Free/Reduced Process Refresher

Indiana Department of Education

May 2015

Agenda

- Tips and Best Practices:
  - End of the Year
  - Direct Certification
  - Free/Reduced Applications
  - Verification for Cause
  - Verification
  - Direct Verification
  - Verification Summary Report

Explore Our Website!

- Visit www.doe.in.gov/snp

School Nutrition Programs

Posted: Thu, 08/25/2011 - 2:46pm *Updated: Thu, 04/09/2015 - 10:23am*

CNPweb Login	School Nutrition Program Newsletters

Program Updates

- Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act
  - Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act: Implementation Plan
  - New Nutrition Standards for School Meals

School Nutrition Programs

- Professional Standards (NEW!)
- National School Lunch Program
- National School Breakfast Program
- After School Snack Program
- Residential Childcare Institutions (RCCIs)
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- Special Milk

Requirements

- Administrative Review Information
- Calendar of Due Dates (revised March 2015)
- Civil Rights
- Edit Checks
- Food Safety (Formerly HACCP)
- Free and Reduced Information
- On-Site Review
- Pricing and Reimbursement Rates
- Procurement (Food Service Management Company Contracts, Food Purchases, etc.)
- Smart Snacks
- Special Dietary Needs
- Verification
- Wellness Policies

End of Year Reminders

End of the Year

- Make sure your 2014-15 files are organized.
- Create a list of non-responding households from the 14-15 Verification Process.
- Determine what type of Verification Process you must undergo in 15-16.

First Steps in PY 2016

Prepare Your Applications

- Download the F/R Application, Parent Letter/Instructions, and Notification Letters
- Review updated paperwork
- Edit the templates with your school's information.
- Do not distribute applications until July 1st!

Direct Certification

Direct Certification Tips

- Users must have a log in and password – obtain this from your school's STN administrator
- Conduct Direct Certification a minimum of 3 times during the school year:
  - Before applications are distributed
  - Before verification is conducted
  - Sometime after the second semester begins
- Once matched, approved for the rest of the year

Eligibility: 02/2015 | Home | Log In | Help

Direct Certification & Verification

School Year 2014 - 2015

The Eligibility Date is set at 6/2014. IT IS READY FOR USE. The system ALWAYS uses data from the prior month. We apologize for leaving the impression that you had to wait until the web page said 7/2014. That will not be the case until the first of August.

ATTENTION: We have fixed several bugs/issues with a patch to the system. Go to Help page for more info.

Direct Certification

Online Resources

Direct Certification

- Quick Start Direct Certification for 2014/2015
- Direct Certification Data Layouts for 2014/2015

https://scndcdv.doe.in.gov/

Eligibility: 04/2015

Home

Log In

Help

Section 3 - Direct and Categorical Certification

			(B) Number of Free Students
Students approved as FREE eligible NOT subject to verification		**ALL SFAs must report Section 3 or check box 3-1 if applicable** ☐ Check this box if you did not complete Direct Certification. Only RCCIs with no day students, NonBase year Provision 2/3, or CEP schools are not required to complete DC.	
	3-2	Report only **Students Direct Certified because of SNAP** (Food Stamps). These may be identified in **column U as "F"** (for Food Stamps) on your school's STN Match Report. According to the STN Database, your program should be reporting at least **444** students Direct Certified because of SNAP. This number might be higher if a Direct Certified student lives in a household with other students not originally found on the STN Match Report.	467
	3-3	**Other students Directly Certified** due to TANF, Foster, or those counted as homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, Head Start,Pre-K Even Start. To identify TANF students on the STN Match Report they will be labeled with an **"A" in column U**. **Foster students** are labeled with a **"W" in column U**of the Match Report. Everyone else will be identified by direct contact witha school liaison or agency.	15
	3-4	Students approved for free meals due to **household turning in an official SNAP (Food Stamp) letter** from the **SNAP** agency.	0

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											A	H	7/31/2014	7	
											A	H	8/31/2014	6	
											F	H	1/31/2015	KG	
											F	H	2/28/2015	2	
											F	H	2/28/2015	1	
											F	H	3/31/2015	5	

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						F	H	7/31/2015	
						F	H	1/31/2015	KG
						W	C		
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Direct Certification Tips

- Save all organized DC matches and look-ups on your computer
- During a review we need to access your downloaded STN files

Processing Applications

Important!

