

Bureau of Nutrition and Health Services

2012-2013 VERIFICATION INFORMATION

Verification Training Webinar, September 20, 2012, 1-4pm

Verification is the confirmation of eligibility for free and reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program.

Verification is to be completed by School Food Authorities (LEAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program. Residential Child Care Institutions that **have day students** must complete verification on applications submitted by day students. Residential Child Care Institutions that **do not have day students** and schools participating only in the Special Milk Program **are exempt**.

Verification must include confirmation:

- of income as reported on the Iowa Eligibility Application OR
- the child(ren) inclusion in a household currently participating in the Food Assistance program OR
- the child(ren) receives FIP (Family Investment Program) benefits.

VERIFICATION IS NOT CONDUCTED WHEN STUDENTS ARE DIRECTLY CERTIFIED.

DUE DATES FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2012-2013

- **October 1, 2012:** Verification sample size must be determined. See “Sample Selection,” below.
- **November 15, 2012:** Verification activities must be completed. Verification of an individual application is complete when a household’s eligibility is verified, or changed to a higher benefit level, or a letter of adverse action has been sent informing the household those benefits will be reduced or terminated.
- **December 1, 2012:** Verification Summary Report will be available on the CNP 2000 system.
- **January 11, 2013:** Verification Summary Report must be completed on the CNP 2000 system. The December and subsequent claims for reimbursement will be held if the Verification Summary Report is not completed on the CNP 2000 system by this date.

Households selected for verification who receive benefits based on income must submit documents to support the amount of income reported. If the household reports income from wages, last year’s tax form is NOT adequate documentation. Wage income must be substantiated by current payroll information. Households reporting self-employment may document income with tax forms. Refer to the worksheet on the back of the Iowa Eligibility Application.

Households selected for verification that receives Food Assistance (Food Stamps) or FIP (Family Investment Program) must provide a valid Letter of Decision.

DIRECT VERIFICATION

LEAs may utilize the E-LookUp on the CNP2000 system to directly verify eligibility for FIP or Food Assistance benefits. If the student cannot be directly verified using E-LookUp, the LEA may contact the local office of DHS and request direct verification. Use the DHS Direct Verification Form on the Form Download section of the CNP 2000. **NOTE: direct verification of benefits may be used to confirm benefit status only.** If the LEA is notified by DHS that the household is not receiving benefits, the LEA must contact the household and request verification documents. Keep in mind the deadlines above when deciding to use direct verification. **Do NOT verify households that have been directly certified.**

LEAs are required to provide all households selected for verification with a telephone number to call for verification assistance. The call must be free for all households in the LEA. The LEA may establish a toll-free number or allow households to reverse charges or set up local numbers for each calling area in the school district. The household must be able to contact a school or LEA official who can directly assist or can refer the caller to a specific person (such as an interpreter) for help. Households who were not able to obtain assistance during their initial call must have a follow-up contact by a school or LEA official.

SAMPLE SELECTION

LEAs are required to select a portion of their applications (a “sample”) for verification.

Verifying all applications is no longer allowed.

Section 9(b)(3) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) was amended by the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (PL 108-265), to specify verification sample sizes for LEAs. **The NSLA now establishes an exact sample size for routine annual verification. LEAs must verify the EXACT NUMBER of applications as calculated by the sample formula and NO MORE.** Decimal or fractional portions in sample size calculations must be **ROUNDED UP.**

Important

Verification for cause should be conducted if the LEA has reason to believe that the information provided on the application is in error. Verification for cause is in addition to regular verification requirements. Results of verification for cause are **NOT** reported on the verification summary report.

Important

Samples may be selected using one of these two methods:

Standard Sample:

This method is available to all LEAs. LEAs must select 3% of applications subject to verification OR 3000 applications, whichever is less. The applications selected must be taken from “**error prone**” applications. **Error prone** applications are those in which the total income is within \$100 monthly or \$1200 annually of the upper limit of income eligibility for free or reduced price meal benefits. LEAs wishing to use the standard sample may want to mark or separate error prone applications during the application approval process to make selection easier. If there are not enough error prone applications to make up the required sample size, LEAs must select additional applications randomly from all applications subject to verification to make up the difference. **ALL FRACTIONS MUST BE ROUNDED UP.**

EXAMPLE: 200 applications subject to verification, with 5 of the 200 error prone and 40 eligible based on participation in the Food Assistance program or FIP. The LEA is required to verify 3%, or 6 applications. The LEA selects the 5 error prone applications and one other application from the remaining 195 applications.

