

Direct Certification

Indiana Department of Education
Office of School and Community Nutrition
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Indiana Department of Education
SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

Direct Certification

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Sponsors using Direct Certification for the first time might want to look at the *STN Method*, starting on page 9. This is the easiest way to comply with the U.S.D.A. mandate to use Direct Certification for the 2008-2009 School year.

Introduction and Overview

Direct Certification, and its sibling **Direct Verification**, are two computer assisted techniques that can be extremely useful in working with Student Free and Reduced Price eligibility issues in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. They are intended to reduce the workload for both Parents and School Administrators, while at the same time, encouraging accurate eligibility determinations. Both techniques involve retrieving information from the Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE) computer network¹.

While Direct Certification has been available in Indiana since 1989, its use will be mandatory for ALL National School Lunch sponsors in the 2008-2009 School Year². Direct Verification is also supported by legislation and USDA policy, but its use is voluntary not mandatory.

The Department of Education and the Office of School and Community Nutrition acknowledges the cooperation and assistance of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. Without their efforts and work, these valuable techniques could not have been developed. We feel that we have developed a set of powerful and flexible tools that can benefit school districts of any size. Our efforts have been recognized nationally.³

Throughout this document comparisons will be made occasionally between Direct Certification and Direct Verification. It is extremely easy to confuse the two processes. In many ways they work in a very similar manner and the web-based interfaces act in a similar manner. It is very important however to use the techniques appropriately. Direct Certification takes the place of the paper application and is used at the beginning of the year; Direct Verification is used as a part of a district's Verification activities and takes place from October 1 through November 15 of each year. Watch for references throughout this document that mention key differences between the two techniques.

Sponsors who are using Direct Certification for the first time should skip to page 9 and the STN Method for the simplest way to comply with the mandate to use Direct Certification.

¹ Currently these applications are hosted on the IDOE STN Application Center: <https://ac.doe.state.in.us>.

² Direct Certification was made mandatory by the 2004 Child Nutrition Program Reauthorization (P.L. 108-265) in the following schedule: SY 2006-2007-LEAs with 25,000 or more students; SY 2007-2008-LEAs with 10,000 or more students; and SY2008-2009 all LEAs.

³ The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities published a study in August 2006 titled "Implementing Direct Certification: States and School Districts can Help Low-Income Children Get the Free School Meals for Which They Are Eligible", by Zöe Neuberger. It can be found at <http://www.cbpp.org/8-11-06fa.pdf>.

Direct Certification

Direct Certification is intended to take the place of the traditional paper “Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals”⁴. Direct Certification involves identifying a school district’s students who are currently receiving either Food Stamp or TANF⁵ benefits. Once Directly Certified, the student is eligible for a Free Meal without the parent having to complete, or the school approve, a paper application. Direct Certification, just like the determination by paper application, is good for the remainder of the school year and the first 30 days of the next school year. Since the Food Stamp and TANF programs have eligibility guidelines similar to those for Free Meals, all directly certified students are certified for Free Meals. ***There is no Direct Certification for Reduced-Price Meals.***

Direct Certification will never totally replace the use of the paper application and just because a student is not identified through Direct Certification it does not mean that they may not be eligible. It is one method of determining eligibility. Historical data suggests that, in Indiana, Direct Certification can identify approximately 50% of the eligible students.

Example: If a school district typically has 1,000 students eligible for free meals, you can expect to directly certify as many as 500 students. Results will vary from district to district of course.

While districts will still have to process applications for students not Directly Certified, schools using Direct Certification can expect to have a significant reduction in the work load of approving applications at the beginning of the year. Parents of students directly certified, will also not have to complete or submit the application. Direct Certification may in some instances also identify eligible recipients of free meals that would other wise not receive the benefit, due to the parent or guardian not completing the necessary forms.

An important additional benefit of Direct Certification is that it reduces the number of applications which must be verified later in the school year. Schools generally have to verify 3% of their applications during the October-November period, and Direct Certification reduces the total number of applications.

⁴ The current Indiana Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals can be found at http://scnweb.doe.state.in.us/Nutrition/external_forms/SPMealsApp.doc

⁵ TANF “Temporary Assistance for Needy Families”, administered in Indiana by the Family and Social Services Administration.

Since the process of distributing paper applications is not eliminated by Direct Certification it is important to coordinate the use of Direct Certification with the application process at the beginning of the school year in order to avoid unnecessary work. The actual beginning of the school year typically starts with mailings of materials to households and/or pre-registration events at schools, so it is important that Direct Certification activities be started as soon as possible, prior to these activities. (Where possible, it is best that students Directly Certified not receive an application for Free and Reduced Price Meals.) The state typically makes the process available soon after July 1 in each year. The Department has to receive new Food Stamp and TANF data for the month of June and load it into the database. This initializes the system for a new school year. Throughout the year, new data is added each month.

The school district will probably want to wait until they have “rolled over” the student master file, deleting graduating seniors, promoting children, and reassigning grades and buildings to students who are expected to return. Once the school has done this activity and the state has made the system available, Direct Certification activities can proceed.

Accessing the STN Application Center

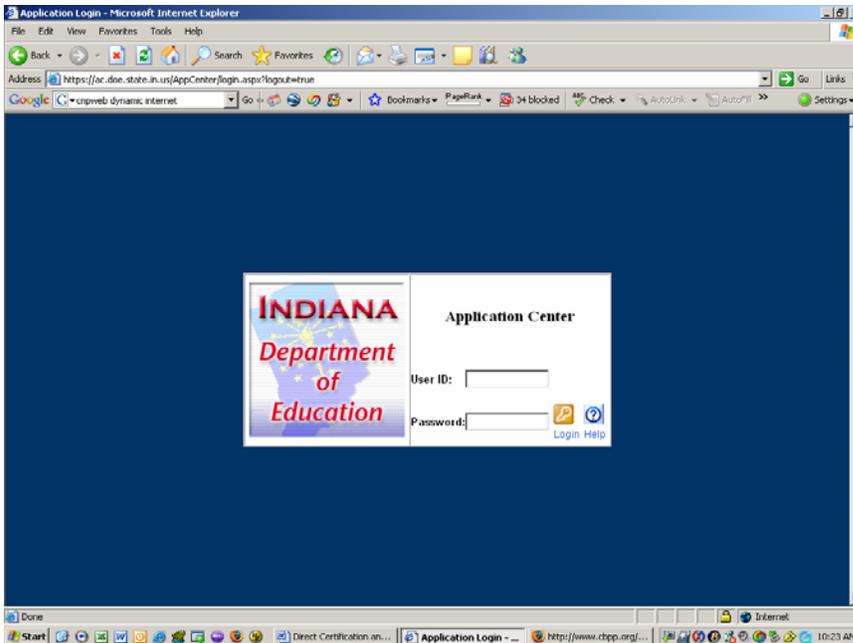
All Direct Certification (as well as Direct Verification) activities are currently hosted on the Indiana Department of Education's STN Application Center (<https://ac.doe.state.in.us>). Please note that this site is different from the Division's primary web page (<http://doe.state.in.us/food>) or the CNPweb[®] system used to enter application, claim and financial data (<http://scnweb.doe.state.in.us>). The Application center is a web portal maintained by the Department for sensitive data transfer activities between the state and local districts. Since Direct Certification involves the transmission of very sensitive data about students and their parents, including names, social security numbers, food stamp and TANF case numbers, and addresses, it is necessary to safeguard the data transmission over the Internet.

Access to the Application Center is by login ID and password. Please do not contact either the State Agency or the Department of Education to receive a password. Login authorizations are handled locally by the school district. If you need to find out who in your district authorizes logins, contact the technical support staff in your district, or find out who files other STN reports for your district with the state. You will need a login assigned to you and you will have to be a member of the "Direct Certification/Verification" access group.⁶ (Access groups define what functions are available to a particular individual, based on their login.)

If your primary duties are in food service it may be easier for someone in your district who is more familiar with the STN site to do the work for you. You will have to make this decision yourself. One possible compromise would be for technical staff to handle the batch upload and download processes associated with both Direct Certification and Direct Verification, but for food service employees to utilize the "lookup" features of the system. You will have to work out these arrangements locally.

