

## Eligibility 101

Determining Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals  
Deb Linderblood, MS, RD, LD.  
Iowa Department of Education

## Objectives

- For new managers to:
  - Understand the variety of ways that students get free or reduced price meals
  - Be familiar with forms that are available on IowaCNP
  - Realize the importance of student benefit levels being confidential

## Who Determines Eligibility?

- Is referred to as the Determining Official
  - Food Service Director
  - Authorized Representative
  - Business Manager
  - Other



## Determining Official



- How many of you are the Determining Official?

## Training

- Minimum of 4 hours per year
- If over 20 hours per week is spent performing School Nutrition duties more training would be required
  - Application Approval & Direct Certification Webinars
    - Every year in July
  - Verification Training
    - Every year in September
  - Verification Report Training
    - Every year in October

## How It All Begins



- Near the beginning of each school year
  - Public must be notified that free and reduced price meals are available
    - Local news media
    - Unemployment office
    - Any major employers who are contemplating large layoffs
  - Sample Public Media Release in IowaCNP

## Information Letters

- Must be distributed to the households of children attending the school
- Informs families about the Child Nutrition Programs and that free or reduced price meals may be available to children
- There are requirements for what must be in the letter
  - State Agency develops a prototype letter each year
    - Available in IowaCNP
    - Schools add the name of their school, meal prices and contact information

## How Do Students Get Free or Reduced Price Meals?

- All children in households receiving benefits from Food Assistance (FA) , or the Family Investment Program (FIP), are eligible for free meals.
- Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.
- Children participating in their school's Head Start program are eligible for free meals.

## How Do Students Get Free or Reduced Price Meals?

- Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
- Children may receive free or reduced price meals if their household's income is at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs) which are revised yearly.

## Food Assistance (FA) or Family Investment Program (FIP)

- These households can be identified by:
  - Direct Certification
  - Free Lunch Letter
  - Case number on an application

## Direct Certification



- Mid-July the Department of Education (DE) posts to the portal the new school year's direct certification list
  - Late spring, school districts submit to the DE in Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI) students enrolled in their district
  - The Department of Human Services submits a list of households who receive Food Assistance or FIP
  - The DE matches the students on these two lists and produces a direct certification list for each school that reports in SRI
- Throughout the school year there are two direct certification lists posted each month

## Potential and Migrant List

- SFAs should also print
  - Potential list identifies siblings
  - This is often where you will find pre-school and/or kindergarten students
  - Migrant students are identified through the DE
    - Free status does not transfer to other children in the household unless they too have been declared as having migrant status

## ELookUp

- For non-public schools and RCCIs that do not have a direct certification list
- Also for newly transferred students
- Use to look up case numbers on an application
- Allows schools to search for individual students/residents
  - If found, they are a student/resident from a household that receives Food Assistance or FIP
  - They will receive free meal benefits
  - Are classified as directly certified



## Free Meals!!!!

- All students who are directly certified automatically receive free meal benefits
  - These households do not need to complete an application
  - Eligibility for free meals is extended to all children in a household if any member has been identified

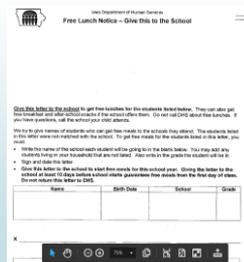


## Notification



- The school must notify the households about eligibility established through direct certification
  - Child is eligible for free meals
  - No further application is necessary
  - An explanation of extended eligibility and how to notify the school of any additional children in the household who are not listed on the notification
  - How to notify the school if free meal benefits are not wanted

## Free Lunch Letter



## Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals

- Schools are not required to provide applications to parents when the household is directly certified
  - If the distribution method is not individualized, the school must provide applications to all households
  - Must be accompanied by instructional materials
  - State Agency puts a prototype application and instruction on IowaCNP each spring
    - Spanish available on IowaCNP
    - Twelve translations are available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/translated-applications>



## Iowa Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Milk

## Eligibility Through An Application

An application may be used to:

1. Report a case number
2. Identify a foster child
3. Identify a homeless, migrant or runaway child
4. Document household size and income



## Children in a Household

**2016-2017 Iowa Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals** (IOWA) (Version of 8/16/16)

Complete one application per household. Please use a new form a person. This application cannot be prepared unless complete information is submitted.