- ISBOA requires schools to have procedures in place to double check (randomly) the work of all their employees, including those who approve applications.
- NO one person should have complete control over benefit assignments.
- Make sure there is a segregation of duties.

Changes to Application Process

- Applications must be organized at District Level
  - No longer processed at school level
  - Limited copying of applications
  - Field Consultant must review original application

Processing Applications

- Cross check apps with your direct certification list
- Process applications within 10 operating days
  - Effective Date Waiver
- 30 Day Carryover ends when new application is processed

Categorical Applications

- Food Stamp/TANF
  - 10 digits, beginning with a 10
  - If they indicate this is anything other than Food Stamp/TANF, ask for income information
  - Check with DC List
  - Conduct DC Lookup
  - If cannot find through DC, approve based on face value and flag to verify for cause

Categorical Applications

- Foster
  - Conduct DC Lookup
  - If no match can be made call the household to see if the child actually is a foster child
  - If cannot determine foster status, advise household to complete income section of application
  - If the household indicates the student is a ward of the State, then approve the application based on face value – this can still be verified

Direct Certification Look Up

- STN Database – Direct Certification - Lookup
- Enter the least amount of information

Direct Certification

Search Date: 5/11/2015

Child Information

Name: [illegible] **SSN:** ****[illegible]

D.O.B.: [illegible]

Guardian Information

Name: [illegible] **SSN:** *****[illegible]

Case #: [illegible]

Address: [illegible]

Eligibility

Direct Certification Based on program participation in month of: 05/2014

Eligible Federal Programs: SNAP/Food Stamp-All other members of household can also be considered Directly Certified.

Print Close

Categorical Applications

- Migrant, Runaway, Homeless
  - Eligibility must be validated before approved:
    - Letter from Homeless/Migrant Agency
    - Letter from school's Homeless/Migrant Liaison.
  - Letter must include child's name, the date determined homeless, runaway, or migrant, and the liaison's signature
  - Maintain on file
  - This should be updated every year

Income Application

- If an application has a case number and income recorded, process using the case number.
- Check that the application is complete
- No annual income allowed
- Only convert to annual income if multiple pay frequencies.
- Flag Error Prone applications *

No Income Application

- The new free/reduced application allows households to leave any fields blank to indicate they have no income to report.
- If a household leaves all income fields blank – approve based on face value and verify for cause.
- Ask how are they meeting their bills? Where are they living?

School Employee Application

- If the application appears to be complete, approve based on face value.
- If the salary information shows a misrepresentation of income on the application, verify for cause.
- Always talk with your school lawyer to determine the best way to handle questionable school employee applications.
- SP 13-2012

Confidentiality/Disclosure

- Sharing eligibility information
  - Only the household that applied
  - Programs under the National School Lunch Act or Child Nutrition Act
  - Programs that have obtained parent/guardian approval for disclosure

Verification for Cause

Flagging Suspicious Apps

- Last year's non responders reapplying
- Food Stamp/TANF number not identified in DC
- No income indicated on the application
- Questionable school employee application

Verification for Cause

- Can be conducted any point during the school year.
- Follow normal verification process.
- Send home a letter requesting verification documentation.
- Keep track for Verification Summary Report.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Date	Name	# Students	Original Elig.	Final Elig.		
2	8/4/2015	Hudson	3	Free - Categorical	Paid (non-response)		
3	8/4/2015	Smith	5	Reduced	Reduced (no change)		
4	9/17/2015	Washington	1	Free - Income	Paid (non-response)		
5	9/27/2015	Lowe	2	Free - Income	Reduced		

Verification Process

Issue 1: Not pulling the right # of applications

- If you use a software or manually count the applications- be sure your system is counting the total number of approved applications on file as of October 1st.
- Always round up!