Once you have a login established, you will be able to access the system:

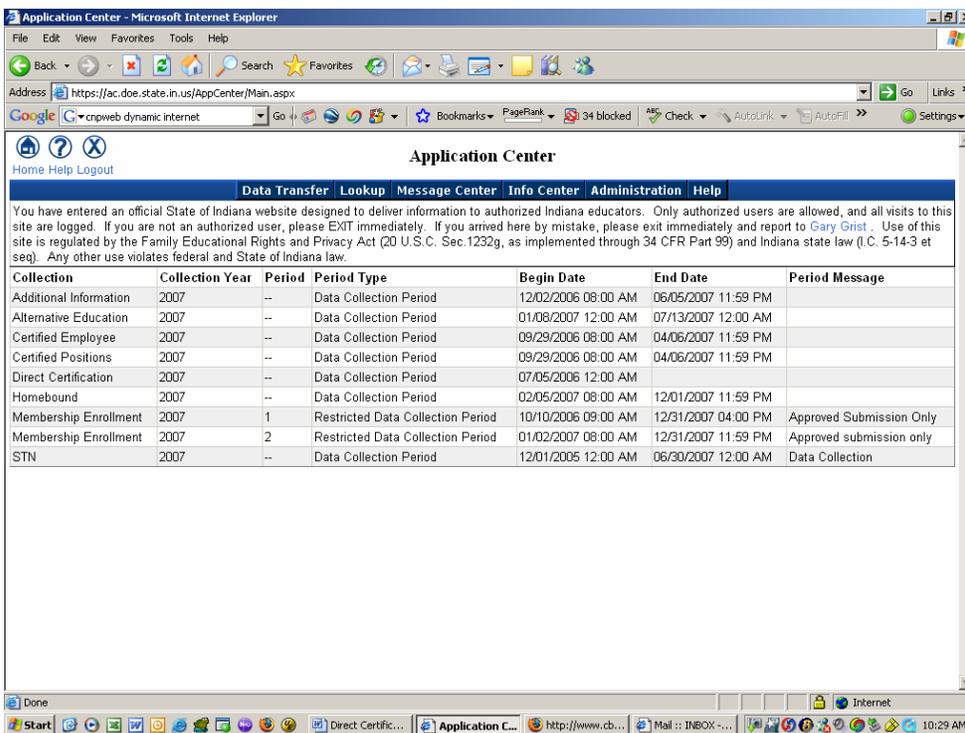
⁶ IDOE has made changes in this area. Users from past years may have been able to access some functions with other access groups. Make sure that your permissions are updated for the summer of 2008 to include the Direct Certification/Verification access group.



<https://ac.doe.state.in.us>

(Please note the *https* rather than the more common *http*. This indicates that it is a secure website.)

Type your User ID and password then press “LOGIN” and you’ll see:



The Direct Certification Process

At this point you have an important decision to make. There are two different ways to carryout Direct Certification in Indiana. They both yield similar results but are appropriate for different school districts with different capabilities: the ***Traditional Method***, and the ***STN Method***.

Both methods involve matching a list of your anticipated student enrollment in the fall against a current list of recipients of either Food Stamps and/or TANF cash benefits. The matching is done based on finding records (students) that have the same:

- Last name
- First name
- Date of birth
- County of residence

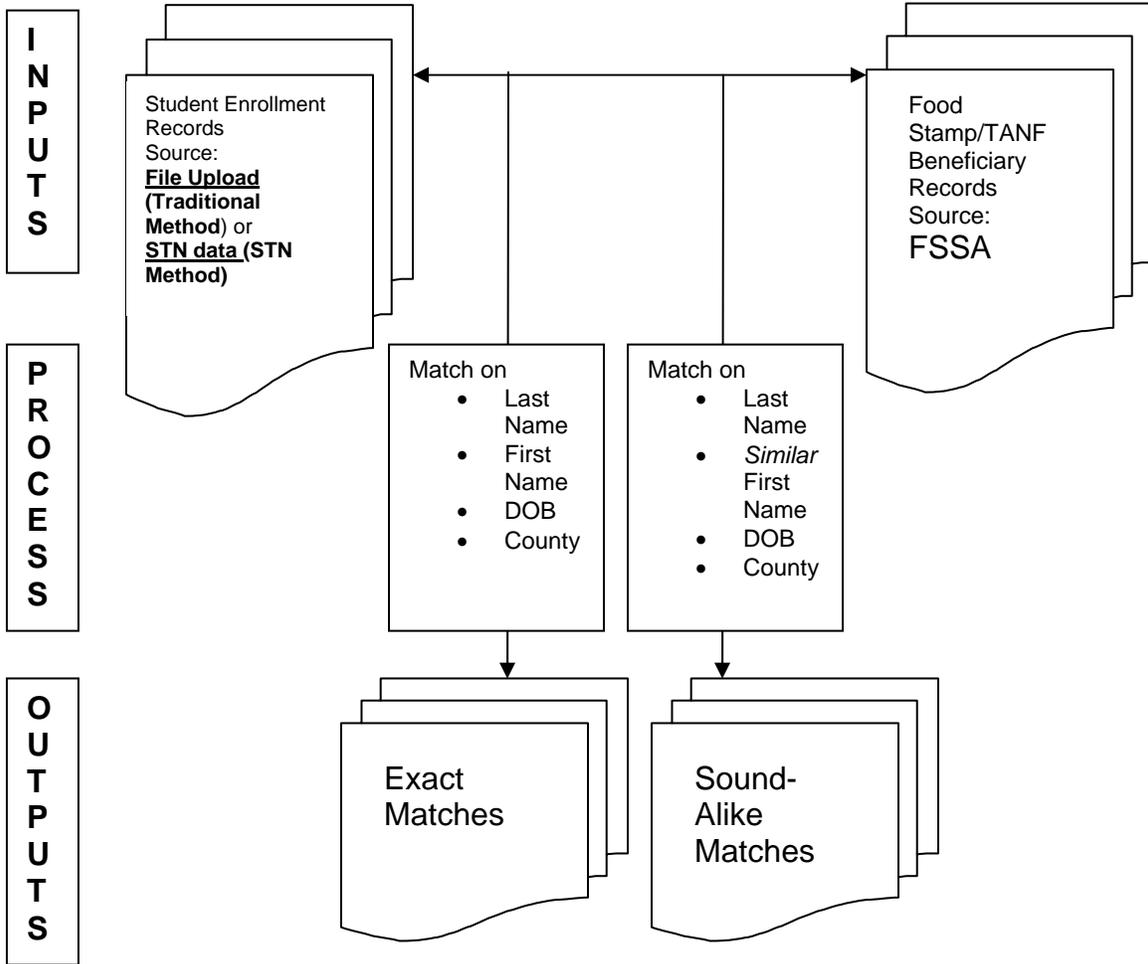
We also do a secondary match where everything matches as in the first example, but the First Names are “similar” (also called “sound-alike”) rather than exactly the same.

Example:

- Laquiha
- La Quisha
- L’Quisha

These names are not “exact” matches, but would meet the test of “similar”. We use a common computer procedure called the *Soundex Algorithm*.

(Direct Certification Process Diagram)



The only difference between the methods is the source of the STUDENT ENROLLMENT RECORDS (upper left corner in diagram above). In the **Traditional Method**, you extract, develop, and upload a special set of records specifically for this Direct Certification process. These records will probably be extracted from your school district’s central student enrollment database. (The department has worked with the vendors of many database products sold in the state, and many offer such a pre-defined extract already.)

The Traditional method involves this extra step before you proceed to processing and downloading the matches.

Direct Certification

In the **STN Method**, there is no uploading of student enrollment data. Direct Certification by the STN Method process essentially uses a list of students compiled from existing STN (Student Test Number) resources. Students who graduated the last spring will still be on the list and pre-registers won't be there yet.⁷ Ignoring the Direct Certification results for students who are no longer attending shouldn't present that big a difficulty. When using the STN method over the summer months, you have approximately the same chance of finding returning students as with the Traditional method. There are other reasons for using the Traditional method if possible however.

By doing the special upload you have the opportunity to include pre-registered kindergarten children who may not be in the STN system yet. Additionally, the "Traditional Method" uploaded file also contains student data such as household mailing addresses that are not available anywhere else in the STN system. These additional fields of data are included in the matching output records and may make processing the information more convenient. Both choices are equally accurate in the matches they identify however.

You can use both methods and compare and mix results.

