

Module 2–Meal Eligibility

Target Audience

- Local educational agencies (LEA)
- Child nutrition director of school districts and county offices of education (COE)
- Staff who determine meal eligibility

For Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI):

- Executive director
- Food service directors
- Staff who determine meal eligibility

Estimated Time Required: 45 minutes

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Learning Objectives

- Develop a clear understanding of the various ways of determining meal eligibility
- Compare the extension of benefits to a household with each of the eligibility determinations
- Develop an understanding of the direct certification process for determining eligibility
- Describe and compare direct certification using local matching versus state matching
- Develop an understanding of the steps involved in processing household applications
- Name two common household application processing errors
- Describe and compare Provisions 1, 2, and 3
- Develop an understanding of CEP

1. Eligibility Determination for Residential Child Care Institutions without Day Students

RCCIs **with** day students must read all sections of this module. However, RCCIs that do **not** have day students must read page 2 **only**.

Day students are community students who attend a school operated by an RCCI, but do not live at the RCCI.

Meal eligibility is the process of determining a household's eligibility for free, reduced-price, and paid meal benefits in the following programs:

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Afterschool Meal Supplements (AMS) (known as Afterschool Snack)
- Seamless Summer Option (SSO)
- Special Milk Program (SMP)

Child Residing in an Institution

Each child residing in an institution or RCCI that participates in the NSLP and/or the SBP is considered a household of one. A household application is completed for each child unless the RCCI uses an eligibility documentation sheet for all children residing in an RCCI. The eligibility documentation sheet must provide information indicating the child's name, the personal income the child receives, the child's date of birth, date of admission, and date of release, if applicable. An approving official must sign the documentation sheet and provide his/her title and contact information.

Residents of an RCCI may attend a public school or attend a school operated by an RCCI. If a student attends a public school, he/she must complete a household application to receive meals at that public school.

RCCI sponsors must document eligibility by completing a household application or an eligibility documentation sheet for each child for each site. These documents must be retained for three years plus the current year.

Note: All RCCIs without Day Students Can Stop Here.

2. Eligibility Determinations for All Other Local Educational Agencies and RCCIs with Day Students

Children attending an RCCI day school, but do not reside at the RCCI are considered members of their household and their eligibility is determined by using a household application or through direct certification.

Determining free or reduced-price (F/RP) meal eligibility is the process that evaluates a household's eligibility for free, reduced-price, and paid meal benefits in the following programs:

- NSLP
- SBP
- AMS (Afterschool Snack)
- SSFO
- SMP
- State Meal Program (STMP)

LEAs must conduct eligibility determination each school year and certify children through the F/RP Meal Eligibility Application or direct certification process in one or more of the following ways:

1. Income Eligibility

- a. Students are considered income eligible in the F/RP category if their household size and income fall within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) **Income Eligibility Guidelines** at or below the F/RP levels.

2. Categorical Eligibility

- a. Assistance Programs: Students who are automatically eligible for free meal benefits if any household member receive benefits with a specific assistance program. Therefore, if one child or adult in the household receives benefits, all students in the household are eligible for free meal benefits.
- b. Other Source Categorical Eligibility: Students who are a homeless, runaway, or migratory child, a foster child, or enrolled in a federally-funded Head Start or comparable State-funded Head Start or prekindergarten program. The eligibility does not extend to other children in the household.

The eligibility determination chart at the end of this section provides an overview of these types of eligibility.

There are two ways to be classified as categorically eligible. Through participation in:

1. Assistance programs:

- CalFresh (federally known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP])
- California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) (federally known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families[TANF])
- Medi-Cal (federally known as Medicaid)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations(FDPIR)
FDPIR is a federal program that provides USDA foods to low-income households living on Indian reservations and to Native American families residing in designated areas near reservations. Eligibility for free meals is extended to all children in a household that receive benefits from FDPIR.

The program is administered locally by either Indian Tribal Organizations (ITO) or an agency of a state government. Households may only participate in FDPIR or CalFresh, not both. For additional information on FDPIR, review the USDA FDPIR Web page at

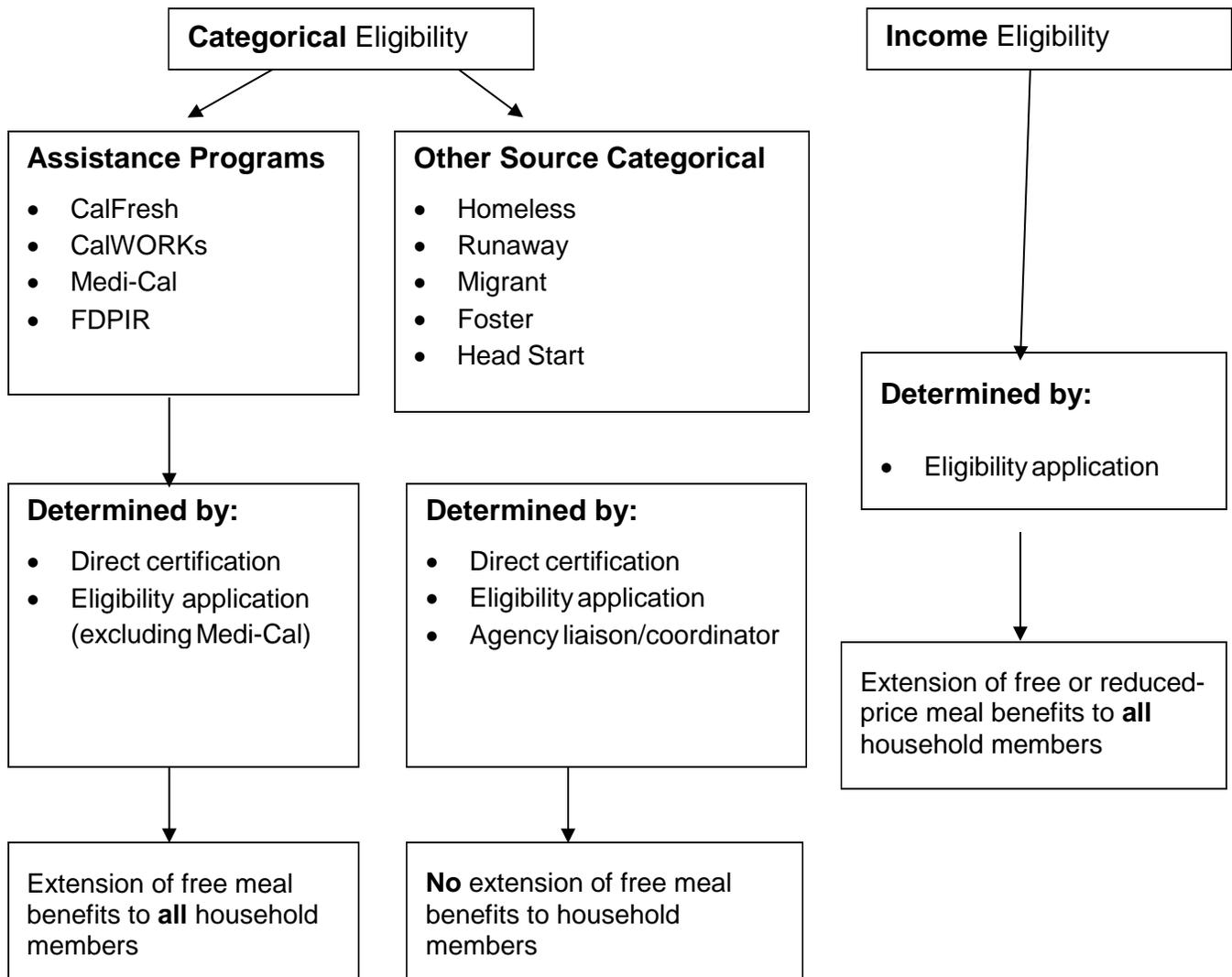
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdpir/food-distribution-program-indian-reservations-fdpir>

