



STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

STATE GUIDANCE

To: Child Nutrition Programs
From: Colleen Fillmore, Ph.D., R.D., L.D., Child Nutrition Programs Director
Date: August 27, 2009
Subject: Extending Categorical Eligibility to Additional Children in a Household
Policy Memo SP-38-2009, CACFP-08-2009 and SFSP-07-2009

This memorandum modifies the policy related to categorical eligibility for free meals or free milk for children who are members of a household receiving assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) or the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program. USDA is modifying the policy to increase access to the child nutrition programs and to streamline the eligibility process.

Beginning in School Year 2009-2010, for direct certification with SNAP, FDPIR or TANF and applications with case numbers for these programs, all children in the family, as defined in 7 CFR 245.2, are categorically eligible for free meals. To the extent possible, the local educational agency (LEA) must extend eligibility for free meals to all children in what would be considered a family for the purposes of applying for free or reduced price meals or free milk. If the LEA does not have an application as a reference, it may be able to use school district enrollment records to determine additional children who are part of the family who were not identified through direct certification. For households submitting applications with case numbers for some, but not all, of their children, the LEA must certify all children as categorically eligible for free meals or milk. Any income information on the application is disregarded. Further, for purposes of carry-over into the new school year, categorical eligibility must, to the extent feasible, be extended to newly enrolled siblings.

This memorandum supersedes the policy provided in the January 2008 edition of the Eligibility Manual for School Meals concerning categorical eligibility. USDA will be updating the manual. These policies extend to the Child and Adult Care Food Program and to the Summer Food Service Program when applications are taken. Please note that these policies do not extend to other categorically eligible categories such as Head Start or children enrolled in the Migrant Education Program. For further information call the Child Nutrition Division at 208-332-6820