The STN Method

We'll describe the STN Method first. It is the simplest and for first-time/new users it may be the easiest way to meet the mandate that says all NSLP sponsors MUST use direct certification (see footnote 2 on page 2.) While the STN method is very simple, there are some drawbacks that will be discussed in detail. We hope that many users who become acquainted with Direct Certification with the STN Method, will graduate up to the Traditional Method in future years. Most small parochial schools with few free or reduced-price students however, will find that the STN meets their needs.

Here's how to proceed after logging in to the Application Center. From the Data Transfer menu, pick Direct Certification Download (do not choose Direct Verification Download that may or may not be visible):

⁷ (This footnote is for those familiar with the STN PE Report.) The STN method uses a copy of "finalized" PE data which is collected in the fall and is enrollment as of Oct. 1st. The PE data is a onetime copy and doesn't change throughout the year. The data is not "removed" until next year's PE data is loaded. PE is open throughout October, and with late submissions and cleanup, extends through the end of November.

Application Center

Home Help Logout

Data Transfer | **Lookup** | **Message Center** | **Info Center** | **Administration** | **Help**

You have entered an official State of Indiana website. If you are not an authorized user, please exit immediately. This site is regulated by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. et seq.). Any other use violates federal and state laws.

Collection	Collection Year	Begin Date	End Date
Certified Employee	2008	01/07/2008 08:00 AM	01/31/2008 06:00 PM
Certified Positions	2008	01/07/2008 08:00 AM	01/31/2008 06:00 PM
Direct Certification	2007	07/05/2007 08:00 AM	06/15/2008 11:59 PM
Homebound	2008	12/24/2007 08:00 AM	12/01/2008 11:59 PM
Membership Enrollment	2008	12/19/2007 08:00 AM	05/31/2008 11:59 PM
Membership Enrollment	2008	01/03/2008 08:00 AM	05/31/2008 11:59 PM
Special Education	2008	12/14/2007 09:00 AM	12/31/2008 11:59 PM
STN	2008	07/01/2007 12:01 AM	06/30/2008 11:59 PM

See Corp/Schl Scoreboard

Once you click on Direct Certification Download, you'll see this:

Application Center

Home Help Logout

Data Transfer | **Lookup** | **Message Center** | **Info Center** | **Administration** | **Help**

Data Transfer > Direct Certification Download

Food Stamp / TANF Information Last Updated: 12/2007

Match Type: --Select One--

File Format: - Select One -

Match Criteria: -- Select One --

Corp ID	Match Type	File Format	Match Criteria	Match Char	Request By	Requested	Exact Match Fil
8215	STN Match	Comma Delimited	All		gpowell	01/29/2008 11:30:59	Exact Match
8435	STN Match	Comma Delimited	New only		66511	01/25/2008 14:02:33	Exact Match
0225	Traditional Match	Comma Delimited	New only		0225lm	01/25/2008 08:28:12	No Data
0225	STN Match	Comma Delimited	New only		0225lm	01/25/2008 08:24:12	Exact Match
5900	Traditional Match	Comma Delimited	All		smithkd	01/24/2008 09:04:48	Exact Match
5900	STN Match	Positional	New only		smithkd	01/29/2008 11:48:48	Exact Match

Make the proper selections for the Match Type, File Format, and Match Criterion drop down list boxes:

Match Type: Choose STN Match. This is important. If you choose Traditional Match, you very likely won't receive any results, since you didn't upload any information first..

Match Type: --Select One--

File Format: --Select One--

Match Criteria: STN Match

Traditional Match

Corp ID	Match Type	File Format
---------	------------	-------------

File Format: Pick the format you want the results to be in. Most of you will probably want Comma Delimited.

Match Type: STN Match

File Format: - Select One -

Match Criteria: - Select One -

Comma Delimited

Positional

XML

Corp ID	Match Type	File Format
8215	STN Ma	

Direct Certification

Match Criteria: The first time you download results each year, you'll want to pick "Retrieve all matches." We'll discuss later on in this document where you might want to choose "Retrieve only new matches".

Match Type:

File Format:

Match Criteria:

Corp ID	Match Type	File Format	Match Criteria	Match
8215	STN Match		Retrieve all matches	All
8435	STN Match	Comma Delimited	Retrieve only new matches	New or
0225	Traditional Match	Comma Delimited		New or

Having made these three selections, look over on the top right side of the screen where you'll see:



Mouse-click on the "Request Match" button. The system will ask you to agree to certain restrictions on using the data obtained by this process. Click "I Agree."

Your request will be added to the top line and look something like this:

Corp ID	Match Type	File Format	Match Criteria	Match Char	Request By	Requested	Exact Match File	Sound Alike Match File
9999	STN Match	Comma Delimited	All		jtodd	01/29/2008 11:30:59	processing	processing

Please notice the word processing on the right side under "Exact Match File" and "Sound Alike Match File". That means the computer is processing your request. Now might be a good time to visit the coffee machine, the water fountain, or take care of any pressing commitments that take you away briefly from your desk! Your screen will refresh a couple of times and with any luck, you'll soon be looking at this:

Corp ID	Match Type	File Format	Match Criteria	Match Char	Request By	Requested	Exact Match File	Sound Alike Match File
9999	STN Match	Comma Delimited	All		jtodd	01/29/2008 11:30:59	Exact Match	Sound Alike Match

The words "Exact Match" and "Sound Alike Match" are hyper-links to your results files. You can individually click on each of them to retrieve your results. Hopefully you won't see some combination of "no data". Where you see "No Data" it means there were no results for that particular match process.

Most reasonably large LEAs should have some results in both columns, though very small parochial schools with low free and reduced-price eligibility may not

have any results or may have exact matches only. We're hoping that the total number of matches found in both columns will be something close to fifty percent (50%) of the number of free students you usually have in your district or school.

When you click on these files what will happen? That depends on many things. If you picked *comma delimited* as your "file format", AND if you have Microsoft Excel installed on your PC as a spreadsheet, you'll probably retrieve your results as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. You might see the results displayed as a text file with either Note Pad or Word Pad. Save the file to your PC in a folder where you can find it later. Find a local expert to help you here if you're confused. How your computer views the results files depends on many choices you've made in setting up your PC and are beyond the scope of this manual. The results will stay available on the STN system for some time, so don't worry about accidentally deleting the information.

What do all the columns of data mean? Look in the second part of Appendix A entitled "Direct Certification Data Layout – OUTPUT" (page 34) where you'll see a description of all the columns and what they mean. Many of the columns of data will be blank. Among other reasons, that's because you chose the STN Match instead of the Traditional Match.

We'll discuss the Traditional Method next. If you just want to use the STN Method this year and keep things simple, you can skip ahead to page 19 and find out what to do with these results.

The Traditional Method

The Traditional Method is probably the best choice for most medium to larger school districts, and some other units that are comfortable with student enrollment database concepts, exporting data to formatted files, and file transfers.

Uploading of Student Enrollment File

Direct Certification with the Traditional Method involves essentially creating a list of records about each of your students, including identifying fields or columns of data, and matching that list against the list of current recipients of Food Stamp and/or TANF benefits. With the Traditional Method you'll need to export from your student enrollment database records for each student and prepare a file with the proper format. The format can be found on the IDOE website⁸, and can also be found in **Appendix A**, beginning on page 30. There's a misconception that you only upload the names of last year's free students. This is incorrect. You upload a list of your total known student enrollment.

The information probably won't be coming from a food service database, but rather from some central student enrollment database at the district level. Remember, we're extracting this data sometime during the middle of the summer in most cases and that data base will be the most current. We have worked with vendors of commonly used systems in Indiana and many if not most systems already have the ability to export to the required file specification. Where possible don't extract this data until the student enrollment database has been "rolled over." This involves eliminating graduating seniors from the previous spring, advancing most students to the next grade, and reassigning building numbers for the fall.