2. Other source categorically eligible programs:

- Homeless child
- Runaway child
- Migrant child
- Foster child
- Head Start Program

A child's eligibility for free meals under other source categorical eligibility does not extend to any other child in the household.

Meal Eligibility Determination Chart Overview



3. Other Source Categorically Eligible Programs

In order to ensure prompt delivery of meal benefits to other source categorically eligible children, the LEA must have written direct certification procedures in place with agencies who serve this population. An appropriate program official must confirm the status for each child, either through direct contact with the agency or by a list of names provided by the agency, prior to providing benefits. Foster children, however, do not require confirmation of eligibility status prior to receiving benefits.

If the household submits an application with income and also indicates other source categorical eligibility for one or more children, the LEA must confirm the student's status before providing meal benefits. If the LEA cannot confirm the student's status, the LEA must process the application using the income information provided. If the LEA can confirm the child's eligibility status, the determination based on income is superseded. However, if some children in the household are not determined to be other source categorically eligible, the income determination remains in effect for them.

For more information regarding direct certification with other source categorically eligible programs, refer to the Eligibility Manual for School Meals located on the USDA School Meals Guidance and Resources Web page at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/guidance-and-resources>

Homeless Child

A child is considered homeless and categorically eligible if he/she is identified as lacking a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act by the LEA homeless liaison, or by the director of a homeless shelter. This includes sharing housing with others due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons. Families or individuals who live in temporary housing including, but not limited to, hotels, motels, camps, shelters, parks, abandoned buildings or cars, are defined as homeless.

Sponsors must obtain acceptable documentation proving that the students are homeless from the district's homeless liaison or director of homeless shelter(s) where the children reside.

Documentation to substantiate free meal eligibility must consist of the following:

- Child's name or a list of names
- Effective date(s)
- Signature of the LEA homeless liaison or the director of the homeless shelter

For more information, review Management Bulletin (MB) 02-114: Meal Eligibility of Homeless Children, located on the California Department of Education (CDE) MB Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mb02114.asp> To locate your district's homeless liaison, review the Homeless Education Liaisons list located on the CDE Homeless Education Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>

Runaway Child

A child is identified as a runaway child and other source categorical eligible when he/she is receiving assistance through a program under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) by the local educational liaison.

Acceptable documentation to substantiate participation in a program for runaway children sponsored by RHYA must include:

- Child's name or a list of names of participating children
- Effective date(s)
- Signature of the school district's homeless liaison

Migrant Child

A child is considered other source categorically eligible if he/she is identified as meeting the definition of migrant in Section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title 20 *United States Code*, Section 6399) as identified by the state or local Migrant Education Program (MEP) coordinator or the local educational liaison. The basic definition of a migrant child for the MEP is a child who has moved across school district lines within the last three years in order to accompany or join a parent or guardian who has moved to seek or obtain temporary or seasonal work in agriculture or fishing.

State educational agencies and local MEP staff are responsible for identifying and maintaining supporting documentation for migrant children that meet the definition. LEAs may contact their migrant education office to get a list of migrant students in their area by accessing the CDE Migrant Education Contacts Web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/me/mt/programs.asp>

Acceptable documentation to substantiate participation for MEP enrollment is:

- Dated list with each child's name, and the signature of the MEP official or local educational liaison
- A letter from an MEP official or local educational liaison provided by a household, which confirms that a child currently meets the definition of migrant

Homeless, runaway, or migrant children qualify for free meals without completing an application if they are on a list that has been certified, signed, and dated by the state or local educational liaison.

Foster Child

A foster child is another source categorical eligible child whose care and placement is the responsibility of a state or local welfare agency or who is placed by a court with a relative or other caretaker household. **This applies only to foster children who are formally placed by the state or court**, not informal arrangements outside of the state or court systems. A child may still be considered a foster child if placed with relatives provided the state or local foster care system or courts make the placement.

If a foster child does not have any personal income, it might be in the foster family's best interest to include their foster child/children along with nonfoster children on one F/RP application. This will increase the household size and may help the nonfoster children qualify for higher meal benefits.

Acceptable documentation to substantiate foster child eligibility is:

- Computer match directly to the LEA or other child nutrition program (CNP) institution indicating the status of the child as a foster child without further application
- A letter submitted by the household from the state, local welfare agency, or court confirming the child's foster status
- Documents from the welfare agency or court stating that the courts have taken legal custody of a child who has been placed in the foster care system
- A list of children in foster care from the welfare agency or court
- An application submitted by the foster parents that indicates the child's foster status. No further documentation is required; however, the application is subject to verification.

For more information, review MB USDA-SNP-25-2012: Foster Children Now Eligible for Free Meals/Milk located on the CDE School Nutrition Program (SNP) MB Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbusdasnp252012.asp>

Head Start

Children enrolled in federally-funded Head Start centers are considered other source categorically eligible for free meals. Acceptable documentation includes:

- Statement of enrollment in Head Start
- List of children participating in Head Start from a Head Start official
- Approved Head Start application

State-funded Prekindergarten Programs

Children enrolled in state-funded prekindergarten programs with eligibility requirements **identical to or more stringent** than those used by the federally funded Head Start centers are also considered categorically eligible. **In California**, children enrolled in state-funded prekindergarten programs are not categorically eligible for free meals due to requirements being **less** stringent and meal eligibility must be determined through direct certification or a meal application.

4. Direct Certification

Direct certification is the process in which all LEAs administering the NSLP automatically certify children who receive certain public assistance benefits for free meals without further application. Eligible children include those identified by state or local agencies as receiving CalFresh, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, FDPIR, homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, and enrolled in Head Start. LEAs complete direct certification using information provided by state or local agencies administering these programs, and children are certified as eligible for free school meals without completing a household application.

