subject to formal verification process

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Consideration for Applications with Foster Children



Mixed HH

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Mixed Households

Households that include children who are Other Source Categorically Eligible and children who are not

Terms to Know

Same HH could have two different eligibility determinations

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Consideration for Applications with Foster Children



Mixed HH

May include

- foster child as HH member
- personal use income earned by foster child

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Consideration for Applications with Foster Children



Mixed HH

- Certify foster child as free
- Determine eligibility for remainder of HH based on
 - HH's income (including personal income earned by foster child)
 - Other categorical eligibility information reported on application

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Consideration for Applications with Foster Children



Foster Payments

- Not considered income and do not need to be reported

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Consideration for Applications with Foster Children



No Eligibility Extension

- Foster child's free eligibility does not extend to other children in HH

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When Foster Children are Adopted

- No longer categorically eligible for free meals as a foster child
- Free eligibility status does not change in current SY
 - Includes up to 30 operating days in subsequent SY



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When Foster Children are Adopted

Subsequent SYs

- Must determine eligibility based on economic unit
- Count all income available to HH including adoption assistance



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When Foster Children are Adopted

"Subsidized" adoption

- Subsidy is included in total HH income
- Eligibility is based on HH size and income



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CSDE Resource

Determining Foster Children's Eligibility for Free Meals or Milk in the School Nutrition Programs and Summer Food Service Program



https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/Foster_Children_Eligibility_SNP_SFSP.pdf

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Processing Applications with Handwritten Case Numbers



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Step 1: Check DC list

A Child is FS, AF, or FM

- Process application as free
- Indicate application is directly certified
- Extend free benefits to all children in HH
- Not subject to verification

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Step 1: Check DC list

B Child is OT

- Process application as free
- Indicate application is directly certified
- Free benefits do not extend to children in HH
- Not subject to verification

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Step 1: Check DC list

C Child is RM and HH size/income makes application denied

- Process application as reduced
- Indicate application is directly certified
- Extend reduced benefits to all children in HH
- Not subject to verification

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Step 2: Review Application for Income

A Income supports free determination

- Process application as free
- Subject to verification if application selected

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Step 2: Review Application for Income

B Income supports reduced determination

- Process application as reduced

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Step 2: Review Application for Income

B Income supports reduced determination

- Process application as reduced
- Contact HH for proof of SNAP or TFA client ID number
 - No response: process as reduced

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Step 2: Review Application for Income

C Income not provided or makes application denied

- Cannot approve application
- Send parent/guardian notification letter requesting proof of TFA/SNAP number
- No response: application incomplete and remains denied

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Proof of SNAP or TFA Benefits

DSS letter supports	DC for reporting purposes (FNS 742 Verification Summary Report)?
TFA benefits	Yes
SNAP benefits	No: Must be coded separately on FNS 742 Verification Summary Report

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Zero SNAP Benefit Households

Review DSS letter to make sure HH is not receiving "zero benefits" → If HH is receiving "zero benefits"

- Child is not categorially eligible for free meals or milk

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Proof of SNAP or TFA Benefits

- Cannot use Connecticut CONNECT EBT Card



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CSDE Resource

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

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/Processing_Free_Reduced_Applications_Providing_SNAP_TFA_Number.pdf

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Accountability of Determining Official



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Importance of Accurate Determinations

Correct benefits for child

Correct funding for LEA



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Accountability of Determining Official: Entities Checking Application Approvals

LEA	CSDE	BOE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HH selected for verification (confirmation review) Independent Review of Application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FNS 742 Verification Collection Report Administrative Review of school nutrition Programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town or board of education (BOE) auditor

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Time for a Break?



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Web-based Applications



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Web-based Applications

- Does the web-based application require information that is not required by USDA?

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Example of Noncompliant Web-based Application

Student Information: Add Student
 Please enter the information for the student below. Fields in bold are required.