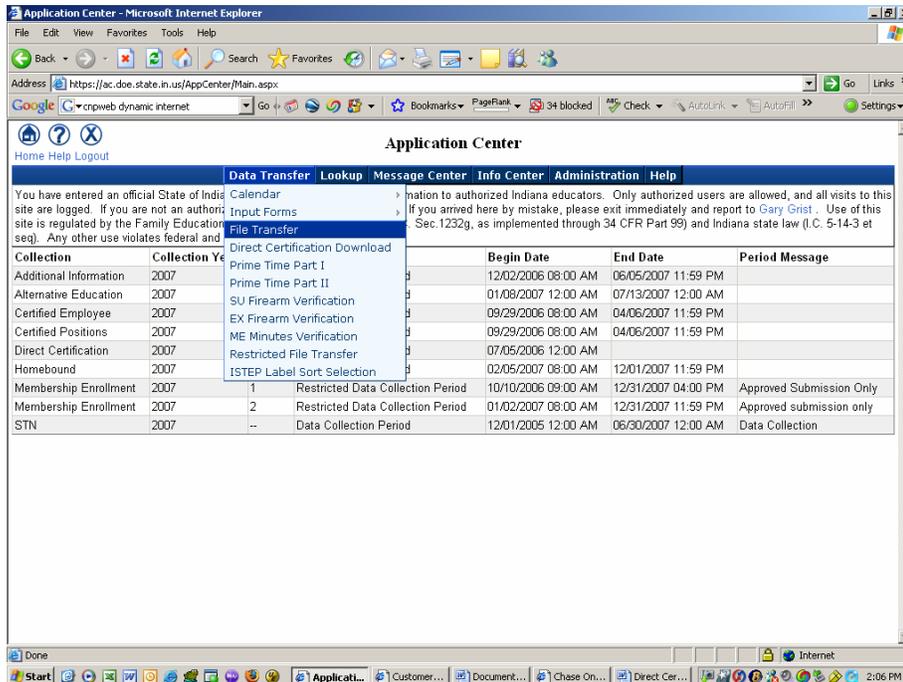
Once you have created the required file in the proper format, you're ready to upload the data and then process the matches. Remember, perfection is not possible or necessary here. It's probably the middle of the summer and you don't know who will positively show up for school in the fall. That's ok. The identification of students receiving Food Stamp or TANF benefits will be correct, but we know that some of the students will have moved out of the district by the time school starts. We also know that some students who start in the fall (either Kindergarten students, or transfers) will not be in the file. While they won't be able to be Directly Certified, they can of course still fill out a paper application if they think they qualify, and they must be given the opportunity. We will not be

⁸ <http://doe.state.in.us/stn/pdf/2006-07-directcertification.pdf>

The format specification can also be found at the end of this document as **Appendix A**.

able to attempt to Directly Certify all students, but we hope that it will cut down on your work as school administrators, and it will save some parents' time.

If you can produce this file of student information, you are ready to upload the. On the dark blue menu bar click on the **[Data Transfer]** and choose **[File Transfer]**



Direct Certification

You're now on the screen where you'll select the file on your PC to transfer to the state's server (upload) and specify what type of file it is and what format it's in.

1 → File Location: *
2 → File Type: *
3 → File Format: *
4 → Transfer Data

Legend:
! = Click to view errors
! = Click to verify the data is correct
! = Click to view warnings
? = The file has not been processed

The last 20 transfers are shown

Results	School	File Type	File Format	Year	Period Processed	Transfer By	File Name
!	0000	Direct Certification	Comma Delimited	2007	--	03/23/2007 13:59:30	doeteam21 accredcorps.bt
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delimited	2007	--	02/28/2007 11:15:48	doehelp9 07 CE Data.bt
!	0000	Language Minority	Comma Delimited	2007	--	02/20/2007 07:57:28	doeteam21 BusFile.bt
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delimited	2007	--	02/06/2007 09:23:45	doeteam21 BusFile.bt
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delimited	2007	--	02/06/2007 08:22:38	doeteam21 BusFile.bt
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delimited	2007	--	01/18/2007 15:40:53	doeteam21 CEtest.bt
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delimited	2007	--	01/18/2007 15:38:27	doeteam21 CEtest.bt
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delimited	2007	--	01/18/2007 14:31:02	doeteam21 CEtest.bt
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delimited	2007	--	01/18/2007 14:29:41	doeteam21 CEtest.bt
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delimited	2007	--	01/10/2007 11:01:19	doeteam21 CEtest.bt
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delimited	2007	--	01/10/2007 10:52:16	doeteam21 CEtest.bt
!	0000	Certified Position	Comma Delimited	2007	--	12/13/2006 08:33:29	DYeaker 0940cp.bt
!	0000	Certified Position	Comma Delimited	2007	--	11/02/2006 14:42:02	6915co 6915cp.bt
!	0000	Prime Time Part II	Comma Delimited	2007	--	10/10/2006 08:08:15	doeuser03 3415 Part II.csv
!	0000	Prime Time Part I	Comma Delimited	2007	--	10/03/2006 15:43:07	doeuser03 4575 Prime Time Part I.csv

Ignore this section for now. All of your school district's past Direct Certification lists are here and your newest processing will appear at the top of this list.

1-Click on the browse button and you'll get what's commonly known as a "file open dialog box." You'll need to find the file on your local PC that you want to upload and then click [Open].

Data Transfer > File Transfer

File Location: * [Browse...]
File Type: * [- Select One -]
File Format: * [- Select One -]

The last 20 transfers are shown.

Results	School	File Type	File Format
!	0000	Direct Certification	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin
!	0000	Language Minority	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin
!	0000	Certified Employee	Comma Delin

Choose file

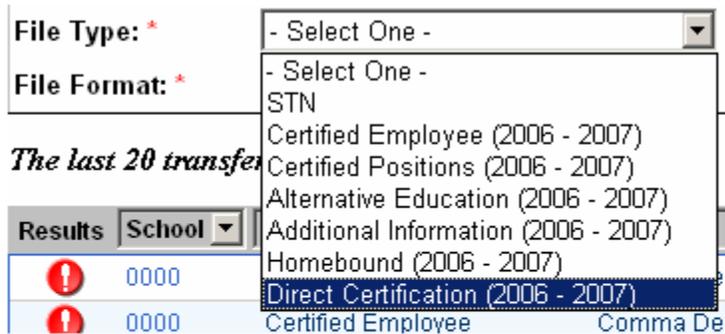
Look in: My Documents

- Cyberlink
- Epson Converted Slideshows
- History
- My Albums
- My Data Sources
- My eBooks
- My Google Gadgets
- My Music
- My Pictures
- My Videos
- Position Descriptions
- Updater5
- ~\fred Certification and Direct Verification April 2007.doc
- 05FN544.xls
- 07-03.doc

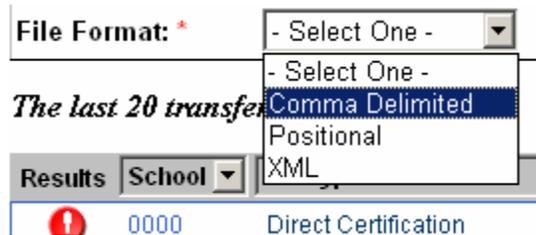
File name: []
Files of type: All Files (*.*)

[Open] [Cancel]

2-Pull Down the file type “Drop Down List Box” (DDLB) and select **Direct Certification**



3-Pull Down the File Format DDLB and select the format that matches the format of the file you want to upload. Most of you will probably select Comma Delimited, some Positional/Fixed Length. We support XML because it is an important evolving standard, but not too many people use it currently.



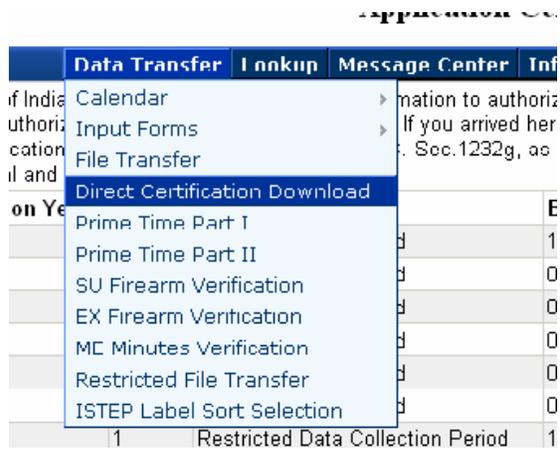
4-Now press and the file will be transferred/uploaded to the department’s server.

Once the file is uploaded you’ll want to go to the “Message Center” (on the blue menu bar) and check to see how many records loaded and resolve any errors. It is beyond the scope of this manual to go into all the details of using the STN system. There are people in your school district who can help you correct errors and reload the data. It should be mentioned that some errors may not be correctable.

Once you have corrected as many errors as possible and have the data loaded into the system, you can proceed with the next step which is to download the lists of directly certified students.

