

*Date:* August 31, 2017

*To:* Authorized Representatives and Food Service Directors of School Food Authorities (SFAs) Participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs)

*From:* Jessica Sharkus, RDN, CD  
Director-School Nutrition Team (SNT)

*Subject:* Back to School Memorandum for School Year (SY) 2017-18

Please forward this important information to all persons with USDA  
Child Nutrition Program responsibilities.

Welcome Back! Please take the time to read through this important information. This memo is written at the start of each new school year to provide you with important clarifications, reminders, and updates pertaining to the CNPs. In addition, we ask that you share this memo with other staff that may need to know this information as well.



### **Email Distribution List**

Starting back in January, the SNT has been providing program information only via the email distribution list *schoolmealsnews*. Make sure you are up-to-date with valuable USDA and Department of Public Instruction (DPI) SNT information by reading the bulletins and announcements that show up in your “Inbox”. We also post our bulletins and memos on our [School Nutrition Programs](#) homepage or on our [communications](#) webpage. We strongly encourage you to suggest to other staff to sign up to receive this important information. Anyone can sign up by sending an email to [join-schoolmealsnews@lists.dpi.wi.gov](mailto:join-schoolmealsnews@lists.dpi.wi.gov).

### **Administrative Reviews**

Those SFAs selected to receive an Administrative Review (AR) during the SY 2017-18 have been notified. If you are unsure if your SFA is receiving an AR, you can review the list of SFAs selected for review on our [Preparing for your Administrative Review](#) webpage.

This comprehensive webpage, detailing the specific areas of the AR, replaces the Pre-Review Workshops we have provided in previous years.

As we have for the past three years, we will continue to work with CN Resource to complete ARs for the SY 2017-18.

### **Procurement Reviews**

New resources are available with the intent to further assist schools with completing their procurement review. Please keep in mind, the AR and the Procurement Review (PR) are two separate reviews, and both follow the same review cycle. Each SFA will be instructed to complete the *Procurement Review Form* (during the PR), located on our [School Procurement Review Process](#) webpage.

We will have conference calls for the SFAs selected for PR, as well as, conference calls for SFAs looking for general information/updates. Details about future conference calls and timelines for your PR will be sent via email. In addition, we have recorded trainings available that cover the important topics of procurement. Our online Procurement Training Series can be found on our [Procurement Training](#) webpage.

### **Buy American**

All SFAs are reminded that procurement transactions must comply with the Buy American Provision (7 CFR 200.21 (d)), when funds are used from the nonprofit food service account (Fund 50). If you have questions about how to comply with Buy American, check out our Buy American Provision webpage.

Reminder: You may be asked to provide a copy of your Buy American–Noncompliant Product List for any non-domestic food items that are found during your AR. An example of a Buy American – [Noncompliant Product List](#) can be found on our Buy American webpage. Schools may use this document to track product(s) they purchase which do not comply with the Buy American provision.

### **Eligibility Manual**

The 2017 version of the [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#) was released by USDA (via Policy Memorandum SP 36-2017) in July. It is located on our website and reflects pertinent policy memoranda changes made since the last update. Updates to the manual are highlighted in yellow to help you identify information that has changed. Formatting and minor changes to the language are not highlighted, since they do not represent a change in policy. **Some key changes are:**

- Due to a USDA Policy Guidance change outlined in memo [SP 19-2017](#), when households complete their application and report income as *annual* (usually noted in Step 3-Column F), SFAs are no longer required to follow up with the household prior to making an eligibility determination.
- On Step 3 of the paper application, the *total number* in box G must match the number of names from Step 1 and Step 3 of the application. If this is not correct, it is considered an incomplete application and must be corrected. Schools should contact the household by telephone or email to clarify and/or correct the household size and document the correction on the application. If this is found uncorrected during an AR, it will be cited as an error.
- Paper applications must have a signature of the household adult who completes the application and certifies that the information listed is correct. Please note that the signature may be cursive or printed.

**Webcasts** are available on the following subjects:

- 1) [Getting Started in Free/Reduced Price Meal Eligibility](#), 15 minutes.
- 2) [Processing Applications and Direct Certification](#) in Free/Reduced Price Meal Eligibility, 35 minutes.
- 3) [Special Situations in the Free and Reduced Price Meal Eligibility](#) Process, 20 minutes.



As part of our commitment to ensuring all households have access to school meals, we have added a short webcast in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#) languages to our training page titled *Filling out the Household Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals*. We encourage you to share this with households by posting it to your SFA's website.

### **Changes to Direct Certification (DC)**

**DC with Medicaid Data:** Wisconsin is participating in the USDA National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Demonstration Project to Evaluate Direct Certification for Free and Reduced Price School Meals using Medicaid Data. We have been working very closely with the USDA, WI Departments of Health Services and Children and Families, and Covering WI to update the web-based direct certification system. We anticipate the Medicaid data will be added to the Direct Certification Program (DCP) on October 1, 2017.