Add Student to Application

First Name **First Name is Required**

Middle Initial

Last Name **Last Name is Required**

Suffix

Birthdate **Birthdate is Required (e.g., 01/03/2011)**

Gender Male Female

Foster Child Yes No

Student Number

School **School is Required**

Grade

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Example of Noncompliant Web-based Application

Address Information
 Please enter the address of the household that is applying for meal benefits.
 Fields in bold are required.

Address
 Address is Required

Address Line 2

City
 City is Required

State
 State is Required

Zip Code
 Zip Code is Required

Primary Phone

Secondary Phone

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Web-based Applications

- Does the web-based application contain language that is not applicable?

Special Circumstances
 If this student is homeless, migrant, runaway, or participates in the Head Start Program, check the appropriate box below and call your school office.

Homeless **Migrant** Runaway

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Web-based Applications

- Does the web-based application contain language that is not applicable?

Information Disclosure
 Because health insurance is so important to children's well-being, the law allows your school district to tell Medicaid that your children are eligible for free or reduced-price benefits unless you tell them not to. Medicaid only uses the information to identify children who may be eligible for their programs. Program officials may contact you to offer to enroll your children. Filling out the Application for Free and Reduced-priced School Meals does not automatically enroll your children in health insurance. If you do not want your school district to share your information with Medicaid, please select "No" below.

Allow my district to share my information with the Medicaid Program: Yes No

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Web-based Applications

- Prevent incomplete responses for required fields, e.g., income
- Set up to warn applicant before they can move forward to next field



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Notifying Households of Eligibility Status



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Notifying Households of Eligibility Status

- Must notify HH of eligibility status (written or verbal)
 - Mail or email adult HH member who signed application *

*** Email must be secure**



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Notification for Denied Applications

- **Must deny**
 - Incomplete applications
 - Applications not meeting eligibility criteria



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Notification for Denied Applications

- **Must be written (mail or secure email)**
 - Send to adult HH member who signed application
- **Cannot use**
 - “Notification” page of online system
 - Automated telephone information systems



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Notification for Denied Applications

- **Must give 10 calendar days’ written notice prior to date change takes effect**
 - Does not apply to 30-day carryover period
- **First day of advance notice period is day notice is sent**
- **Mail or securely email to adult HH member who signed application**



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Refusing Benefits

- HH qualifies for free or reduced-price meals but parent/guardian wants to pay full price or reduced price
- HH has right to refuse eligibility benefit
- Make note of request and claim meals as applicable



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Verification for Cause



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Verification for Cause

Verification of any questionable application on a case-by-case basis

Terms to Know

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When Verification for Cause Occurs

- Separate from formal verification process in October
- May occur any time



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Verification for Cause Process

- Contact HH to clear up any issues before processing application
- Once notify HH, must complete process formal verification process
 - Use CSDE's verification forms



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Benefit Issuance Document



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Benefit Issuance Document

List of children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals or free milk

Terms to Know

- Roster
- List of free, reduced, and paid students



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Required Information

Name of school: ABC Elementary School
 Enrolled students: 664
 Eligible students: 62
 Total free eligible: 62
 Total reduced eligible: 44

Certification Number	Last name	First name	Benefit status (free, reduced, paid)	Method of certification: application or direct certification (DC) *	Date of certification	Select for verification?
1	Last A	First A	Reduced	Application	8/18/2023	No
2	Last B	First B	Free	DC: FM	8/15/2023	No
3	Last C	First C	Free	Application	8/18/2023	No
4	Last D	First D	Reduced	DC: RM	8/15/2023	No
5	Last E	First E	Free	DC: AF	8/15/2023	No
6	Last F	First F	Free	DC: OT	8/15/2023	No
7	Last G	First G	Free	DC: Letter	9/1/2023	No
8	Last H	First H	Reduced	Application	9/1/2023	Yes
9	Last I	First I	Free	DC:FM Ext Cert. 2	8/18/2023	No
10	Last J	First J	Reduced	DC:RM Ext Cert. 4	8/15/2023	No