LEAs may accept CalFresh notification letters from the household as a secondary method of recognizing categorical eligibility for free meals. When the household provides a CalFresh eligibility letter to the LEA or school, the letter must be used to establish eligibility, but it is not considered direct certification for reporting purposes.

LEAs must conduct direct certification matches a minimum of three times during the school year. Below are the recommended time periods when direct certification should be completed:

- At or around the beginning of the school year (i.e., July 1)
- Three months after the beginning of the school year
- Six months after the beginning of the school year

There are two exceptions to the mandatory direct certification requirement:

- Schools in nonbase years that operate under CEP and Provision 2 (direct certification must be conducted once per year) and
- RCCIs or boarding schools without day students

RCCIs and boarding schools **with** day students must conduct direct certification for all students enrolled.

Direct certification has proven to lessen the burden of the eligibility and verification processes and can increase meal participation. The CDE recommends conducting a direct certification match monthly.

Local Data Matching (available to all LEAs)

LEAs set up an agreement with the county social services agency to receive a list of students eligible for CalFresh, CalWORKs, and foster care. Lists for migrant, homeless, runaway, and Head Start students may be obtained from other local liaisons. A contact list of county social services agencies that provide direct certification information is available on the CDE CalFresh County Contact Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/directcertcountycontacts.asp>

When conducting a local direct certification match, the following documentation is required to establish direct certification eligibility and to substantiate claims:

1. Names of children being directly certified
2. At least one identifier (birth date, address, parent's name, gender, etc.)
3. Date and signature from an official with the assistance program(s)
4. Public assistance benefit type or code

For computer matches, documentation must include correspondence or a written agreement between the assistance program(s) and the LEA that sets out or confirms the manner in which LEA officials will be provided with the children's benefit status.

A checklist regarding how to implement direct certification with the county social services agency can be located on the CDE Direct Certification Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/directcert.asp>

State-level Data Matching (available to public school districts, COEs, and charter schools)

The CDE established a statewide system that matches student information data stored in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) against statewide data on CalFresh, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, and foster recipients.

The CALPADS list is an acceptable documentation when conducting a state match for CalFresh and CalWORKs benefits.

To understand more about Direct Certification through CALPADS, please visit the Management Bulletin (MB) Direct Certification Process Using the CALPADS on the CDE Web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/directcert.asp> Also, to get a list of foster students in the CALPADS, please visit the CALPADS Update Flash #95 located on the CDE Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sp/cl/calpadsupdf1ash95.asp>

Private schools, nonpublic schools, and RCCIs with day students **cannot** use CALPADS to retain their student enrollment data. These schools must receive direct certification data through county social services agencies.

CALPADS Training

The California School Information Services (CSIS) currently provides technical support and training for LEAs regarding how to use the CALPADS to extract direct certification results. For information about CSIS trainings, visit the CSIS CALPADS Training Schedule and Registration Web page at <http://www.csis.k12.ca.us/e-learning/calpads-registration/> or contact the CSIS directly by phone at 916-325-9210 or by e-mail at calpads-support@cde.ca.gov

Required Reporting for Direct Certification

The USDA requires that LEAs report separately the students directly certified through CalFresh and other programs on the annual Verification Report. The CALPADS provides a Certification Status Code that designates the program eligibility as follows:

- S: Student is eligible for free meals only through the SNAP (CalFresh in California).
- T: Student is eligible for free meals only through TANF (CalWORKs in California) or other eligible public benefit programs.
- M: Student is eligible for free meals only through Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California)
- R: Student is eligible for reduced-price meals only through Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California)
- N: Student is not eligible for free meals.

SFAs that complete the Direct Certification process with a local county agency that does not designate the program eligibility will need to work in partnership with the county agency to obtain data that is compliant with USDA requirements for all future verification reports.

The NSD will notify LEAs each year on how to complete the verification report to meet the reporting requirement.

Effective Date of Eligibility for Directly Certified Children

Generally, directly certified children are eligible for free school meal or milk benefits on the date the LEAs processes the automated data matching file or list. However, LEAs may consider the effective date of eligibility to be the date of the automated data matching file or benefit recipient file from another agency, which first identifies the student as eligible for direct certification rather than the date the LEA accesses and processes the automated data matching file into their local point of service (POS) system. To be used for this purpose, the data file must be generated and received by the LEA in the current school year.

LEAs choosing to exercise this flexibility must read and follow the instructions provided in MB SNP-17-2015: Eligibility Effective Date for Directly Certified Students available on the CDE SNP MB Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mb.asp>

Parent Notification of Benefits

LEAs are required to notify qualifying households that their children were directly certified for free meals.

The notification letter must include the following information:

- The child is eligible for free benefits
- No further application is necessary
- An explanation of extended eligibility and how to notify the LEA of any additional children in the household not listed on the letter
- How to notify the LEA if the household wants to decline free benefits for their directly certified children

The CDE provides a prototype notification letter of direct certification for free meals which is available on the CDE SNP Eligibility Materials Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/eligmaterials.asp>

Additional Direct Certification Resources

For more information on this subject, visit the CDE NSD Direct Certification Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/directcert.asp>

5. Household Application Requirements

LEAs must provide household applications to families applying for F/RP meals or free milk benefits, unless the household has been directly certified. Applications provided to households must be accompanied by instructional materials. Only one household application is submitted for all children in the household who attend schools in the same LEA. **An LEA cannot require a household to submit an application.**

Applications must be in compliance with the USDA Eligibility Manual for School Meals, Title 7, *Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR)*, Part 245, and California statutory requirements to meet all criteria examined during an administrative review (AR).

Limited English Proficiency Households

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) refers to an individual with a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. LEAs that receive federal funding to participate in the NSLP, SBP, and SMP have a responsibility to ensure that language and communication are not a barrier for individuals identified as LEP. LEAs must provide meaningful access for eligible students from households comprised of LEP individuals. In order to diminish any language barriers, the F/RP meal application and other household materials (letter to household, instructions, direct certification letter, approval/denial letter, and verification materials) must be available in a language that the LEP individual can understand.

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For more information on this subject, review USDA Policy Memo SP 37-2016 on the USDA School Meals Policy Web page at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/policy> and MB

SNP-09-2016: LEP on the CDE SNP MB Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mb.asp>

Application Content

Required information on the application may be organized at the LEA's discretion, except for the attesting statement. The application must include space for the following:

- Statement from the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act must be provided on the application or included with the instructions on how to complete the application

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not submit all needed information, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the last four digits of the social security number of the primary wage earner or other adult household member who signs the application. The social security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals, and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs.

We may share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews, and law enforcement officials to help them look into violation of program rules.