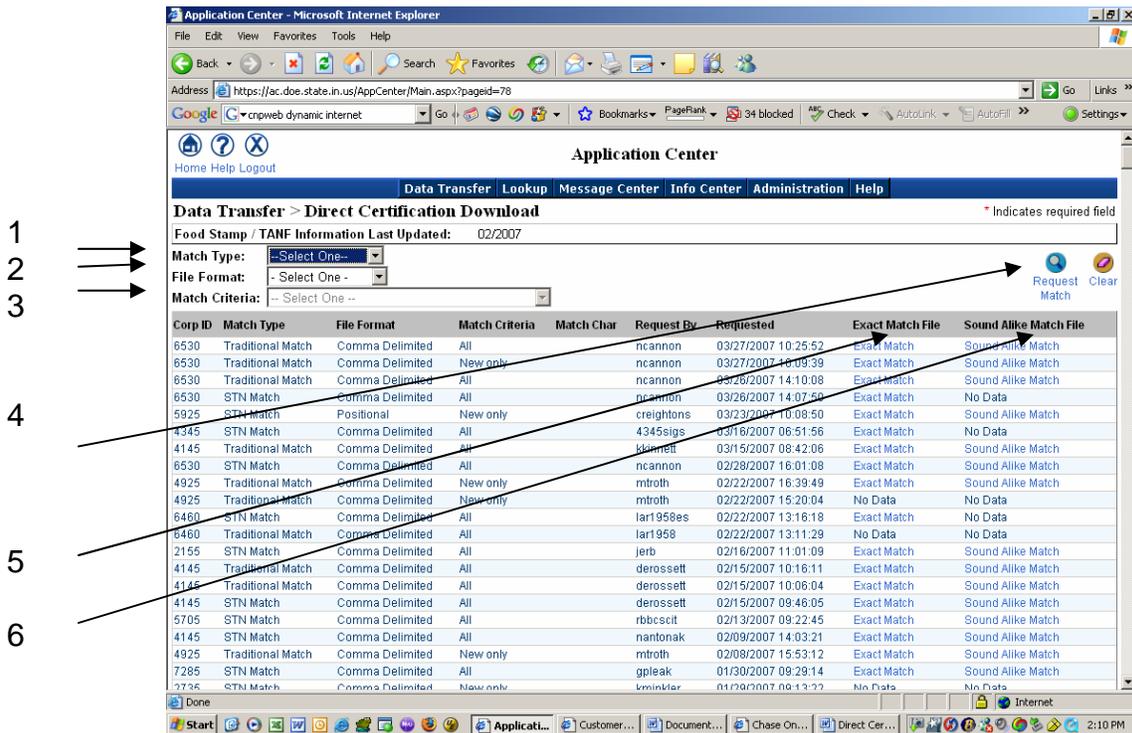
Direct Certification

Go to the Blue Menu Bar and select “Data Transfer”, then select “Direct Certification Download.”

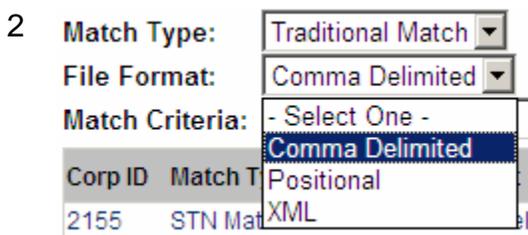


(From this point on, the directions are similar to the STN method.)

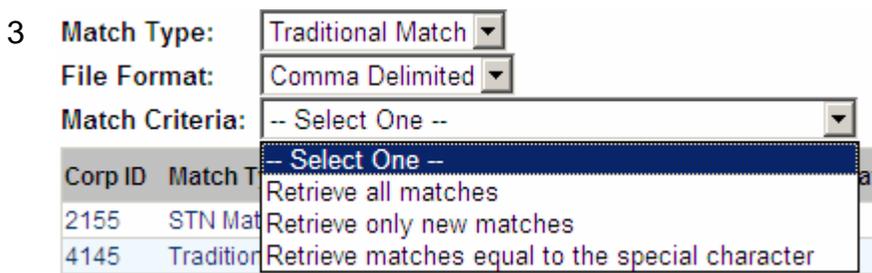
You'll see a screen like this. The individual items will be discussed in sequence:



Choose either Traditional Match.



Choose either Comma Delimited, Positional/Fixed Length, or XML. This will be the format of the OUTPUT. Most will probably choose "comma delimited." See the earlier discussion under the STN method.



Direct Certification

Choose “Retrieve all Matches.”

After making the above choices, press the  on the right hand side of the page (#4). Wait a little while and soon you’ll hopefully see links that can be selected (clicked on) to retrieve your exact and sound alike matches.

Corp ID	Match Type	File Format	Match Criteria	Match Char	Request By	Requested	Exact Match File	Sound Alike Match File
9999	STN Match	Comma Delimited	All		jtodd	01/29/2008 11:30:59	Exact Match	Sound Alike Match

The information is arrayed the same as with the STN method, described in the section Request Match-STN Method beginning on page 11.

Using the Results of Direct Certification

Whether you used the STN Method or the Traditional Method, you’ve presumably processed your matches now and you hopefully have a list of “exact matches” and a list of “sound-alike” matches. (In previous years we used to call these “hard” matches and “soft” matches respectively.)

Depending on a variety of factors you have the list in either a text format, or more than likely for most of you, an Excel spreadsheet.

You should put these two computer files in a secure place and save them as an important record. They are literally as important as a whole file folder of approved applications.

Each name (each line) in the file represents a student that you can approve for Free meals based solely on Direct Certification. You do not need an application. All of the names in the “exact match” file can be directly certified, and more than likely all or most of the names on the “sound-alike” file can also be. Check the variants of the first names, as well as the listed address. If you used the Traditional method you’ll be able to see both the address carried in school records as well as the address carried by the Food Stamp/TANF program side-by-side in columns “M” and “N”. (Fields 13 and 14 in the file layout.) If you used the STN method, column “M” (field 13) will be blank, since you didn’t upload that information. You can still check the Food Stamp/TANF program address against school records to help verify if the sound-alike match is correct. More than likely, most of the sound-alike matches will be correct. We have found over the years that families are often not as consistent as you might think in spelling their children’s names!

Example:

- Laquisha
- La Quisha
- L'Quisha

These names are not “exact” matches, but would meet the test of “similar”. We use a common computer procedure called the *Soundex Algorithm*.

The next step in the process is to send the parents of each Directly Certified student a letter informing them that their student is eligible for Free meals and giving the parent the right to “refuse” the benefit. (Some people who are eligible for free meals do not want to receive the benefit, for a variety of reasons.)

The Department has a suggested format for the form on its website⁹.

[OFFICE ADDRESS/LETTERHEAD]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Date:

Each student identified below is automatically approved through Direct Certification for free meals and textbook assistance based on his/her eligibility for:

[] Food Stamps OR [] TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families).

Student's Name: _____ Birthdate: _____

Address: _____

School: _____

Student's Name: _____ Birthdate: _____

Address: _____

School: _____

Please do not fill out an application for free or reduced price meals for this (these) child(ren). If any of the information listed above is incorrect, or you have any questions, please contact this office at _____.

Sincerely,

⁹ It can currently be found at: http://scnweb.doe.in.gov/Nutrition/external_forms/SPDirCertNotifLtr.doc

Direct Certification

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

SIGN ONLY IF YOU DO NOT WANT YOUR CHILD TO RECEIVE THESE BENEFITS AND/OR HAVE THAT INFORMATION RELEASED, THEN RETURN THE STATEMENT(S) BELOW TO THIS OFFICE.

Date: _____

() I do not want my child _____ to receive free meals.
(Child's Name)

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date: _____

() I do not want the information that my child _____ has been
(Child's Name)
approved for free benefits under the National School Lunch Program released to the programs I have indicated; () Textbook assistance () Hoosier Healthwise () Twenty-first Century Scholars

Signature of Parent or Guardian

The letter serves the following functions.

1. Inform the parent of their student's eligibility for the Free Meal benefit based on Direct Certification.
2. It tells them that no application is necessary to receive this benefit.
3. Informs them of the right to reject the benefit if they so choose.
4. Gives them the right to reject (individually) any of the other benefits that are also connected to Free Lunch Eligibility. These are currently Free Textbooks, and having their student's name shared with the 21st Century Scholar Program, and the Hoosier Healthwise Children's Insurance Program (SCHIP).