* Direct Certification (DC) Codes
 AF: Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) FM: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 DC: Free Medicaid OT: Other (foster children) RM: Reduced Medicaid Ext. Cert.: Extended benefits

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Maintaining Benefit Issuance Document

1. Use LEA's student information system (SIS)
 - DO works with IT
 - SIS communicates daily with food service point-of-sale system
 - Ensure accuracy, efficacy, and confidentiality
 - Include weekly direct certification match



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Maintaining Benefit Issuance Document



2. Use food service point-of-sale system

- Communicates directly with computer/register terminals in serving lines
- Confers child's eligibility benefit

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Maintaining Benefit Issuance Document



2. Use food service point-of-sale system

- Check to determine software company's capabilities
 - Daily data
 - Benefit issuance document

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Maintaining Benefit Issuance Document



3. Create Excel spreadsheet maintained manually by DO

- Must contain all required components including weekly direct certification match
- Use to create roster

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Important Reminders for Benefit Issuance Document



- Must be accurate and updated
- Point-of-sale list/data must match
- Available for Administrative Review
- Keep backup paper copy with cashiers
- Cannot maintain separate benefit issuance document
- Must safeguard confidentiality

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Claim Consolidation Process



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Claim Consolidation

- Submit monthly claim based on daily edit check worksheet

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CSDE Resource

Edit Check Worksheets

Connecticut's Official State Resource | Search Connecticut Government | Language & Settings

CT.gov Home / Department of Education / Meal Counting and Claiming for School Nutrition Programs / Documents/Forms

Meal Counting and Claiming for School Nutrition Programs

Overview Documents/Forms
 Edit Check Forms | Meal Count Forms | Monitoring Forms

Related Resources
 Laws/Regulations
 Contact

Provided by:
 Department of Education

Edit Check Forms

- Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)
 - CEP Edit Check Worksheet and Instructions
- NSLP and SBP
 - Edit Check Worksheet for Lunch
 - Instructions for Edit Check Worksheet for Lunch
 - Edit Check Worksheet for Breakfast and Lunch
 - Instructions for Edit Check Worksheet for Breakfast and Lunch

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Counting-and-Claiming-for-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#EditCheckForms>

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Claim Consolidation

- Submit monthly claim based on daily edit check worksheet
- Update free and reduced-price eligible numbers monthly
- Report total enrollment for school

Checks and balances in CNP System

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Claim Consolidation

- Approved free and reduced applications and directly certified students =
- Names and eligibility on benefit issuance document =
- Eligibility conveyed at point of service =
- Free, reduced, and paid enrollment on daily edit check worksheet =
- Free, reduced, and paid enrollment on monthly claim for reimbursement

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CSDE Resource

Overview of Meal Counting and Claiming Process for Connecticut School Nutrition Programs

Overview of Meal Counting and Claiming Process for Connecticut School Nutrition Programs

The Department of Education (SDE) oversees the implementation of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Summer Lunch Program (SLP), and Special Milk Program (SMP). The NSLP and SBP provide reimbursements for each meal plus indirect costs, and provide the monthly program reimbursement and a monthly meal claim. To ensure the reimbursement, SDE must accurately report and claim the number of meals served by schools to request the claim.

The six central elements of a successful counting and claiming process are:

1. Right the documentation
2. Report all eligible students
3. Report all eligible meals
4. Report all eligible meals, including all eligible meals
5. Claim all eligible meals
6. Claim all eligible meals

SDE also oversees the all-of-counting-and-claiming process, ensuring that all eligible students are counted and that all eligible meals are reported. SDE also oversees the all-of-counting-and-claiming process, ensuring that all eligible students are counted and that all eligible meals are reported. SDE also oversees the all-of-counting-and-claiming process, ensuring that all eligible students are counted and that all eligible meals are reported.

