

# “In a Nutshell” The Free and Reduced Price Meal Application, Special Situations – Determining Eligibility / Verification



## 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; all others are subject to Verification in the chart below.**

- **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 or local Migrant Education Program (MEP) 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

<b>Foster Child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three ways to determine eligibility of a foster child:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Application with Foster box checked</li> <li>○ Match on DC list as an “E” code, but does not extend to others in the household</li> <li>○ Documentation from the court or welfare agency indicating the child is the legal responsibility of the State</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Kinship Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court-ordered:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Formal: If the State retains custody; then student receives free meal benefits, but documentation must be provided</li> <li>○ Informal: If the household has custody, then eligibility is determined by household application or DC</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Guardianship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If court-ordered and State retains legal responsibility with documentation, then student receives free meal benefits</li> <li>• If household has accepted legal responsibility, then eligibility is determined by household application or DC</li> </ul>
<b>Adoption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the household has accepted legal responsibility, then the child is a member of that household for benefit determination</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>
<b>Joint Custody</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When joint custody has been awarded and the child physically changes residence, the child is part of the household where the child resides</li> <li>• If both guardians apply for meal benefits, but the eligibility status is different, the child receives the greatest benefit level</li> <li>• If child matches on a DC run with “O, S, T, M, Z, G” code, the benefit extends to other children that reside in each household</li> <li>• Meal benefits do not extend to the second household if eligibility is based on a case number or an income application</li> </ul>

<b>Homeless</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the determining official obtained documentation from Homeless Liaison or homeless shelter official, then the student receives free meal benefits</li> </ul>
<b>Migrant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If determining official obtained documentation from MEP Coordinator, then the student receives free meal benefits</li> </ul>
<b>Runaway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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 confirming the child currently participates in an RHYA program, then the student receives free meal benefits</li> </ul>
<b>Head Start or Even Start</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the program director provides a list of enrolled students within the Local Education Authority (LEA), then the student receives free meal benefits</li> </ul> <p>Note: The student must be Pre-K for Head Start/Even Start and not enrolled in kindergarten</p>
<b>Foreign Exchange</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student is a member of the household with which he/she resides; therefore meal benefit is based on eligibility of household</li> </ul> <p>Note: If districts wish to provide a meal benefit, a transfer must be made from another fund to cover the cost</p>
<b>Transfer Student</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documentation required to support previously determined meal benefits (copy of DC list/meal application)</li> </ul>
<b>Transfer from Special Provision Schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision to Non-Provision (<i>within same LEA</i>): If no current eligibility is in file, offer free meal benefit, run DC or complete meal application within 30 operating days<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Provision to Non-Provision (<i>different LEA</i>): LEAs are encouraged (required by July 1, 2019) to offer free meals for 30 operating days, run DC or complete meal application<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Visiting Student</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students can be claimed at the paid rate, or based on the student's <i>home</i> school eligibility determination with a copy of supporting documentation</li> <li>CEP student's <i>home</i> school must send claiming percentages to hosting school<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Deployed Personnel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Person who is activated or deployed is counted as a household member</li> <li>Money that supports the household is considered income, except combat pay</li> </ul>
<b>Emancipated Child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>
<b>RCCI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>Child not residing in the institution (<i>day students</i>) is considered a member of the household in which the child resides, and meal benefits are based on eligibility of household</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Reference the State Agency's list to confirm currently participating special provision sites

<sup>2</sup>See CEP website for Visiting Students resource

Eligibility Resources: <http://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/national-school-lunch-program/free-reduced-applications>