

# The Free and Reduced Price Meal Application, Special Situations

## Determining Eligibility / Verification

### *In a Nutshell*

#### OTHER SOURCE CATEGORICALLY ELIGIBLE

Below are categories which make children automatically eligible for free meal benefits, either through direct certification (DC) or application. Eligibility does not extend to any other child in the household. Note: If any of these children are a match on DC (O, S, T, E, M, Z, or G codes), Verification is not required.

- Foster child whose care and placement is the responsibility of the State, or who is formally placed by a court with a caretaker household through which the State retains legal custody of the child
- Homeless as designated by a district's Homeless Liaison or homeless shelter official
- Migrant as determined by the State Migrant Program Coordinator
- Runaway and receiving assistance under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)
- Head Start or Even Start enrollee

#### DETERMINING HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, BENEFIT ISSUANCE, AND VERIFICATION

##### Verification

Each LEA must annually verify eligibility of children from a sample of household applications approved for free and reduced price benefits for that school year. The Verification process applies to children not identified through DC or Other Source Categorically.

##### Foster Child

- Three ways to determine eligibility of a foster child:
  - Application with Foster box checked; subject to Verification
  - Match on DC list as an "E" code, but does not extend to others in household except on DC list with "O, S, T, G or M" codes
  - Documentation from the court or welfare agency indicating the child is the legal responsibility of the State

##### Kinship Care

- If formal/court-ordered and State retains legal responsibility with documentation, then student receives free meal benefits
- If informal where the household has custody, then eligibility is determined by household application or DC

##### Guardianship

- If court-ordered and State retains legal responsibility with documentation, then student receives free meal benefits
- If household has accepted legal responsibility, then eligibility is determined by household application or DC

##### Adoption

- If the household has accepted legal responsibility, then the child is a member of that household for benefit determination
- If a Foster child is adopted during the school year, then the child retains free meal benefits for the remainder of the year plus up to 30 operating days in the following school year

#### JOINT CUSTODY

When joint custody has been awarded and the child physically changes residence, the child is part of the household where the child resides

- If both guardians apply for meal benefits, but the eligibility status is different, the child receives the greatest benefit level
- If child matches on a DC with "O, S, T, G, M or Z" code, the benefit extends to other children that reside in both households
- Meal benefits do not extend to the second household if eligibility is based on a case number or an income application

## STUDENT CATEGORIES

### Homeless

- If the determining official obtained documentation from Homeless Liaison or homeless shelter official, then the student receives free meal benefits; benefits do not extend to other students in the household

### Migrant

- If determining official obtained documentation from State Migrant Coordinator, then the student receives free meal benefits; benefits do not extend to other students in the household

### Runaway

- If a list of participating children and effective dates from Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RYHA) official, or a letter from a RHYA official or Homeless Liaison confirms the child currently participates in an RHYA program, then the student receives free meal benefits; benefits do not extend to other students in the household

### Head Start or Even Start

- If the program director provides a list of enrolled students within the Local Education Authority (LEA), then the student receives free meal benefits; benefits do not extend to other students in the household  
Note: The student must be Pre-K for Head Start/Even Start and not enrolled in kindergarten

## STUDENT DESIGNATION

### Foreign Exchange

- Student is a member of the household with which he/she resides; therefore, meal benefit is based on eligibility of household Note: If districts wish to provide a meal benefit, a transfer must be made from another fund to cover the cost

### Transfer Student

- Documentation required to support previously determined meal benefits (copy of DC list/meal application)

### Transfer from Special Provision Schools

- Provision to Non-Provision (within same LEA): If no current eligibility is on file, offer free meal benefit for 30 operating days, run DC or complete meal application<sup>i</sup>
- Provision to Non-Provision (different LEA): LEAs are required to offer free meal for 30 operating days, run DC or complete meal application<sup>ii</sup>

### Visiting Student

- Students can be claimed at the paid rate, or based on the student's home school eligibility determination with a copy of supporting documentation
- CEP student's home school must send claiming percentages to hosting school<sup>iii</sup>

## OTHER STUDENT SITUATIONS

### Deployed Personnel

- Person who is activated or deployed is counted as a household member
- Money that supports the household is considered income, except combat pay

### Emancipated Child

- If child is living alone or considered a separate economic unit, child is considered household of one and must sign own application, no Social Security Number required

### RCCI

- If the child resides in the institution, child is considered a household of one; the submitted documentation (list or completed application) from the appropriate official is not subject to verification
- Child not residing in the institution (day students) is considered a member of the household in which the child resides, and meal benefits are based on eligibility of household

[Eligibility Resources: dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/program-requirements/free-reduced-meal-eligibility](https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/program-requirements/free-reduced-meal-eligibility)

<sup>i</sup> Reference the State Agency's list to confirm currently participating special provision sites

<sup>ii</sup> Reference the State Agency's list to confirm currently participating special provision sites

<sup>iii</sup> See CEP website for Visiting Students resource