It is important to note that to reject either the free lunch or other benefits, the parent must respond. If they do not respond, it is assumed that they want the benefit, and/or give their implied consent to have their student's name shared with the other programs. This is the opposite of what happens when a parent fills out the traditional paper application. With the paper application the parent has to explicitly consent to benefits. Adopting the strict case of having the parent give their consent would negate the usefulness of Direct Certification, since the school would still have to process a large amount of "parent consent" forms. This wouldn't be much better than processing a large number of applications. Federal

regulations and policies fortunately accommodate the efficiencies of the Direct Certification process and allow for the implied consent where the parent takes no action. The Parent must be mailed this letter however.

At this point, hopefully you'll be able to devise a way to distribute paper applications to all the students in your school or district who were not Directly Certified. As stated earlier, just because a student was not Directly Certified, does not mean they might not still be eligible. There are many students who are eligible for Free meals, not to mention all the students eligible for Reduced-Price meals, who do not receive either Food Stamp or TANF benefits. You can expect that if you successfully use Direct Certification, that the number of applications filled out on the basis of categorical eligibility will be limited or non-existent. Most of your applications will be "income" applications where eligibility is based on household size and household income.

Trying to devise a strategy for distributing applications to all the students, EXCEPT those who are Directly Certified, is difficult to accomplish. We suggest that you talk with a school or district that is similar to yours who has already successfully implemented Direct Certification.

Some schools mail applications directly to the home. If you have first "marked" the students who are directly certified in your student information database, you should be able to print mailing labels only for those that aren't marked.

Some schools distribute applications to parents are pre-registration. If this is the case at your school, you can provide staff with lists sorted by building of those who are already Directly Certified.

Just remember, you must still distribute applications in a way that maintains confidentiality, so you won't want staff telling parents standing in line "your child has already been directly certified for free meals, so you don't need one of these applications."

We've talked about the need to coordinate Direct Certification with the process of distributing applications and that ideally you would only distribute applications to students who were NOT Directly Certified. There will be times however where a parent of a child who has already been Directly Certified receives an application by mistake, fills it out, and returns it to the school. Current USDA policies allow the school officials to "disregard" the application.

USDA Policy states "In situations where the school/LEA receives both documentation for direct certification and an application submitted on behalf of the child, school officials should disregard the application. Direct certification takes precedence over the application submitted by the household."

Direct Certification

Another challenge that will happen with Direct Certification is when a parent receives a letter from your office informing them that two of their students have been Directly Certified and the parent calls (sometimes confused or angry) asking about the status of their third (and maybe fourth or fifth) students.

There are a variety of reasons why not all of the students in a household will be identified by Direct Certification matching procedures. Since the matching is based on equality of various data elements (first name, last name, county of residence, and birth date) contained in two separate lists, any typographical errors may cause a name not to be matched. Maybe either school officials or Food Stamp/TANF officials entered an incorrect birth date for one of the children. If this happened, the student's name will not be identified. Sometimes last names are inconsistently listed where a parent has been divorced and remarried and all the students in a household don't share the same last name. The fact is, there are a variety of reasons why not all names might be found.

If a student's name is not on the Direct Certification list, you cannot assume that they are eligible because their siblings were. Without specific information that these additional children also receive Food Stamps or TANF, they will still have to have an application. (This leads to the apparent contradiction that some of the students in the household will be directly certified and some of them will have to complete the application. It can get worse if the students who complete the application are not approved!)

Fortunately, we have another tool available that can help in situations such as this and will many times resolve these discrepancies. The tool is called "Direct Certification Lookup" and it is the last major part of the Direct Certification suite of tools available. The "STN Method" and the "Traditional Method" refer to **batch** matching processes that process many student records at the same time. The process can work efficiently because it uses exactly the same rules to process each student. What is needed is flexible method to identify students even when there might be a data error in either the school record or the Food Stamp/TANF record that makes matching with the batch process impossible. **Direct Certification Lookup** allows flexible searching for one student by a variety of flexible approaches and can often solve your problem. Let's look at how to use this valuable tool in the next section.

Direct Certification Lookup

Log back into the STN Application center and on the top menu bar, click on "Lookup". Pull down the menu and select "Direct Certification".

Be careful!! "Direct Verification Lookup" might also be available, depending on the time of the year, but do not select it! DV Lookup is not for use in Direct Certification, but is only to be used during the Verification activities after October 1, when you are verifying your 3% sample of applications.

Application Center

Data Transfer	Lookup	Message Center	Info Center
f Indiana website de	STN Lookup		uthorized Indiar
ot an authorized use	Direct Verification		ou arrived here1
Family Educational P	Direct Certification		C. Sec.1232g, a
violates federal and	School and Corp Lookup		
n Year	AYP Student List 2005-06		Begin Date
Period	GED Recipient Lookup		12/02/2006 06
Pe	PE Missing AT		01/08/2007 12
	User and File Lookup		07/05/2006 12
	Data Collection Period		07/05/2007 06

Direct Certification

After selecting Direct Certification (Lookup) you'll see a screen that looks like this:

The screenshot shows the 'Application Center' interface. At the top, there are navigation links: Home, Help, and Logout. Below this is a menu bar with 'Data Transfer', 'Lookup', 'Message Center', 'Info Center', 'Administration', and 'Help'. The main heading is 'Lookup > Direct Certification' with a note '* Indicates required field'. Under 'Select Search Criteria:', three radio buttons are present: 'Case Number' (unselected), 'Student Information' (selected), and 'Guardian Information' (unselected). The 'Search By Student Information' section contains four fields: 'Student Last Name: *' (text input), 'Student First Name: *' (text input), 'Student County of Residence: *' (dropdown menu with '-- Select One --'), and 'Birth Date:' (text input). At the bottom, the 'Search Type' section has two radio buttons: 'Basic' (selected) and 'Sounds Like (First Name Only)' (unselected). A 'Search Clear' button is located in the bottom right corner.

The “radio button” at the top allows you to search based either “Case Number”, “Student Information”, or “Guardian Information”. Based on your selection the search screens look slightly different. You can see what the “Student Information” screen looks like above, and it is the default.

If you select “Case Number” the screen will look like this:

The screenshot shows the 'Application Center' interface. At the top, there are navigation links: Home, Help, and Logout. Below this is a menu bar with 'Data Transfer', 'Lookup', 'Message Center', 'Info Center', 'Administration', and 'Help'. The main heading is 'Lookup > Direct Certification' with a note '* Indicates required field'. Under 'Select Search Criteria:', three radio buttons are present: 'Case Number' (selected), 'Student Information' (unselected), and 'Guardian Information' (unselected). The 'Search By Case Number' section contains one field: 'Enter Case Number: *' (text input). At the bottom right, there is a 'Search Clear' button.

If you select “Guardian Information” it will look like this:

The screenshot shows the 'Application Center' interface. At the top, there are navigation links: Home, Help, and Logout. Below this is a menu bar with 'Data Transfer', 'Lookup', 'Data Verification', 'Info Center', 'Administration', and 'Help'. The main heading is 'Lookup > Direct Certification' with a note '* Indicates required field'. Under 'Select Search Criteria:', three radio buttons are present: 'Case Number' (unselected), 'Student Information' (unselected), and 'Guardian Information' (selected). The 'Search By Guardian Information' section contains four fields: 'Guardian Last Name: *' (text input), 'Guardian First Name: *' (text input), 'Student County of Residence: *' (dropdown menu with '-- Select One --'), and 'Guardian SSN:' (text input). At the bottom, the 'Search Type' section has two radio buttons: 'Basic' (selected) and 'Sounds Like (First Name Only)' (unselected). A 'Search Clear' button is located in the bottom right corner.

All three screens have the advantage that you can fill in the information that you have and search for matching records. You will notice that in each instance you

can also do an exact match or sound alike match by changing the radio button for “Search Type” at the bottom for the screen. Obviously, if you leave birthdate out, you’ll find more students with the name “Mike Smith” than if you limit the search to a specific birthdate. **You must select County of Residence from the drop down list box. Be careful, in a few instances, the student’s county of residence may not be the county that the school is in. This is important since Food Stamp/TANF benefits are issued from the county of residence.**

While you certainly wouldn’t want to use lookup to search for every student attending your school or district, it’s a great problem solver. In the case of the parent asking why one of their students didn’t get directly certified it can be a real benefit. Search for the student’s name without birth date, looking for both sound alike matches and exact matches. Search by parent name. Perhaps the most useful method involves using the case number. In instances where you already have found some children in a household, the batch matching program will have returned matching records for some of the children and it will show you the matching student’s Food Stamp/TANF case number.