- Statement from California *Education Code (EC)*, Section 49557(a), using at least 8-point boldface type: "Applications for F/RP meals may be submitted at any time during a school day. Children participating in the federal National School Lunch Program will not be overtly identified by the use of special tokens, special tickets, special serving lines, separate entrances, separate dining areas, or by any other means."
- Children's ethnicity and race is optional for the household to provide, but the question must be included on the application. All SFAs are required to collect racial and ethnic data each year for each site. You may review the CDE Description of Racial and Ethnic Categories Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/raciaethniccat.asp>
- Names of all household members (children and adults)
- Any household member who receives CalFresh, CalWORKs, or FDPIR benefits, and their case number
- A check box indicating the status of another source categorically eligible program
- Total income from each source in whole dollars only and the frequency of income for

each household member (children and adults)

- A field for applicants to enter a zero to represent no income and no requirement for a separate indication (i.e., check box). There must be clear and easy to understand instructions that any blank income field is a positive indication of no income and certifies that there is no income to report for that household member.
- The attesting statement, directly above the signature block for the signing adult, to certify that:
 - The person signing the application is furnishing true information and that the application is being submitted in connection with federal funds
 - School officials may verify the information on the application
 - Deliberate misrepresentation of the information may subject the applicant to prosecution under state and federal laws
- Last four digits of the social security number (SSN) of the adult signing the application. If the adult signing the application does not have an SSN, there must be a checkbox indicating no SSN. **Please note that putting “NA” on the line that asks for the SSN digits is not acceptable.** The SSN field must be incorporated into the income reporting section. Households applying based on non-income criteria (categorical eligibility) are not required to provide their SSN.
- All forms of communication available to the public regarding program availability, except menus, must contain the appropriate USDA nondiscrimination statement. The current nondiscrimination statement, including the Spanish statement, is available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-nondiscrimination-statement>

Electronic Application

The LEA may make the application and supporting materials available electronically via the Internet. In addition, the LEA may accept applications electronically and may provide procedures to collect electronic signatures for such submissions. All disclosure restrictions must be met and acceptance of the application and electronic signatures must be in accordance with guidance issued by the USDA. For further information, access the USDA Policy Memo SP-10-2007: Update on Electronic Transactions in CNPs located on the USDA Web page at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/update-electronic-transactions-child-nutrition-programs-1> and SP-12-2007: Electronic Record and Reporting Systems located on the USDA Web page at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/electronic-record-and-reporting-systems-1>

- Electronic signatures are accepted if confidentiality requirements are met
- Faxes are **not** accepted as electronic signatures from households

For more information, review MB USDA-CNP-02-2011: Privacy Protection and SSNs located on the CDE SNP Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbusdacnp022011.asp>

Online applications must include Web links to the following resources that are not currently required to be provided with the paper application:

- Translated meal applications posted by the USDA with instructions in the appropriate language, which inform the applicant how to submit the application.
- Online application for CalFresh, the state health care system, and summer meal program within the same city or school district.
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) with instructions on how to apply.

Online applications are prohibited by SB 708 from being made available or accessible if the online application allows for the information provided by an applicant to be used by a private entity for any purpose not related to the administration of a school food program, or if the online application requires an applicant to waive any right or to create a user account in order to submit the application.

6. Processing Applications

To be considered complete, an application must include all required information. Any application that is missing required information, contains inconsistent information, or is unclear is considered an incomplete application and may not be processed. The LEA should make reasonable efforts to contact the household in order to obtain or clarify required information.

LEAs must designate a Determining Official(s) who ensures completeness of the applications and makes eligibility determinations. An employee of a food service management company (FSMC) may act as an agent for the LEA in various aspects of the application, certification, and verification processes. The FSMC employee must comply with all requirements for these processes, including limited disclosure of individual eligibility information. The LEA is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all requirements are met and that the information on the application remains the property of the LEA and may not be used or possessed by the FSMC for any use other than to determine eligibility for F/RP meals.

The determining official may not complete the application for the household using information derived from other records available to the school. Any missing information on the application must be provided by the household.

The LEA must not delay the approval of an application if the household fails to provide any information that is not required. For example, if an application has all of the required information for determining eligibility, but the household did not include its street address or birthdates, processing of the application may not be delayed.

All agencies are required to:

- Determine eligibility, notify the family of its status, and implement the status within 10 working days of receipt of the application
- Notify families by written or verbal communication. E-mail notification is allowed when notification is made to the adult household member who signed the application

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- Resolve any questions or inconsistencies
- Deny any applications that are not income or categorically eligible
- Review all applications under California's confidentiality laws

Additional SNP eligibility materials, including various meal application formats, are available on the CDE SNP Eligibility Materials Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/eligmaterials.asp>

Reimbursement Rates and Annual Eligibility Scales

To determine eligibility, use the current year's scale. The eligibility scale is located on the CDE Rates, Eligibility Scales, and Funding Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/rs/index.asp>

Complete Income Application

To determine if a household meets federal income eligibility requirements for meal benefits, the Determining Official(s) must compare the household size and the total household income to the federal Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEG). A complete application must provide:

- Names of all household members (children and adults)
- Amount, source, and frequency of current income for each household member
- Signature of an adult household member
- Last 4 digits of the SSN of the adult signing the application or an indication that there is no SSN

The earnings of a child who is a full-time or regular part-time employee, or who receives income from other sources such as Supplemental Security Income or Social Security, must be listed. Since many students do not receive income on a regular basis, the application now provides a single reporting field in which the household can report the total income earned by all students.

Complete Assistance Program Application

For applications with a case number for a federal assistance program, a complete application must provide:

- Names of all the children in the household
- CalFresh, CalWORKs, or FDPIR case number for the child(ren) or for any household member listed on the application
- Signature of an adult household member completing the application

Determining officials must ensure that the assistance program case number or identifier listed on the application is consistent with the format used by the assistance program within the state.

If the case number seems incorrect, the LEA should contact the household or the local assistance program to confirm the household's eligibility or verify the application for cause. LEAs are encouraged to review the direct certification list to determine whether any of the applications with case numbers can be matched with children on the list.

- If a match is found, the application must be disregarded, the family must be placed on the direct certification list, and categorical eligibility must be extended to all children in the household
- When a match is not found, the LEA should contact the household for further clarification or verify the application for cause

Complete Other Source Categorical Eligibility Application

If a child has **not** been identified on the homeless/runaway or migrant list, they can complete an application. An appropriate box or other indication on the application must be checked to identify the child's status as homeless, migrant, or runaway. A complete application must provide:

- Names of all the children in the household
- Indication of a child's categorical eligibility status
- Signature of an adult household member completing the application

The LEA official must contact the Other Source Categorically Eligible agency liaison to confirm that the children are eligible under one of these programs before free benefits are provided. If the household submits an application with income and indicates **Other Source Categorical Eligibility** for one or more children, the LEA must confirm the children's status before benefits can be provided. If the LEA cannot confirm the children's status, the LEA must process the application using the income information provided.