School enrollment data will be matched with Medicaid eligibility data to identify children who receive Medicaid, or live with a child who receives Medicaid, and whose family income, before expenses and deductions, does not exceed:

- 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for free school meal eligibility; or
- 185 percent of the FPL for reduced price meal eligibility.

As part of this demonstration project, Wisconsin is required to participate in an evaluation of the impact of the additional match categories. We may need to contact your SFA for specific information as the pilot project gets going. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

**DC with Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR):** Also, new for SY 2017-18, students that participate in FDPIR will automatically qualify to receive free meals. Participant data from FDPIR agencies identifying members of households receiving assistance under FDPIR will be included in the direct certification process.

We are currently working with the Menominee Indian Tribe to roll out their FDPIR data into the DCP soon. Once a release date is determined, this information will be shared.

**New Direct Certification Eligibility Codes:** As a result of adding additional eligibility data to the DCP, there will be three new codes added to the direct certification eligibility codes.

M – Student is identified by the state's Medicaid database at the income level for FREE meals and is automatically eligible.

Z – Student is identified by the state's Medicaid database at the income level for REDUCED price meals and is automatically eligible.

G – Student is identified by a FDPIR list provided by participating Native American tribes and is automatically eligible for free meals.

Some points worth noting with these additional matches:

- Students do not qualify for free or reduced price meals on an application indicating a Medicaid case number.
- Some students may be in an eligibility carryover status for the first few days of school; however, if they carried free meal benefits last school year and are now matched on DC with a Z code, the Z code is considered a NEW eligibility determination and would change their status to reduced, thus ending the 30-day carryover period.
-  If a household submits an income application and the information provided qualifies them for free meals, and they showed up in DC as code “Z”-Medicaid reduced, the application takes precedence over the DC match, and the student qualifies for the free benefit. The student always receives the best eligibility benefit.



There is no change to how direct certification is completed or how the input file is set up as a result of these enhancements. More information on the direct certification process, file formatting and eligibility codes is located on the SNT [Direct Certification](#) webpage. The following is the hierarchy of match codes:

- S: SNAP
- O: SNAP and W-2 Cash Benefits
- T: W-2 Cash Benefits
- G: FDPIR
- E: Foster
- M: Medicaid-free
- Z: Medicaid-reduced
- N: No match

### **Unpaid Meal Charge Policies**

Starting July 1, 2017, SFAs are required to have an unpaid meal policy. In May 2017, USDA released the 2017 version of their best practice guide called *Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge: Proven Strategies from Our Nation's Schools*. It is designed to support State and local stakeholders working every day to address this issue. This and other resources can be found on our [Financial Management](#) webpage. Scroll down to the *Unpaid Meal Charges* section.

The SNT is working on a Q&A document that will provide answers to the most frequently asked questions. This will be available in the near future and will be posted to our website. It will also be shared through our bulletin through the *schoolmealsnews* email distribution list.

### **School Meal Flexibilities for School Year (SY) 2017-18**

In a DPI SNT memo to Food Service Directors, dated August 22, we are allowing SFAs to apply for a Whole Grain Rich Exemption again this year as well as a low-fat, flavored milk exemption. Details on how to apply for these can be found on our [Meal Pattern Components](#) webpage.

SFAs are not required to meet the Sodium Target 2 until 2020. The delayed time table provides SFAs and the school nutrition industry the certainty and predictability they need to make appropriate plans for meeting sodium targets. SFAs are still required to meet Sodium Target 1. The SNT is available to provide any needed technical assistance in developing menus that are low in sodium and appealing to students.

### **Special Dietary Needs**

The USDA published the 2017 Edition of the [Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meal Programs](#) in July 2017, which can be found on our [Special Dietary Needs](#) website. In order to operate the USDA Child Nutrition Programs, SFAs enter into an agreement with the DPI SNT. As part of this agreement, SFAs must comply with the USDA regulation *Non Discrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance*. This includes ensuring children with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP).

### **Updated Meal Pattern for Pre-K and Childcare Programs Participating in the NSLP and SBP, Effective October 1, 2017**

Do you serve meals to children in Pre-K or childcare programs under the NSLP and the SBP? Beginning on **October 1, 2017**, the updated Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern will replace the current meal pattern options for SFAs serving infants and/or children ages 1-5 years old and not yet in kindergarten. SFAs that serve infants and/or children in these age groups will need to follow the updated CACFP meal pattern. The CACFP meal pattern requirements were updated to better align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, as required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. For more information about the CACFP meal pattern that replaces the current options, visit the [Infants and Preschool in the NSLP and SBP](#) webpage.