Issue 2: Not completing the correct verification process

- Schools with high non-response rate must conduct Standard (Error Prone)
- All other schools can choose:
  - Standard (Error Prone)
  - Alternate One (Random)
  - Alternate Two (Focused)

Standard - Error Prone Verification

- Find 3%– round up!
  - 301*3% = 9.03 – 10 Error Prone apps to verify
- Pull that number from your error-prone apps that were flagged at the beginning of the year.

Alternate 1 - Random

- If you are not required to conduct Standard-Error Prone verification, this is an easy verification process to implement.
- Find 3%– round up!
  - 301*3% = 9.03 – 10 random apps to verify

Alternate 2 – Focused Sample

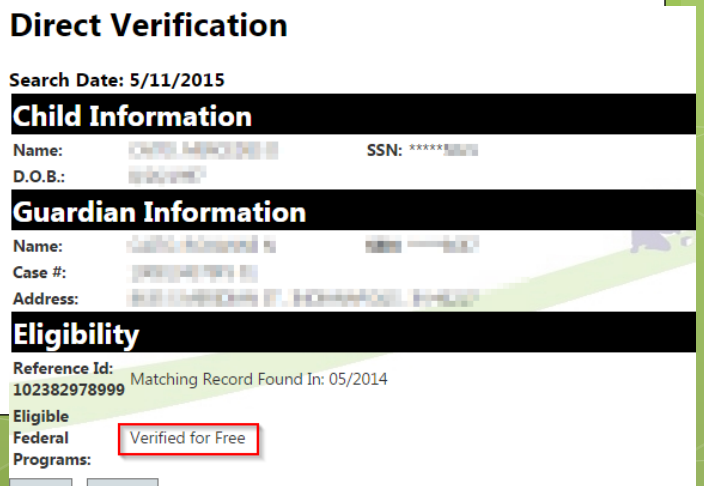
- Schools can choose to do this, but often do this wrong.
- Find 1% and .5% from that number – round up!
  - 301*1%= 3.01 – 4 error prone apps to verify
  - 301*.5%=1.505 – 2 categorical apps to verify

Issue 3: Not completing the Confirmation Review

- Confirmation reviews are required for schools that manually process applications or those that have software systems that cannot confirm they are 100% accurate.
- Someone other than the person processing the application is required to review the application to make sure it was approved correctly in the first place.
- They must sign off on this.

Issue 4: Schools do not use Direct Verification

- Takes place in the STN Database
- If one student can be Direct Verified, Verification is complete for the whole application.
- You can Direct Verify any type of application, not just Food Stamp/TANF applications.



Issue 5: Not sticking to the Verification Due Date

- Stick to your due date.
- If a household does not respond by that due date, they are considered non-responders.
- Send notification letter stating in 10 calendar days their status will change to paid.
- If they respond within those 10 days, they will need to fill out a new application and provide documentation to back up their income information.
- If they don't respond and submit a new application, you must ask for verification documentation.

Verification Summary Report

Verification Summary Report

- Here is what you need to fill out your report:
  - Total number of DC students (including any students that were approved through Look Up or because a sibling was identified)
  - The number of free – categorical, free – income, and reduced applications on file with the number of students on those applications
  - The number of households verified for cause, the total number of students on those applications and the results after verification
  - The total number of households verified, the total number of students on those applications and the results after verification

Recordkeeping

- 3 years plus the current operating year:
  - Copy of F/R Application, Parent Letter, Instructions, Notification Letters
  - Direct Certification Lists and Look-Ups
  - Free/Reduced Applications
    - Approved, Denied, Withdrawn
  - Verification Documentation
    - Verification and Verification for Cause
  - Appeal Documentation

Questions?