If Other Source Categorical Eligibility is documented for all children in the household, the determination based on income is superseded. However, if some children in the household are not determined Other Source Categorically Eligible, the income determination remains in effect for them, and the application must be retained in the LEA's records.

Complete Foster Child Application

A foster child is categorically eligible for free meals. An appropriate box or other indication on the application must be checked to identify the child's status. The child's status for free meals does not require confirmation of eligibility status prior to receiving benefits. A complete application must provide the:

- Name of the foster child
- Indication of the child's foster care status
- Signature of an adult household member completing the application

Certifying Mixed Eligibility Applications

On household applications that indicate mixed eligibility, where some children are other source categorically eligible and some children are not, LEAs must have a method to process different eligibility statuses that may result from these situations.

Other Source Categorical Eligibility of a child does not convey eligibility to other children in the household. If the household submits an application with income and indicates other source categorically eligible for one or more children, the LEA must confirm the children's status. The LEA official must contact another source categorically eligible program agency liaison to confirm that the children are eligible under one of the identified programs before free meal benefits are provided.

If the LEA cannot confirm the child(ren) Other Source Categorical Eligible status with the program official, the LEA must then use the household's income and size, which includes the Other Source Categorical Eligible child(ren), to determine if the noncategorically eligible children listed on the application are eligible for benefits.

A complete mixed application must provide:

- Names of all household members (children and adults)
- An indication of the program source of Other Source Categorical Eligibility status
- Amount and source of current income for each member and the frequency of income
- Signature of an adult household member completing the application
- Last 4 digits of the SSN of the adult signing the application or an indication that there is no SSN

Extension of Benefits to Household Members

LEAs need documentation to identify other members in the same household, e.g., enrollment information.

For more information, review MB USDA-CNP-05-2010: Extending Categorical Eligibility located on the CDE MB Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbusdacnp052010.asp> Meal eligibility applications from the prior school year are valid until an eligibility determination is made for the current school year for the first 30 operating days of a new school year. Ensure that your LEA has processes in place to change the eligibility category on the 31st operating day of the new school year.

Effective Date of Meal Eligibility Determination

Flexibility is available to LEAs for establishing the effective date of household eligibility when processing applications. If an LEA chooses, it can establish the date that a household submits an application as the effective date of a student's eligibility, rather than the date the official

approves the application. This flexibility only applies to:

- School meal eligibility determinations made through the application process
- Complete applications containing all the required information at the time of submission or that are only awaiting documentation of another source of categorical eligibility (i.e. homeless or migrant children)

LEAs choosing to exercise this flexibility must read and follow the instructions provided in MB SNP-08-2014: Effective Date of F/RP Meal Eligibility located on the CDE MB Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbsnp082014.asp>

Different Income Intervals

Multiple incomes listed in **different** intervals on an application must be converted to an **annual** income by multiplying the income type by the following intervals:

- Weekly income x 52
- Biweekly (every two weeks) income x 26
- Semimonthly (twice a month) income x 24
- Monthly income x 12

LEAs may not round the values resulting from each conversion, instead add all of the unrounded converted values and compare the unrounded total to the appropriate IEGs for annual income and household size. If only one income interval is listed, use the IEGs, as listed, without converting to annualized income.

Failure to Apply and the Child is in Need of Program Benefits

If a household fails to apply for eligibility, the LEA may take the following actions:

- School official complete an application on behalf of the student known to be eligible
- Base the student's eligibility on the best household income and size information available or an indication of an Other Source Categorically Eligible program
- Note the source of the information used on the application

This procedure is intended for limited use only for individual situations and not for groups of households. The names of household members, an adult SSN, and the signature of an adult household member are not required on the application. Households must be notified if the student qualifies for F/RP meals under this process. When the LEA completes an application on behalf of the household, these applications are excluded from verification.

Temporary Approval and Verification for Cause

Temporary approval of an application is not applicable because meal eligibility is good for the entire school year. Further, if LEAs are concerned with the authenticity of the information provided on an application, they may, on a case-by-case basis, verify the application for cause. The LEA must resolve the household's benefits/income within the timeframe to process the application.

Error-prone Applications

Error-prone (EP) applications indicate a total monthly household income within \$100 below the F/RP income eligibility limits. **or**

A total annual income within \$1,200 below the F/RP income eligibility limits on the federal IEGs for that household size.

Identify EP applications by:

- Checking the **EP** box at the bottom of the application form
- Flagging the EP applications in some way for easy identification
- Filing the applications separately for easy retrieval

Computerized software can usually identify EP applications. Sponsors using such software should verify that it is correctly identifying EP applications.

Eligibility Requirements for Military Families

Household composition for the purpose of making an eligibility determination is based on an economic unit, which is a group of related or unrelated individuals that share housing, income and expenses. Any benefits paid directly to a nondeployed military service person is considered income. Members of the armed forces who are activated or deployed in support of any military combat operation are considered a household member. Any income provided to the household by the deployed service member must be included when determining eligibility.

Reportable income sources for military service members include:

- Military basic pay
- Cash bonuses
- Food and clothing allowances
- Off-base housing allowances
- Veteran's benefits

Excluded income sources are:

- Privatized on-base housing allowances
- Combat pay

- Deployment Extension Incentive Pay
- Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance
- Payments from Agent Orange Compensation Exclusion Act

The USDA excludes military combat pay from income eligibility determinations for the following:

- F/RP meals in the NSLP and SBP
- F/RP meals for centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Tier status determinations for family day care homes in the CACFP
- Meals in the Summer Food Service Program
- Free milk in the SMP

For more information, review MB CNP-02-2017: Eligibility Requirements for Military Families located on the CDE MB Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbcnp022017.asp>

For more information on special situations for eligibility, such as adopted children, joint custody, and self-employment income versus wages, refer to the Eligibility Manual for School Meals located on the USDA School Meals Guidance and Resources Web page at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/guidance-and-resources>

Eligibility status for F/RP meals remains in effect for the entire school year. Households are not required to report changes in income or household size, or changes regarding participation in a program that makes the child(ren) categorically eligible. However, households may voluntarily report a change. If a change will decrease benefits (i.e., free to reduced-price, free to paid), the LEA must explain to the household that the request is voluntary and not required to be reported. The LEA must put that change into effect within 10 operating days, if the household chooses to submit a change that decreases benefits. If benefits are voluntarily decreased, the LEA must send a notice of adverse action that includes:

- Written confirmation of the action
- An indication that the change was made at the request of the household
- An explanation of the household's right to continue receiving free or reduced-price benefits, should the household choose to do so

7. Benefit Issuance (Rosters)

LEAs must develop and **maintain** a master roster with the approved eligibility category for each student. The roster should include the following:

- A list of F/RP eligible students at all schools within LEA
- The student's name, school name, benefit status, method of certification, date of certification, students whose application was selected for verification
- The list should contain no duplication of names
- The list should come from the POS system used in each school

Please note:

- It is not recommended to group student names by benefit status
- Coding is such that no person outside of **need to know** personnel can identify a student's eligibility category

Rosters must be updated when a change occurs on a student's approved benefit level. If one roster is maintained at the SFA with the names of students eligible for free or reduced-price benefits, and a second roster is used at the POS to check names of students receiving meals, the CDE reviewer must use the second POS roster during the AR.