Important

Alternate Sample Method:

This method is ONLY available to LEAs that

1. had a non-response rate less than 20% during verification in school year 11-12. Non-response rate is the percentage of applications selected for verification that did not provide information to the LEA; OR
2. have more than 20,000 children approved for free or reduced price meals by application. Children approved by direct certification are not included. Contact the State Agency if you believe this applies to your LEA.

ALTERNATE SAMPLE CALCULATION

Calculate your LEA's non-response rate using this formula:

$\# \text{ applications selected that did not respond} \div \text{total \# applications selected} \times 100 = \text{non-response rate}$

Alternate samples may be selected by one of these two methods:

1. **Alternate Method One:** LEAs must randomly select 3% of all applications approved as of October 1 of the school year or 3000 applications, whichever is less.

EXAMPLE: 200 applications subject to verification, with 5 of the 200 error prone and 40 eligible based on participation in the Food Assistance program or FIP. The LEA may select 3% (or 6) applications randomly from all 200.

OR

2. **Alternate Method Two:** LEAs must select 1% or 1000 (whichever is less) of all applications approved as of October 1 of the school year, selected from error prone applications AND 0.5% or 500 applications (whichever is less) of applications approved based on participation in the Food Assistance program or FIP. **ALL FRACTIONS MUST BE ROUNDED UP.**

EXAMPLE: 200 applications subject to verification, with 5 of the 200 error prone and 40 eligible based on participation in the Food Assistance program or FIP. The LEA may select 1% of 200 (or 2) from the error prone applications and 0.5% of 40 (or 0.2 applications, rounded up to 1) from the 40 eligible based on participation in the Food Assistance program or FIP.

ICAVES

ICAVES will help you to correctly select your sample size. It is available in the Form Download section of CNP2000. Click on ZIP to open this tool as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The instructions are on each page. Click on the Verification tab across the bottom. The last page is a tracking form that will help keep the process on track and simplify the completion of the Verification Summary Report.

LEA's must NOT verify MORE than or LESS than the sample size.

OTHER POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. Foster children are NOT included in the verification sample.
2. Directly certified, homeless and migrant households are NOT included in the sample size for verification.
3. Carry-over applications are NOT included in the sample size. Carry-over applications are those that are carried over for up to 30 operating days from the

- prior school year or until a new application is filed, whichever is earlier. When determining the sample size, only count applications **received and on file in the current school year on October 1.**
4. LEAs may decline to verify up to five percent of the verification sample if the LEA determines that the household is “frail.” The LEA should consider factors such as household stability and communication difficulties when exercising this option. Applications removed from the verification process in this way must be replaced with another application.
 5. Households may provide documentation of income for any point in time between the month prior to the date of application and the date the household is required to provide documentation.
 6. If a household selected for verification moves out of the district before verification is completed, another application must be selected to replace the household that moved.
 7. Before starting the verification process, the LEA must ensure that the applications selected for verification were correctly determined. The “Confirming Official” is someone other than the individual making the initial determination “Determining Official” who must review the application to ensure its accuracy. The signature of the Confirming Official and the date that confirmation was completed must be noted in Part 5 of the Iowa Eligibility Application.
 8. LEAs are required to provide households selected for verification with a toll-free telephone number to call for verification assistance. The LEA may establish a toll-free number, allow households to reverse charges, or set up local numbers for each calling area in the school district. The household must be able to contact a school or LEA official who can directly assist or who can refer the caller to a specific person (such as an interpreter) for help. Households that were not able to obtain assistance during their initial call must be called back by a school or LEA official.
 9. **The LEA is required to contact households selected for verification that do not respond to requests for verification documentation.** The “Follow-Up Official” must make at least one contact to households that do not respond to verification request. The signature of the Follow-Up Official and the date of the contact must be noted in Part 5 of the Iowa Eligibility Application. NOTE: LEAs are not required to make repeated contacts to complete verification. When making follow-up requests, keep in mind the November 15 completion date and set realistic deadlines for information.

FORMS

Prototype forms for notification of verification selection (Prototype III) and verification results (Prototype VI) are in the Form Download section of the CNP 2000 system (English & Spanish versions). Click on ZIP to open these forms as Microsoft Word documents. They are also available on the Bureau website: http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=369&Itemid=2956 . LEAs that wish to print these forms without change on school letterhead are NOT required to submit the forms to the Bureau. **LEAs that wish to modify or amend these forms must submit them to the Bureau for approval.**

Other forms are available in the Optional Forms file of the Form Download section of the CNP 2000 system. **Contact your consultant if you have questions.**