



# STATE OF IOWA

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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DATE: May 2, 2014

TO: Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)  
Center-based Institutions

FROM: Robin Holz, CACFP Lead Consultant - Centers  
Bureau of Nutrition and Health Services

SUBJECT: Effective Date of Free or Reduced Price Meal Eligibility Determinations

This purpose of this memo is to clarify the flexibility available to organizations that participate in the CACFP for establishing the effective date of eligibility for Program participants determined to be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Participants have generally been certified eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits based on the date the household application is approved by the organization. However, if the organization chooses, it may establish the date an application is submitted by the household as the effective date of eligibility, rather than the date the official approves it. The effective date can be retroactive to the first of the month as long as the participant was in care at that time.

This flexibility applies to eligibility determinations made through the application process only (not based on information shared by another Child Nutrition Program or Child Welfare Agency), and only to complete applications containing all required information at the time of submission.

Organizations must have a method to document the date the application was submitted, such as a date stamp. If an organization that charges separately for meals elects to use this flexibility, and delayed approving an application determined to be eligible for free or reduced-price meals, it must refund any money paid by or on behalf of the participant for reimbursable meals served during the period between submission of the application and the eligibility determination, including forgiving accrued debt.

Use of this flexibility is at the organization's discretion; however, an organization implementing this flexibility must notify their State agency consultant at the time of a review or as requested. Organizations exercising this flexibility must do so consistently for all participants.

If you have questions, contact [robin.holz@iowa.gov](mailto:robin.holz@iowa.gov). (515)281-3484.