8. Common Errors in Eligibility Determination

The following is a list of common errors of federal requirements that have been identified when reviewing meal applications:

- Missing information:
 - SSN of the adult signing the application

Note: If the SSN is missing, writing **NA** is **not** acceptable. Use the word **none** on the income application only or check the correct box, indicating the adult signing the application has no SSN.
 - Case number for categorical benefits
 - Name of individual who signed the application is not included with names of household members
 - Income source and frequency for all household members
 - Signature of parent/guardian or an adult household member
 - Signature of agency representative making determination
 - Date of certification

No income: Effective SY 2016–17, any income field left blank is a positive indication of no income and certifies that there is no income to report. When no income is provided for any household member, the application is considered complete. Applications must request that each household member write **zero** when there is no income to report. The LEA may not require a separate indication of no income, such as a check box or another fill-in field. The application must include clear and easy to understand instruction that communicates to the household that any income field left blank is a positive indication of no income and certifies that there is no income to report. Applications with blank income fields must be processed by the Determining Official(s) as complete. Applications with zero income or the household intentionally misreported its income, can be selected for verification or verified for cause.

- Incorrect Determination
 - Incorrect weekly or monthly income conversion factor used
 - Incorrect category determination from the federal IEG
 - Total number in the household does not match number of names listed
- Roster Errors
 - Eligibility information incorrectly transferred to hard copy roster
 - Eligibility information incorrectly transferred into computerized POS system
- Direct Certification
 - Not implemented
 - Match not completed correctly or not three times within first six months

Duration of Eligibility

A student's eligibility status for all CNPs remains in effect for the entire school year and carries over for up to 30 operating days into the new school year, or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first. The 30 operating days begins on the first operating day of school. Carryover applies to eligibility established through a household application or through direct certification. The LEA may not have a carryover period of less than 30 operating days. The eligibility status must return to the paid category if the student is not directly certified or does not have an approved F/RP meal application by the 31st operating day of the new school year.

If a student's eligibility expires at the end of the 30-day carryover period, the LEA is not required to send a notice of denial or notice of adverse action. Both the notice of denial and notice of adverse action provide an opportunity for the household to appeal. An eligibility determination was not made by the LEA since the household was not directly certified or failed to apply for F/RP benefits, there is no right to appeal a discontinuation of benefits due to the expiration of the carryover period.

Transfer of Eligibility

Unlike carryover, which occurs at the start of a new school year, transfer of eligibility applies when a child transfers to another school during the school year.

When a child transfers to a new school within the same LEA, the new school must accept the eligibility determination from the child's former school, if the child has an individual eligibility determination. A child that transfers within the same LEA from a Provision 1, 2, 3 or CEP school to a non-Provision school must be provided free reimbursable meals for up to 30 operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first.

To assist the household when a student transfers to a new school, LEAs are strongly encouraged to share a student's eligibility to minimize disruptions in meal benefits and avoid unpaid meal charges, especially from low income households. Sharing a student's eligibility status is allowable to reduce the delay in school meal benefits from one LEA to another. An LEA may provide free reimbursable meals for 30 operating days for any student that transfers to a new LEA from a Provision 1, 2, 3, or CEP school to a non-Provision school. The new LEA may accept the eligibility determination from the student's former LEA without incurring liability for the accuracy of the former determination.

The final regulation titled *National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Eliminating Applications through Community Eligibility as Required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* (Title 7, Code of Federal Regulations, sections 245.6(c)(2) and 245.9(1); 81 Federal Register 50194, July 29, 2016) gives state agencies the ability to allow LEAs eligibility carryover for up to 30 operating days (or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first) to students who transfer from Provision to non-Provision schools, within or between LEAs, both during and between school years.

For further details, see MB SNP-22-2016—Eligibility Carryover Period located on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbsnp222016.asp>

9. Second Review of Applications

LEAs that demonstrate high levels of or a high risk for administrative errors associated with eligibility determinations, must conduct a second review of all free, reduced-price, and paid applications before households are notified of eligibility status. The second review must be conducted by an independent individual that did not make the original eligibility determination. This individual is not required to be an employee of the LEA, but must be trained on how to make application determinations.

The CDE will identify LEAs required to conduct a second review of applications using two criteria. The first criterion is mandated by the USDA and the second is defined by the CDE under the authority granted by the USDA.

The CDE implemented the following selection criteria:

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1. USDA-mandated criterion: LEAs with a 10 percent or greater certification/benefit issuance error rate, as determined by the CDE during their most recent SNP AR.
2. CDE criterion: LEAs that are new to the NSLP and SBP. This is defined as an LEA that submits a new application, regardless of prior participation in the program.

The CDE Field Services Unit will annually notify LEAs by June 30 each year, if they are determined high risk and subject to a second review of applications based on one of the criteria above. Those LEAs required to conduct a second review of applications, based on the CDE selection criteria mentioned above, must conduct the review annually until they demonstrate to the CDE that no more than 5 percent of reviewed applications required a change in eligibility determination.

For more information and clarification on this topic, review MB SNP-32-2015: Release of the New LEA Second Review of Applications Report located on the CDE SNP MB Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbsnp322015.asp>

10. Meal Application Confidentiality

The LEA is responsible for the application process and for upholding the meal eligibility confidentiality laws.

California is the only state in the nation with confidentiality laws that govern F/RP applications and all data provided within the application (*EC 49557* and *49558*). Therefore, the confidentiality disclosure guidelines mentioned in the USDA Eligibility Manual are **not applicable** in California.

The school food service may **only** share the name and eligibility status of a child and **only** with the following:

- The Academic Achievement Testing Coordinator recognized by the school district
- The No Child Left Behind Coordinator (only in Program Improvement Schools)
- The superintendent, another school district, charter school, or COE when a student transfers from one LEA to another
- The State Superintendent of Public Instruction, designated CDE staff, or the local administrator for LCFF purposes
- Disclosure of individual F/RP data is restricted and subject to board policy

LEAs may voluntarily implement a process to share F/RP meals applications with local CalFresh offices. Assembly Bill (AB) 402 is intended to increase the participation of F/RP eligible households in the CalFresh program. Many students are eligible for the CalFresh program, but are not currently receiving benefits. AB 402 allows LEAs, under certain conditions, to share F/RP Meal application information from eligible households with local CalFresh office to determine eligibility. Among the benefits of AB 402 for both households and

LEAs, more F/RP eligible students receiving CalFresh benefits, thus ensuring that they have meals outside school, and more students being directly certified as eligible for free school meals.