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/MealCount/Overview_Meal_Counting_Claiming_SNP.pdf

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CSDE Webpage

Meal Counting and Claiming for School Nutrition Programs

Connecticut's Official State Resource | Search Connecticut Government | Language & Settings

CT.gov Home / Department of Education / Meal Counting and Claiming for School Nutrition Programs

Meal Counting and Claiming for School Nutrition Programs

Overview

Overview School Nutrition Programs | Program Guidance | Forms | Resources | Nutrition Education

Related Resources
 The resources below help schools and districts understand the SDE requirements for meal counting and claiming in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Summer Lunch Program (SLP), and Special Milk Program (SMP).

Contact
 All aspects of school nutrition programs (meal counts) are tracked at the state level, and all data is reported to the Department of Education.

Provided by:
 Department of Education

Connecticut Requirements and Guidance

- Forms
 - Edit Check Forms (Documents/Forms section)
 - Meal Count Forms (Documents/Forms section)
- Meal Application and Data Management Process for Connecticut School Nutrition Programs
- Monitoring Forms (Documents/Forms section)
- Site Information on Menu Collection and Point of Service Meal Count Systems

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Counting-and-Claiming-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

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Independent Review of Applications



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Independent Review of Applications

A type of review required if the LEA demonstrates a high level of, or high risk for, administrative errors associated with application certification

Terms to Know

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Independent Review of Applications

- Another person (not DO) must conduct second review of applications
- Must submit additional report (FNS 874) to CSDE

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Independent Review of Applications

- Applies to at-risk LEAs
 - LEAs new to NSLP
 - LEAs that exceed error threshold of 10% during Administrative Review
 - Any other LEAs deemed at risk by CSDE

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Records Retention



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Records Retention

Documentation	Timeframe
All records to support claim	3 years after submission date of final claim for fiscal year
Records with unresolved audit findings	Beyond 3 years, as long as required to resolve audit issues

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Records Retention

- Special Provision schools (e.g., CEP) must keep all data to support base year or Identified Student Percentage (ISP) data
- Check with BOE/town to determine if records retention requirements are more stringent

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Appeal Procedures



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Appeal Procedures

- Parents/guardians have right to appeal eligibility determination
 - Must file within the 10 calendar days advance notice period to ensure continued benefits while waiting for a hearing and decision

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Appeal Procedures

- LEA's parent/guardian notification letter for free/reduced-price eligibility must include information on
 - LEA's appeal procedures
 - 10 calendar days advance notice period

Sample Letter of Verification Results and Adverse Action for Income Households
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/Verification/Sample_Letter_Verification_Results_Adverse_Action_Income_Households.docx

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Appeal Procedures

- If parent/guardian requests appeal within the 10 calendar days advance notice period, forward to hearing official

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Appeal Procedures

- More information
 - LEA's policy statement
 - USDA's Eligibility Manual for School Meals

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/USDA_eligibility_manual.pdf

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Civil Rights Responsibilities



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Civil Rights Resources

- **FNS Instruction 113-1: Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement – Nutrition Programs and Activities**
- **Required PowerPoint
Civil Rights: Your Responsibilities in the School Nutrition Programs**



<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Civil-Rights-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs#schools>

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Questions?

School Nutrition Programs Staff	
County	Consultant
Fairfield County (includes Region 9)	Fionnuala Brown 860-807-2129 fionnuala.brown@ct.gov
Litchfield County (includes Regions 1, 6, 7, 12, and 14)	
New Haven County (includes Regions 5, 15, and 16)	Greg King 860-713-6804 greg.king@ct.gov
Hartford County (includes Region 10)	Teri Dandeneau 860-807-2079 teri.dandeneau@ct.gov
Middlesex County (includes Regions 4, 13, and 17)	
New Haven County (includes Regions 5, 15, and 16)	Susan Alston 860-807-2081 susan.alston@ct.gov
New London County	
Tolland County (includes Regions 8 and 19)	
Windham County (includes Region 11)	

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CNstaff/countyassign.pdf>

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Thank you for participating in module 2!



<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Eligibility-for-Free-and-Reduced-price-Meals-and-Free-Milk-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources>

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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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