### **USDA Foods**

For SFAs receiving USDA Foods through participation in the NSLP, the DPI's USDA Foods section of the SNT sends out a packet that provides detailed information regarding Wisconsin's USDA Foods Program at the beginning of each school year. This packet includes information such as general program policies and procedures, delivery service and receiving procedures, and other USDA Foods Program updates. For more information, please review the Wisconsin USDA Food's *School Year 2017-2018 Back-to-School Packet*, which was mailed to participating SFAs earlier this month. The cover letter from this packet can be found on the [USDA Foods Mailings and Notices](#) webpage.



### **Reports Reminder**

The SNT has posted online a variety of annual calendars to help SFAs with report deadlines and reminders. Various Calendars of School Nutrition Program Requirements can be found on our [Calendar of School Nutrition Requirements](#) webpage.



### **Site-Based Claiming**

Starting October 3, the SNT online claiming system will only accept site-based claims. Site-based claiming collects school level claim data for each participating school listed on Schedule A of the online contract, which then pulls into a final consolidated claim. Please refer to the *Site-based Online Claims Manual* located on our [Claiming](#) webpage for detailed instructions on how the claims need to be submitted starting in October 2017.

### **Team Nutrition Printed Resources**

Wisconsin Team Nutrition has a variety of school nutrition resources available for schools to request at no cost. These resources include nutrition education curriculum guides, cookbooks, and reimbursable meal dry-erase signage. Order copies of the resources using the [Team Nutrition Resource Order Form](#).



### **School Wellness Summit**

Wisconsin Team Nutrition is excited to host the sixth school wellness summit on March 8, 2018, in Madison at the Alliant Energy Center. The summit will offer breakout sessions in school nutrition, physical activity, and wellness policy. Agenda and registration information will be posted on the [Team Nutrition](#) webpage in November.



### **Professional Standards**

The Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs rule requires ongoing training hours for school nutrition professionals, whether the SFA operates the school nutrition program or contracts with a food service management company. SFA-level compliance with the professional standards will now be included as part of the AR. Each SFA must have someone designated as the School Nutrition Director.

- During the AR, the DPI consultant will review training topics for each staff member and the process of tracking the completed hours annually.
- Please note, there are minimum hiring standards of the School Nutrition Director according to the SFA's enrollment in the areas of education and food safety, and then followed up with continuing education. If the SFA has a new director, since July 2015, please contact a DPI School Nutrition consultant to determine if the proper hiring standards have been met.
- For more information, refer to the [SNT Professional Standards](#) webpage

### **Training Opportunities**

Please frequently check our [training](#) webpage to view upcoming training opportunities as well as recorded webcasts.

### **Program Promotion**

The goal of our social media campaign is to highlight some of the wonderful things that are happening in schools throughout Wisconsin. We hope to assist in increasing participation through sharing great ideas and best practices. Check out videos that showcase best practices happening in SFAs around Wisconsin on our [Wisconsin School Meals Rock!](#) webpage. Please contact the SNT if you have a great story to share.

### **#WISchoolMealsRock**

We encourage you to use the hashtag #WISchoolMealsRock when posting to your Facebook and Twitter accounts. We also hope that you will tag us on your posts as well. This can be done by tagging us at WI DPI School Nutrition Programs on Facebook and using the handle @WisDPI\_SNP on Twitter. This is a great way to share new recipes, photos of your menu items for the day, best practices, etc. If you are interested in starting an account or would like some tips on creating a powerful profile or crafting the perfect message for your audience, please contact Rebekkah Plano, Public Health Nutritionist at [rebekkah.plano@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:rebekkah.plano@dpi.wi.gov).

### **School Nutrition Skills Development Courses (SNSDC)**

The SNT sent out an email with a link for those who attended the SNSDC courses over the summer (June-August). If you participated in one or many of our classes, we would greatly appreciate any and all feedback. Feedback is requested by September 15, 2017.



### **Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch:**

Help celebrate National Farm to School Month (October) by crunching into locally and regionally grown apples at NOON on Thursday, October 12! This can be done at schools, early learning care settings, hospitals, or other organizations in Wisconsin as well as throughout other states in the Great Lakes region including Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. There are so many ways to Crunch! Share your creative and fun ideas for how to celebrate. Be sure to register on the [UW Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems Apple Crunch](#) webpage and be counted toward our region's goal of ONE MILLION CRUNCHES this year! Use the hashtags: #F2SMonth and #GreatAppleCrunch when posting on social media.



### **Potential Fraud Attempt: Restaurant owner receives phony health inspector call**

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has received a report from a restaurant owner stating they received a call from someone claiming to be with “the State” attempting to schedule an inspection and requesting a checking account number or a credit card number.

DATCP does not request financial information over the phone or schedule an inspection of your establishment. Should you receive this call, do not answer or engage the caller – just hang up. Do not provide the financial information requested.

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To file a complaint, visit the [Consumer Protection Bureau](#), send an email to [datcpholine@wisconsin.gov](mailto:datcpholine@wisconsin.gov), or call 1-800-422-7128.