For more information and clarification regarding the ability to share student meal program eligibility information, view:

Management Bulletin CNP-03-2015: Exceptions to Sharing Eligibility Data in the CNPs located on the CDE MB Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbcnp032015.asp>

Management Bulletin SNP-31-2015: Sharing School Meal Applications with CalFresh Offices located on the CDE MB Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbsnp312015.asp>

Management Bulletin SNP-12-2015: Guidance on Sharing of School Meal Applications located on the CDE MB Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbsnp122015.asp>

11. Eligibility Benefits under Alternative Claiming Method—Provisions 1, 2, 3

Schools and RCCIs **with** day students may use an alternative claiming method, known as Provisions 1, 2, or 3.

Basic Requirements for Each Provision

Traditionally, school officials annually distribute F/RP Meal applications to households of all enrolled children and make determinations of eligibility for F/RP meals under the NSLP and SBP. They also count the number of meals served by type (free, reduced-price, and paid meals) at the POS on a daily basis to claim federal reimbursement.

In an effort to reduce paperwork and other administrative burdens at the local level, Congress incorporated three alternative provisions to the traditional requirements for annual determinations of eligibility for F/RP meals and daily meal counts by type. As mentioned above, these alternatives are commonly referred to as Provision 1, Provision 2, and Provision 3.

In addition to Provision 1, 2, and 3, the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) was made available to all schools in California for SY 2014–15. CEP is not available for RCCIs. Please see Section 12 for more information regarding the CEP.

Provision 1

Base year plus one year—reduces application burdens by allowing schools where at least 80 percent of the children enrolled are eligible for F/RP meals to certify children eligible for free meals for a two-year period. LEAs continue to take daily meal counts of the number of meals served to children by type as the basis for calculating reimbursement claims. LEAs send applications in year two only to households who did not qualify for F/RP meals.

Provision 2

Base year plus three years—requires that a school serve meals to participating children at no charge starting in the base year. Reduces application burdens to once every four years, and simplifies meal counting and claiming procedures by allowing a school to receive meal reimbursement based on claiming percentages in years two–four. LEAs on a year round school schedule must submit the Provision 2 Implementation Request no later than June 1 before the school year in which they are applying to participate in Provision 2. LEAs on a traditional school schedule must submit the Provision 2 Implementation Request no later than June 30 before the school year in which they are applying to participate in Provision 2. Additional four-year extensions to Provision 2 are possible when certain socioeconomic conditions are met.

Examples of socioeconomic data:

- Direct certification
- Information collected by the city, county zoning, or economic planning office
- Unemployment rates/percentages
- FDPIR
- Statistical sampling of the school's population using the eligibility application
- Census data

At a minimum, any socioeconomic data that SFAs use to request an extension must meet the following criteria:

- Be reflective of the school's population
- Be equivalent data for both the base year and the last year of the cycle
- Effectively measure whether the income level of the school's population (adjusted for inflation) has remained stable, declined, or had only negligible improvement.

To be considered reflective of the school's population, the data must directly correspond to the area covered under the school's attendance area. For example, city data that cannot be disaggregated to the school's attendance area is not considered reflective of a school's population.

Provision 3

Base year plus four additional years—requires that a school serve meals to participating children at no charge during all nonbase years. Meals can be served at no charge or for a fee during the base year. Provision 3 reduces application burdens and simplifies meal counting and claiming procedures by allowing a school to receive meal reimbursement during the nonbase years based on claiming numbers established in the base year. The federal cash and commodity assistance is adjusted for enrollment, inflation, and operating days, if applicable, for a period of up to four years. Additional four-year extensions to Provision 3 are possible when

certain socioeconomic conditions are met.

The NSD does not often recommend Provision 3 for the following reasons:

- Many districts have lost money on Provision 3 when participation increases
- If participation decreases, the district is required to go off Provision 3
- Districts fail to monitor participation or they fail to maintain all documents for the period required by 7 *CFR*, Section 245.9(g)

Mandatory Review of Provision 2 or Provision 3 Base Year

The CDE is required to conduct a review of certification and benefit issuance documentation during the base year for any SFA requesting approval to participate in the NSLP or SBP using Provision 2 or 3. This is required for schools:

- Requesting to apply for Provision 2 or 3
- Adding new sites to Provision 2 or 3
- Establishing a new base year
- Operating nonbase year Provision 2 or 3 sites that have not received a base-year review

For more information on how the review is conducted, review the CDE NSD Mandatory Review of P2 or P3 Base Year—Revised MB Web page at:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbsnp162016.asp>

Record Retention

LEAs must retain records for all schools operating Provision 2 or 3. Base year records for Provision 2 or 3 must:

- Establish claiming percentages that support subsequent years' reimbursement
- Be retained during the entire period (established by the base year) that the special provision is in effect, including all extensions, and for three years after the final claim for reimbursement or until all audits are resolved
- Include documentation of the verification activities from the base year

Provision 2 and 3 may be used for one meal service type, breakfast or lunch, or both meal service types at a site. **Remember** that if a provision is used for only one meal type, applications must be collected for the non provision meal service type. See Modules 3 and 5 for more information on provisions.

12. Community Eligibility Provision

The Final Rule: NSLP and SBP: Eliminating Applications through Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) as required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) was released July 29, 2016.

This final rule establishes requirements for state agencies, LEAs, and schools operating the CEP, a reimbursement option that allows the service of school meals to all children at no cost in high poverty schools without collecting household applications. By eliminating the household application process, streamlining meal counting, and claiming procedures through the CEP, LEAs may substantially reduce administrative burden related to operating the NSLP and SBP. This rule codifies many requirements that were implemented through policy guidance following enactment of the HHFKA, as well as provisions of the proposed rule. These requirements will result in consistent, national implementation of the CEP (RCCI's may not participate in the CEP).

Federal Register Link:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2016/07/29/2016-17232/national-school-lunch-program-and-school-breakfast-program-eliminating-applications-through>

The following provides the benefits of the CEP and an overview of this claiming option:

Benefits

- All students receive two nutritious meals at no cost to the household while reducing administrative costs and paperwork for the school
- Schools on the CEP do not collect and certify NSLP applications to determine meal eligibility or complete the annual application verification process
- Meal lines move faster because it is not necessary for staff to categorize each meal served as free, reduced-price, or paid
- Breakfast and lunch participation increases
- Increased meal participation means improved student access to meals and nutrition leading to improved academic performance, decreased sick days, and better school attendance
- Elimination of overt identification of students eligible for F/RP meals

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to participate in the CEP, the LEA must:

- Have an Identified Student Percentage (ISP) of at least 40 percent as of April 1 of the year prior to implementing CEP—a school and/or district may group schools together to reach 40 percent
- Agree to serve free breakfast and lunch to all children in the participating school(s)

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- Have a record of administering the NSLP or SBP in accordance with program regulations
- Count total lunches and total breakfasts served to students daily
- Not collect household applications for F/RP meals
- Agree to deposit nonfederal funds into the nonprofit school food service account in an amount equal to the difference between federal reimbursement and the cost of serving lunches and breakfast at no charge to all participating children

Record Retention

LEAs operating CEP must retain records used in the development of the ISP during the entire period the CEP is in effect. This includes records for the initial approval year and all records from the year any updates are made to the ISP.

