

A background image of students in a school cafeteria, overlaid with a blue tint. The students are looking at food on a counter.

MAINE DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION

# Determining Student Eligibility for Meal Benefits

**Presented by: David Hartley**



# Traditional/CEP/SP2

	Traditional	CEP	Special Provision II
<b>Qualification</b>	Any District	Any school/district with 25% + enrolled students on DC	Any District
<b>F/R Meal Benefit Application</b>	Yes, each year	No	Yes, first year No, year 2-4

# Ways to Determine F/R Eligibility

## 1. Free & Reduced Meal Application

- Income
- Categorical (SNAP, TANF, Foster)

## 2. Direct Certification (DC)

## 3. Migrant/Homeless/Head Start List

If a family selects Migrant on an Application, the Migrant Liaison from the Dept of Education must be notified for approval

# Traditional Meal Benefit Applications

- Collected Annually: be sure it is current SY Application.
- Processed within 10 calendar days of receipt.
- Determines student eligibility for the entire school year.
- Families must be notified of benefit eligibility: Free, Reduced or Paid
- Requires the completion of the Verification process
  - Verifying 3% of the approved applications
- 
- Students claimed based on determine eligibility

# Meal Application Benefits

- New School Year
- Prior Year eligibility for the first 30 school days or:
  - New application or other method to give benefits are received
  - If after 30 days not documentation is received, status changes to Paid
    - Not need to notify family, not responding to anything
- First School day: September 2, 2026
- 30<sup>th</sup> School day: October 15, 2026
- Weekends, holiday, workshop days not counted

# Carryover of F/R Eligibility

- F/R eligibility status from the previous school year remains in effect for up to 30 operating days, or until new documentation is received, whichever comes first.
- New eligibility supersedes carryover eligibility.



# Processing Free & Reduced Meal Applications

F R D  
D P

## HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION FOR FREE & REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS – SY2026

Complete one application per household. Return completed form to: [INSERT INFORMATION]  
 You may apply online at: [INSERT WEB ADDRESS OR DELETE]

### STEP 1: STUDENT INFORMATION List ALL students living in the household.

Student Last Name	Student First Name	School	Foster Child	Homeless/Migrant
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### STEP 2: ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS Do any household members (including you) participate in SNAP, TANF or FDIPIR?

No → Go to STEP 3.  Yes → Write name and SNAP/TANF number here and skip to STEP 4.  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SNAP or TANF Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Letter \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 3: HOUSEHOLD INCOME List all household members including yourself & students listed above. List gross income for each person. By entering '0' or leaving blank, you certify (promising) there is no income to report.

Names	Gross Income														
	Farmings from Work before deductions	Weekly	Every 2 weeks	1 time/month	Monthly	Public Assistance, Child Support, Alimony received	Weekly	Every 2 weeks	1 time/month	Monthly	Pensions, Retirement, Social Security, All Other Income	Weekly	Every 2 weeks	1 time/month	Monthly
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# Verification

- Verification is the required process of confirming eligibility for F/R meal benefits
  - Application approval = face value
  - Verification = confirming income reported on application
- Specific timeline to follow
- Verification process is reported in CNP web
  
- Verification training - in person and webinar recording

# Benefit Issuance (Master) List

- List of students eligible for F/R meals
- List should contain:
  - Student first and last name
  - Benefit status (free/reduced/paid)
  - Date status was determined
  - Method of determination (DC/categorically eligible/income)
  - School name
  - Changes

# Student Master List

Andres, Allie	F	09/01/25	Application	Elementary	
Smith, Sam	R	09/02/25	DC	Elementary	
Smith, Norman	P	09/12/25		Middle	F - P 11-12-25
Young, Betty	P			Middle	
Wilson, Joyhn	F	08/30/25	DC	High	

# Special Provision II

- Year one is the same as Traditional Meal Benefit Applications
  - Meal benefit applications collected and processed as normal
  - Accountability and claiming completed by student name and eligibility
  - Verification completed
- Years 2-4
  - No new meal benefit applications accepted from any students, even new
  - Accountability is completed by a total number of meals served, breakfast and lunch
  - Claims are completed by entering total number of meals served, CNPweb will calculate number free, reduced and paid

# Special Provision II

- During Special Provision II, first year a review of meal benefit applications and student eligibility will be conducted in the fall
- Any changes needed will be corrected to the beginning of the school year

# Special Provision II

- During the Base year, Year one
- CNPweb will determine claiming based on number of meals served, breakfast, lunch, free, reduced and paid

	Free	Reduced	Paid	TOTAL
Breakfast	4,779	1,043	11,000	16,822
	28.4%	6.2%	65.4%	
Lunch	7,320	1,336	16,100	24,756
	29.6%	5.4%	65.0%	

# Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

- NO meal benefit applications accepted.
- Determination is made based on students determined eligible on the Direct Certification list.
- Headstart students, Homeless from Homeless Liason.
- Direct Certification list and enrollment list on April 1, year prior to beginning using CEP

**NO APPLICATIONS!!!**

# Students' Eligible CEP

- Direct Certification
  - SNAP
  - TANF
  - Foster Care
  - Migrant
  - Homeless
  - Migrant
  - Maine Care – Free

NOT Maine Care Reduced

S-SNAP  
T-TANF  
F-Foster Care  
M-Migrant  
H-Homeless  
A-Maine Care Free  
~~Z-Maine Care Reduced~~

# Extending Eligibility

- The following benefits extend to all children living in the household on the DC list:
  - SNAP, TANF, Maine Care - Free
- The following benefits are ONLY for the children identified
  - Foster, Migrant, Homeless, Headstart

# Determineing CEP Percentages

- Individually, as a group within the District or District Wide

	Enrollment	DC	ISP
Praetoris High School	440	74	16.8%
Shunderson Middle School	469	198	42.2%
Elwell Elementary School	678	347	51.2%
	1,587	619	39.0%
	.		
ISP * 1.6 Multiplier = Free Claiming Percentage			62.4%

# Documentation

In order to claim Federal reimbursement for Free/Reduced student meals, you must have proper documentation of student eligibility.

What is proper documentation?

- Meal Benefit Applications

- DC list

- Homeless Liaison

- HeadStart List

- Migrant on Application – followup with DOE

- Migrant Coordinator



# How long must documentation be kept

- Any Special Provision Documents
- Normal 3 Years, plus the current
- Special Provision is a 4 year program, documentation must be kept for 7 years

# NEO: Direct Certification (DC)

Export to Excel

Date Added	Student ID	Student Name	BirthDate	Case Head Name	DHS Case ID	DHS Town Name	SNAP/TANF	Enrollment Start	Enrollment End
7/7/2020	130019498	SMITH, JOSEPH	4/5/2003	SMITH, HELEN	80376133A	Machias	F	9/3/2019	6/4/2020
7/7/2020	130019465	ALLEN, HARVEY	4/27/2016	ALLEN, ZACH	15885093A	Machias	H	9/3/2019	6/4/2020
7/7/2020	150019654	ZAZUCUS, ZOE	10/30/2013	ZAZUCUS, ABBY	04583373A	Machias	S	9/3/2019	6/4/2020

S-SNAP  
T-TANF  
F-Foster Care  
M-Migrant  
H-Homeless  
A-Maine Care Free  
Z-Maine Care Reduced

[Individual Student Search](#)

You must select the button below to certify the list has been reviewed as required by Federal Regulations.

Reviewed

# Notification of Eligibility Applications

## NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

DATE:

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your application for free or reduced-price meals for your child(ren) has been:

- Approved for applicable programs listed below (check all that apply)
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free Lunches             | <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced price lunches at \$ _____ per meal              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free Breakfasts          | <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced price breakfast at \$ _____ per meal            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free After School Snacks | <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced price After School Snacks at \$ _____ per snack |
- Denied because:
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household income is over the amount allowable. | <input type="checkbox"/> The application is missing _____. |
|---|--|
- Other \_\_\_\_\_.

You may appeal this decision by contacting the Hearing Official, \_\_\_\_\_ at (phone/email of Hearing Official) \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

[Signature of Approving Officer]

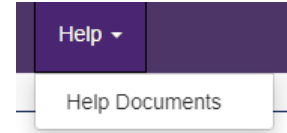
# Confidentiality

- Student eligibility information is CONFIDENTIAL
- May share aggregate data
- Eligibility information may not be shared without written parental permission
  - Sharing information form
- May share with another Child Nutrition Programs
  - Disclosure Chart in Eligibility Manual



# Resources

- USDA's Eligibility Manual for School Meals
- Quick Reference Guide (handout)
- Determining Student Eligibility video:  
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/training>
- CNPw
- eb Help Tab



## Help Documentation

Sort	Program	Form Description
0	NSLP	CNPWeb Administrative Review Quick Guide for SFA's
0	NSLP	Sponsor and Site Claims Reference Guide
1	NSLP	District Claim Approver Instructions
1	NSLP	October Survey Quick Guide
1	NSLP	Verification Guide
5	NSLP	SY24 Annual Application Packet Reference Guide
7	NSLP	Local Foods for Schools (LFS) Summary Page - Federal Grant



# Questions

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