Case numbers in Indiana look something like one of these examples:
9999999999 ADCR 01 or
9999999999 FS 01
9999999999 ADCR 02

The first 10 digits are the base case number, the ADCR or FS are program designators that in this case stand for TANF or Food Stamps respectively, and the 01 or 02 refer to what is known as sequence numbers. **In most cases you will want to just search by the base case number, so just enter the first 10 digits into the search box.**

After you enter 10 digits of the case number and click on the “search icon” over on the left side, you’ll hopefully receive a listing of records associated with the case number.

In our example of the missing child, hopefully you’ll see again the names of the students who the batch program has already identified, but you’ll also see some names of students who weren’t matched. As stated earlier, that might have been because of a data entry error, or some other reason.

Data Transfer | Lookup | Message Center | Info Center | Administration | Help

Lookup > Direct Certification * Indicates required

Select Search Criteria: Case Number Student Information Guardian Information

Search By Case Number

Enter Case Number: *

  Search Clear

Direct Certification Results

View	Case No.	Student Full Name	Birth Date	County of Residence	Guardian Full Name	Guardian SSN
	9999999999	██████████	09/21/1997	49 - Marion County	██████████	██████████
	9999999999	██████████	09/21/1997	49 - Marion County	██████████	██████████

Direct Certification

If you can find the name of the “missing student” click on the “view icon”  in the far left column and you’ll pull up a detail screen for the individual child record. It will look like this:

Direct Certification Results	
Case Number:	[REDACTED]
Student Details:	
Name:	[REDACTED]
Birth Date:	09/21/1997
Address:	[REDACTED]
County:	49 - Marion County
Certification Date:	07/31/2007
Guardian Details:	
Name:	[REDACTED]
SSN:	[REDACTED]
Match Details:	
Direct Certification Based on program participation in month of: 02/2007	
Eligible Federal Programs:	Food Stamp
<input type="button" value="Print Information"/>	<input type="button" value="Close Window"/>

This screen solves your problem. Print the screen out and file it away. It allows you to directly certify the student just as if his name had appeared on either the “exact match” or “sound-alike” listings.

We hope you find Direct Certification Lookup a useful technique to solve problems.

Direct Certification throughout the School Year

We've talked about Direct Certification mostly in the context of a process to be done at the beginning of the school year. For many of you that's the only time that you'll utilize these powerful techniques. If you do it onetime a year, you'll satisfy the mandate that all sponsors of the National School Lunch Program utilize Direct Certification.

We've added a variety of features to our programs however, that make it possible for you to do Direct Certification activities throughout the year.

The first technique allows you to, at subsequent dates throughout the year, go back into the system and see if any new students can be directly certified, beyond those who were directly certified at the beginning of the year. Maybe a student who was "paid" at the beginning of the year comes from a family that has fallen on hard times. Maybe they have recently applied for and received food stamps, but forgot to apply for free lunch.

On the Direct Certification Download screen you have options. At the beginning of the year you hopefully selected "Retrieve all matches". At periodic intervals throughout the year you can select "Retrieve only new matches." The system keeps track of names it has previously included in lists produced. If you check "new matches" you'll only see results that have not been on any previous list.

Application Center

Home Help Logout

Data Transfer Lookup Data Verification Info Center Administration Help

Data Transfer > Direct Certification Download * Indicates required

Food Stamp / TANF Information Last Updated: 02/2008

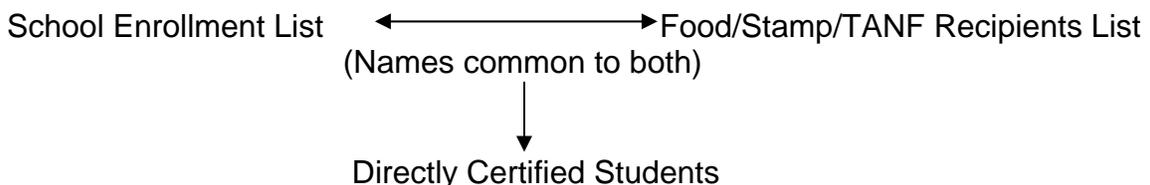
Match Type: Traditional Match

File Format: Comma Delimited

Match Criteria: -- Select One --

Corp ID	Match Type	File Format	Match Char	Request By	Requested	Exact Match File	Sound Alike Match File
8360	STN Match	Comma Delimited	All	ksta8360	04/03/2008 10:27:54	No Data	No Data
8360	STN Match	Comma Delimited	All	ksta8360	04/03/2008 10:22:38	Exact Match	Sound Alike Match
8360	STN Match	Comma Delimited	All	WMcConaha	04/03/2008 10:22:31	Exact Match	Sound Alike Match
4500	STN Match	Comma Delimited	New only	carrie5	04/02/2008 16:45:52	Exact Match	Sound Alike Match

Don't forget, Direct Certification processes essentially involve comparing a list of your school students against a list of Food Stamp TANF recipients and listing the names common to both lists.



Direct Certification

The names on both of these lists can change at any time. If you use the Traditional Method, you can re-upload your school enrollment at anytime. If you use the STN method, the school enrollment list that is generated will eventually be updated sometime after early December as mentioned earlier.

The Food Stamp/TANF data is updated monthly. Whenever you use any Direct Certification process you're matching only against the most current list of Food Stamp/TANF recipients, so the list is constantly changing.

Because of these changes, the results of the matching process will vary over time. New names will appear on lists that weren't there before and names that were will not be on subsequent listings. This last fact needs emphasized. A particular student might be directly certified in late July or August when you do your initial Direct Certification process. Later on, say in December, you re-run the process, using either STN or Traditional methods. It's possible that that same student will not be listed in the output because the family no longer receives Food Stamps or TANF benefits. Should you change the student's eligibility or make the family file a paper application to prove that they still are eligible for the Free Lunch benefit? NO. The determination made at the beginning of the school year is valid for the rest of the year (and the first 30 days of the new school year). This is the same for students who's eligibility is based on a paper application. A student's parents are no longer required to notify the school if their status changes in the middle of the year. The same concept holds for Direct Certification. Once a child is directly certified, the status is not changed, even if the name is not on subsequent Direct Certification lists.

APPENDIX A-File Layouts

A current version of this document can be found at:
<http://doe.state.in.us/stn/pdf/2006-07-directcertification.pdf>

File Specification for Direct Certification data uploads and downloads

The purpose of this data collection is to expedite the application for the eligibility of the USDA Free Lunch benefit program. Instead of the traditional eligibility requiring a parent to fill out a paper application, direct certification allows the state agency to match school district enrollment with food stamp or TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the successor to AFDC) recipients and “directly certify” students for free lunches. Direct certification is an administrative time saver and may identify students who would otherwise not be identified. Additionally, direct certification records are excluded from the routine auditing process.

Audience:

Participation in Direct Certification is voluntary for public schools, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools at this time. Several corporations are currently participating in this data collection project. This will be a mandatory collection by the 2007-2008 school year.

Although the student data collected may already exist in the Application Center, the timing of this collection and the data contained is based solely on the data provided by the user. Certification starts earlier each year, therefore the rollover of student data from elementary to junior high, etc must happen at the local level.

Instructions:

The required data should be collected, combined into a file, and submitted to the Department of Education through the Application Center.

The collection period will begin on July 5, 2006 and will be available till the end of December 2006. During this time you can submit the file to retrieve any matches by the traditional match or by Student Test Number (STN). Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year the data will be updated once a month with current data from FSSA. Also starting this school year, the files will include the STN number.