**STEP 1 List ALL Household Members who are infants, children, and students up to and including grade 12. If more spaces are required for additional names, attach the application included.**

Child's First Name	MC	Child's Last Name	Age	Child's School	Grade	Sex	DOB
	<input type="checkbox"/>						
	<input type="checkbox"/>						
	<input type="checkbox"/>						
	<input type="checkbox"/>						
	<input type="checkbox"/>						



## Food Assistance Participation

**STEP 2 Do any Household Members (including you) currently participate in one or more of the following assistance programs: Food Assistance, FIP, or FOPM?**

Yes  No  (If you answered "No" to any of these questions, you do not need to complete this step.)

Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Household Member with Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Guidance on Case Numbers

- Case numbers are normally 10 characters long
- The first character may be a number or a letter and the rest are numbers sequenced like this:
  - Example: A00000-00-0
  - Another Example: 000000-00-0-0

## Household Size and Income

**STEP 3 Report Income for ALL Household Members (Step 3 is step if you answered "Yes" to STEP 2.)**

**A. Child Income**

**B. All Adult Household Members (Including yourself)**

**C. Total Household Income**

**D. List Total (Step 3) of Adult Household Member (A-D)**



## Income Eligibility Guidelines

State of Iowa  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
IOWA APPLICATION FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS  
(For Schools Only - Starting 08/01/2016)  
810-281-6339

(Internal use only - do not distribute to parents)

**INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES (2016)**  
**Effective 7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017**

Household Size	Free Meals			Reduced Price Meals		
	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
2	\$14,400	\$1,200	\$280	\$15,000	\$1,250	\$285
3	\$18,000	\$1,500	\$360	\$18,750	\$1,562	\$365
4	\$21,600	\$1,800	\$420	\$22,500	\$1,875	\$425
5	\$25,200	\$2,100	\$480	\$26,250	\$2,187	\$485
6	\$28,800	\$2,400	\$540	\$30,000	\$2,500	\$545
7	\$32,400	\$2,700	\$600	\$33,750	\$2,812	\$605
8	\$36,000	\$3,000	\$660	\$37,500	\$3,125	\$665
9	\$39,600	\$3,300	\$720	\$41,250	\$3,437	\$725
10	\$43,200	\$3,600	\$780	\$45,000	\$3,750	\$785

## Contact Information and Adult Signature

**STEP 4 Contact Information and Adult Signature**

For all programs we require a signature for the administrator or parent/guardian. All the contact information below will be shared with the school district. If you are a parent/guardian, please provide your contact information for the school district. If you are a school administrator, please provide your contact information for the school district.

Name of school administrator: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of adult completing the form: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of adult completing the form: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## For Administrative Use Only

**DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE. FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY.**

Annual income (combined) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Family size \_\_\_\_\_ Children's health insurance status \_\_\_\_\_

Household income:  Below \$12,000  \$12,000 - \$15,000  \$15,000 - \$20,000  \$20,000 - \$25,000  \$25,000 - \$30,000  \$30,000 - \$35,000  \$35,000 - \$40,000  \$40,000 - \$45,000  \$45,000 - \$50,000  \$50,000 - \$55,000  \$55,000 - \$60,000  \$60,000 - \$65,000  \$65,000 - \$70,000  \$70,000 - \$75,000  \$75,000 - \$80,000  \$80,000 - \$85,000  \$85,000 - \$90,000  \$90,000 - \$95,000  \$95,000 - \$100,000  Over \$100,000

Application status:  Complete  Incomplete  Over income limits

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Racial and Ethnic Identities

**OPTIONAL Children's Racial and Ethnic Identities**

We are required to ask for information about our children's race and ethnicity. This information is important and helps to make sure we are fully serving our community. Responding to this section is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility to free or reduced price meals.

Ethnicity (check one):  Hispanic or Latino  Not Hispanic or Latino

Race (check one or more):  American Indian or Alaskan Native  Asian  Black or African American  Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  White



## hawk-i

**Low-Cost Health Insurance for Children**

If your children do not have health insurance, many families getting free or reduced price meals can also get free or low cost health insurance for their children. This free program, called **hawk-i**, allows you to share your free or reduced price meal application information with **Medicaid & hawk-i**, the State's voluntary insurance program for children. Private schools, BC/CCs and children's hospitals may receive information from **hawk-i** to determine if you are eligible for free or low cost health insurance and contact you. They are not allowed to use the information from your free and reduced price application for any other purpose or to share with any other entity or program. You are not required to allow us to share this information, and will not affect your child's eligibility for free or reduced price meals. **If you do NOT want your information shared with Medicaid or hawk-i, you must tell us by completing the information below.** If you want further information, you may call **hawk-i** at 1.800.527.6802. Also, if you are **already** receiving Medicaid or **hawk-i**, please sign below. This will avoid another contact.