All CEP records must be retained for three years after submission of the final claim for reimbursement. Records must continue to be retained if any audit findings from the period during which the records were in use remain outstanding or until all issues raised by the audit have been fully resolved.

Additional CEP Information

The ISP is made up of identified students who are directly certified for free meals on the basis of their receipt of CalFresh, CalWORKs, FDPIR, or Medi-Cal benefits and the extension of those benefits to students within the same household. It also includes students that are certified as homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, and income-eligible for Head Start.

The reimbursement rate for both lunch and breakfast is determined by multiplying the percent of identified students by a factor established by the USDA (currently 1.6 percent). The resulting number is the percent of meals school food authorities will be reimbursed at the free reimbursement rate with the rest being reimbursed at the paid rate. No meals are reimbursed at the reduced price rate. For example, a school with 50 percent identified students would be reimbursed at the free rate for 80 percent of the breakfasts and lunches it serves ($50 \times 1.6 = 80$) and the remaining 20 percent would be reimbursed at the paid rate.

Participating schools are guaranteed to receive the same reimbursement rate (or a higher rate if the level of direct certification increases) for four years. The higher ISP will not be automatic. LEAs must apply for the higher ISP if their level of direct certification increases and they wish to receive higher reimbursement.

For more information on the CEP and the Resources and tools section to implement the CEP, please visit the CDE CEP Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/cep.asp>

USDA has developed the CEP Planning and Implementation Guidance document located on the USDA Web document at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/SP22-2016a.pdf>

In addition, the USDA has updated information on CEP Guidance and Q&A Web document at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/SP19-2016os.pdf>

13. National School Lunch Programs and the Local Control Funding Formula

The LCFF requires the CDE and LEAs to produce an unduplicated count of students who are English learners and eligible for F/RP Meal, or foster youth. This presents different issues for the NSLP, those **not** implementing Provision 2 and 3 and those implementing Provision 2 and 3. As discussed in Section 9, F/RP Meal applications can be shared with designated LCFF schools and CDE staff.

NSLP Programs not under Provision 2 and 3

Schools **not** under NSLP Provision 2 and 3 annually collect F/RP Meal applications from households. Your local LCFF administrator will require this information. Cafeteria funds cannot be used to secure income information from families who chose not to complete a school meal application.

NSLP Programs under Provision 2 and 3

Schools implementing NSLP Provision 2 or 3 are not required to gather F/RP Meal applications in nonbase years.

In the absence of school meal applications, California's schools will need to use an alternative form to gather individual income information from the students to receive full funding for the LCFF during nonbase years of Provision 2 and 3, and all years of participating in the CEP. Sample alternative forms can be located on the CDE LCFF Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/lcffaqa.asp#PROV2and3>. Districts may choose to develop their own form and are not required to use any of the posted samples. The alternative form cannot have any reference to the NSLP.

In order to reduce the burden of data collection, Provision 2 and 3 and CEP schools may establish an LCFF base year (this is different from the base year under the NSLP). Schools using this option must collect income data for all students at least once every four years, and collect income data for every newly enrolled student in the intervening years. The status of the student in the LCFF base year remains the same until an LEA establishes a new LCFF base year for the school.

Schools may perform the LCFF base year data collection during the same year that they establish a new Provision 2 and 3 base year under the NSLP. The NSLP applications should be used during the Provision 2 and 3 base year. Schools never collect NSLP applications when participating in the CEP. LEAs must use an alternative household income data collection form to collect LCFF base year data for students attending a CEP school.

The collection activities of the alternative forms cannot be paid by cafeteria funds. Provision 2 and 3 schools are not required to reset their base year and can continue on that status under the NSLP.

The NSD worked with the California Food Policy Advocates who developed a number of resources about what LCFF is and how food services can use LCFF to further support student achievement, student engagement, parent involvement, and school climate, which are all part of the eight-state LCFF priorities. Most importantly, please make sure you are **at the table** with your district and advocate for your programs during the development of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). It is your chance to advocate for space, facilities, nutrition education funding, etc., and all those things that your budget cannot cover.

Access this link for resources on the LCFF and LCAP and learn about what other districts are doing <https://cfpa.net/nutrition-and-education-policy/>

Updated LCFF FAQs are continually posted to the CDE LCFF Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/lcfffaq.asp>

To subscribe to these updates by e-mail, send a **blank** e-mail message to join-LCFF-list@mlist.cde.ca.gov.

14. Resources

For more information on meal eligibility, refer to the Eligibility Manual for School Meals located on the USDA Guidance and Resources Web page at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/guidance-and-resources>

The Provision 2 Guidance Manual is located on the USDA School Meals Provision Web page at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/provisions-1-2-and-3>

For Provisions 1, 2, 3, and the CEP Policy Statement Addendum and Provision 2 Extension Applications, visit the Child Nutrition Information and Payment System Download Forms section Web site at <https://www.cnips.ca.gov>

LEAs are encouraged to distribute Medi-Cal for Families flyers or forms with meal application information and to make the California Health Benefit Exchange Web address and phone number available at their district or agency. For school-based outreach materials, visit the California School Based Health Alliance Web page at <http://www.schoolhealthcenters.org/start-up-and-operations/outreach-and-enrollment/all-in/>

For more information, review MB 03-2015: Sharing of Meal Applications for Medi-Cal located on the CDE MB Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mb032015.asp>

Contact Persons

If you have any questions regarding this section, please contact your SNP county specialist for further information. The SNP county specialist and child nutrition consultant (CNC) contact list is located in the CNIPS Download Forms section, Form ID Caseload. You can also call 800-952-5609, Option 2, to be directed to your SNP specialist.

State-level Matching—Direct Certification

If you have any questions about using the CALPADS, please contact the CALPADS service desk at calpads-support@cde.ca.gov. The CALPADS support request form is located on the CDE Web page at <http://www2.cde.ca.gov/CALPADSHELP/DEFAULT.ASPX>

This module provides the following Professional Standards:

Key Area: Administration (3000)

Learning Topic: Free and Reduced-price Meal Benefits (3100)

Learning Objective: Certify and Process Applications (3110); Understand Community Eligibility (3130)

Instructional Minutes: 60