References:

For more detailed information on Direct Certification and explanation of Traditional and STN Match, please review the following document:
<http://doe.state.in.us/food/schoolnutrition/cnpbenefitforms.html>

Direct Certification Data Layout – INPUT for Traditional Match

Field Order	Fieldname Description	Length	Data Field Specification and Requirements	Notes
1	County of Residence	2	State Assigned County ID Data Type: Numeric Required Field: YES	County in which the student lives.
2	Corporation/Diocese Number	4	State Assigned Corporation ID Data Type: Numeric Valid Range: 0000-9999 Required Field: YES	Corporation where the student is enrolled
3	School Number	4	State Assigned School ID Data Type: Alpha-Numeric Valid Range: 'A' through 'M' (non-public) and '0' (zero) through '9' EXAMPLE: Public = 0025 or Non-Public = A235 Required Field: YES	School building where the student is enrolled

Direct Certification

4	Student Last Name	25	Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: A-Z, ' (apostrophe), / (slash), - (hyphen), space Required Field: YES	
5	Student First Name	20	Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: A-Z, ' (apostrophe), / (slash), - (hyphen), space Required Field: YES	
6	Student Middle Name/ Middle Initial	15	Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: A-Z, ' (apostrophe), / (slash), - (hyphen), space Required Field: NO	
7	Student Name Suffix	3	Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: A-Z Required Field: NO	
8	Birth Date	10	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric MMDDYYYY or MM/DD/YYYY where MM = Month, DD = Day, and YYYY = Year Valid Range: 01 <= MM <=12 01 <= DD <=31 1900 <= YYYY <= 2099 Required Field: YES	
9	Social Security Number	9	Data Type: Numeric Required Field: NO	
10	Address – Street	30	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric Required Field: YES	
11	Address - City	20	Data Type: Alpha Required Field: YES	
12	Address - State	2	Two-Letter State Abbreviation Data Type: Alpha Required Field: NO	
13	Address - Zip Code	9	Data Type: Numeric Required Field: NO	Use 5- or 9-digit zip code
14	Corporation Assigned Student ID	15	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric Valid Range: A-Z, 0-9, Special Characters Required Field: YES	A student ID that, the corporation has assigned, is unique to the school building and will be used instead of the STN Number.
15	Guardian Last Name	25	Data Type: Alpha Required Field: NO	
16	Guardian First Name	20	Data Type: Alpha Required Field: NO	
17	Guardian Middle Name/ Middle Initial	15	Data Type: Alpha Required Field: NO	

Direct Certification

18	Guardian Whole Name	35	Data Type: Alpha Required Field: NO	
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Direct Certification

19	Grade Level	2	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric Allowable Codes are: PK = Pre-Kindergarten Ages 3-5 KG = Kindergarten 01 = Grade 1 02 = Grade 2 03 = Grade 3 04 = Grade 4 05 = Grade 5 06 = Grade 6 07 = Grade 7 08 = Grade 8 09 = Grade 9 10 = Grade 10 11 = Grade 11 12 = Grade 12 13 = Grade 12+/Adult Required Field: YES	
----	-------------	---	--	--

20	Student Test Number (STN)	9	Official Student Test Number (STN) assigned to the student Required Field: YES	
21	Special Match Characters	8	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric Valid Range: A-Z, 0-9, space Required Field: NO	

Certification XML Data Layout – INPUT for Traditional Match

```
<XIF_DCData> <Corporation Id="">
<School Id="">

    <Student> <Name Last="" First="" Middle="" Suffix=""/> <Address Street="" City="" State="" Zip=""/>
    <Birth Date=""/> <DirectCertificationInfo GradeLevel="" County="" SSN=""/> <SchoolUse
    StudentID="" GuardLastName="" GuardFirstName="" GuardMiddleName=""
    GuardWholeName="" STN=""/> </Student>
<Match Char=""></Match> </School> </Corporation> </XIF_DCData>
```

Direct Certification Data Layout – OUTPUT (Used for Both Traditional and STN Methods)

Field Order	Fieldname Description	Length	Data Field Specification and Requirements	Notes
1	School Submitted County	2	Data Type: Numeric Valid Range: 00-99	
2	School submitted Corporation Number	4	State Assigned corporation number	
3	School Number	4	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric Valid Range: 'A' through 'M' (non-public) and '0' (zero) through '9'	
4	School-Submitted Corporation Student ID	15	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric Valid Range: A-Z, 0-9, Special Characters	This field is for corporations that use a student ID for their own purposes other than the STN Number.
5	STN	9	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric 9-digit Student Test Number	
6	School-Submitted Student Last Name	25	Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: A-Z, ' (apostrophe), / (slash), - (hyphen), space	
7	School-Submitted Student First Name	20	Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: A-Z, ' (apostrophe), / (slash), - (hyphen), space	
8	ICES Student First Name	20	Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: A-Z, ' (apostrophe), / (slash), - (hyphen), space	
9	School-Submitted Student Middle Name/ Middle Initial	15	Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: A-Z	

Direct Certification

10	ICES Student Middle Name/ Middle Initial	15	Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: A-Z	
11	School-Submitted Suffix	3	Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: A-Z	
12	School-Submitted Birth Date	10	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric MM/DD/YYYY where MM = Month, DD = Day, and YYYY = Year Valid Range: 01 <= MM <=12 01 <= DD <=31 1900 <= YYYY <= 2099	
13	School-Submitted Address – Street	30	Data Type: Alpha Numeric Valid Range: A-Z, (period) ., ‘ (apostrophe), / (slash), - (hyphen), Valid Range: Space 0-9	
14	ICES Address – Street	30	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric Valid Range: A-Z, (period) ., ‘ (apostrophe), / (slash), - (hyphen), Valid Range: Space	
15	School-Submitted Address - City	20	Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: A-Z, space	
16	ICES Address - City	20	Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: A-Z, space	
17	School-Submitted Address - State	2	Two-Letter State Abbreviation Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: A-Z	
18	School-Submitted Address - Zip Code	9	Data Type: Numeric Valid Range: 0-9	
19	School-Submitted Social Security Number	9	Data Type: Numeric Valid Range: 0-9	
20	ICES Case Number	16	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric Valid Range: A-Z, 0-9, space	
21	ICES Assistance Type	1		
22	Hard/Soft Match	1	Data Type: Alpha Valid Range: H, S	Indicates whether the match was exact
23	Certification Date	10	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric MM/DD/YYYY where MM = Month, DD = Day, and YYYY = Year Valid Range: 01 <= MM <=12 01 <= DD <=31 1900 <= YYYY <= 2099	

Direct Certification

24	School-Submitted Grade Level	2	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric Allowable Codes are: PK=Pre-Kindergarten KG=Kindergarten 01=Grade 1 02=Grade 2 03=Grade 3 04=Grade 4 05=Grade 5 06=Grade 6 07=Grade 7 08=Grade 8 09=Grade 9 10=Grade 10 11=Grade 11 12=Grade 12 13=Grade 12+/Adult	
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Direct Certification

25	Guardian Last Name	25	Data Type: Alpha	
26	Guardian First Name	20	Data Type: Alpha	
27	Guardian Middle Name/ Middle Initial	15	Data Type: Alpha	
28	Guardian Whole Name	35	Data Type: Alpha	
29	Match Month	2	FSSA Data used in matching names was current as of this Month.	
30	Special Match Characters	8	Data Type: Alpha-Numeric Valid Range: A-Z, 0-9, space *This optional field allows you to classify records into user specific categories	

Direct Certification XML OUTPUT Data Layout

```

<XIF_DCData> <Corporation Id=""> <School Id="">
  <Student STN="" > <Name Last="" First="" IcesFirst="" Middle="" IcesMiddle=""
    Suffix=""> <Address Street="" IcesStreet="" City="" IcesCity="" State="" Zip="">
    <Birth Date=""> <DirectCertificationInfo GradeLevel="" County="" SSN="">
    <SchoolUse StudentID="" GuardLastName ="" GuardFirstName=""
      GuardMiddleName=""
      GuardWholeName="" STN="">
    <IcesMatchInfo CaseNumber=""
      AssistanceType="" MatchType=""
      CertDate="" Matchmonth=""
      MatchChar="" > </Student>
</School> </Corporation>
</XIF_DCData>
  
```

Change History

Version	Change History
08.14.06	Field 30 changed to field 21 on the input file.
06.02.06	Field 30, Special Match Characters added to the input and output file.
07.06.05	Corrected XML tags Corporation ID and School ID on the input file
06.22.05	Field 29, STN removed from the OUTPUT file. Field 5 was also STN number.
05.13.05	Match Month, field 30, added to the output file.
05.03.05	Data layout changed to include STN Number, Audience added, Instructions added
05.21.03	Original layout