My program below indicates  YES  NO  I don't know

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

- In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.
- Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, accessible website, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.
- To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9922. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:
  - (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
  - (2) Fax: (202) 696-7442; or
  - (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).
 This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## Supplemental Worksheet

**2016-2017 Free Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Optional Supplemental Worksheet**

**Additional Children in Your Household**

Child's Name	DOB	Relationship	Enrolled in School	Enrolled in Daycare	Enrolled in Head Start	Enrolled in Pre-K	Enrolled in Kindergarten	Enrolled in 1st Grade	Enrolled in 2nd Grade	Enrolled in 3rd Grade	Enrolled in 4th Grade	Enrolled in 5th Grade	Enrolled in 6th Grade	Enrolled in 7th Grade	Enrolled in 8th Grade	Enrolled in 9th Grade	Enrolled in 10th Grade	Enrolled in 11th Grade	Enrolled in 12th Grade

**Additional Adults in Your Household**

Name	Relationship	Age	Enrolled in School	Enrolled in Daycare	Enrolled in Head Start	Enrolled in Pre-K	Enrolled in Kindergarten	Enrolled in 1st Grade	Enrolled in 2nd Grade	Enrolled in 3rd Grade	Enrolled in 4th Grade	Enrolled in 5th Grade	Enrolled in 6th Grade	Enrolled in 7th Grade	Enrolled in 8th Grade	Enrolled in 9th Grade	Enrolled in 10th Grade	Enrolled in 11th Grade	Enrolled in 12th Grade

**Optional Member Information**

## Notification

- If a household is approved for free or reduced price meals, they must be notified either in writing or verbally of their eligibility status.
- Households with children who are denied benefits must be provided with written notification of the denial.
  - The notification must advise the household of:
    - the reason for denial of benefits;
    - right to appeal;
    - instructions on how to appeal; and
    - the ability to re-apply for benefits at any time during the school year.

## Appeals



- Households may appeal either the denial of benefits or the level of benefits
  - Must be given 10 calendar days written advance notice of the change
  - If they appeal, the school must continue to provide the original benefit status until a determination is made

## Appeal Decision

- Households must be notified in writing of the decision following an appeal
- If the benefits must be reduced, the reduction must take place no later than 10 operating days after the decision is made
- If the benefits are increased, the increase must take place within 3 operating days after the decision is made

## Household Does Not Appeal

- If the household does not request an appeal during the 10 calendar day advance notice period, benefits must be reduced or terminated no later than 10 operating days after the notice period.



## Verification

- Completed each October
- Is a confirmation of eligibility
- Only required when eligibility is determined through the application process
- Households are selected based on a sample pool of approved applications on file as of October 1st



## Verification Report

- All SFAs must report the results of verification activities
  - RCCIs without day students are exempt from verification but still must complete the report



## Reporting Requirements

- Verification Report requires reporting:
  - Students directly certified
  - Students directly certified through other programs
  - Letter method
  - Categorically Free based on providing a case number
  - Free based on household size and income
  - Reduced based on household size and income

## Organization is the Key

- Print and keep direct cert, potential and ELookUp lists together
- Keep current applications divided into:
  - Free based on a case number
  - Free based on income
  - Reduced based on income
- If a household turns in an application and then becomes directly certified, mark application "DC", date and store separately from other applications.



## Calendar

- Posted yearly on IowaCNP (NSLP040)
  - Contains due dates for:
    - Claim submissions
    - Verification deadlines
    - *hawk-i* submission
    - As well as FFVP & SFSP applications
  - Dates of webinars

## Confidentiality

- Information provided on the application is to only be used for determining eligibility for meal and milk benefits and verification of eligibility
  - Disclosing the eligibility status for other purposes requires informing the household
    - In some cases, must obtain parental consent prior to disclosure



## Preventing Overt Identification

- SFAs must assure that a child's eligibility status is not disclosed at any point in the process of providing free or reduced price meals
  - Need to know
  - Waiver for specific school fees
    - Space on the Application Supplemental Worksheet
    - Space on the State Agency Prototype Notification Letter to use for Directly Certified households

## USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

- In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.
- Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.
- To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.azusa.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.azusa.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and of any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA, give provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:
  - (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
  - (2) Fax: (202) 696-7442; or
  - (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).
- This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Thank You



Questions???

- Deb Linderblood
  - [deb.linderblood@iowa.gov](mailto:deb.linderblood@iowa.gov)
  - 515-281-5663

