

Louisiana Believes

**Processing Free and Reduced
Meal Applications
SY 2018-19**

TOPICS

- Collection Officials
- Application Distribution
- Application Deadlines
- Categories of Meal Benefit Applications and Complete Applications
- Calculating Income and Determining Meal Benefit Status
- Transfer of Eligibility

COLLECTION OFFICIALS

Four Types of Collection Officials

- Determining Official
- Pre-Verifying (Confirming) Official
 - Verifying (Follow-up) Official
 - Hearing Official

THE DETERMINING OFFICIAL

- Responsible for determining the status of all free/reduced (F/R) applications submitted
- The status determination is based on information reported on the F/R meal application
- Large SFAs may have more than one Determining Official

THE DETERMINING OFFICIAL

- Writing on the application is ok (use a different color ink) and avoid using sticky notes
- Mark each applications with date and with “received as is” if damaged or has scratch outs
- Date stamps are often used
- Label application with “EP” if error prone for easy future reference

THE DETERMINING OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

- The name of the Determining Official(s) is listed on the Collection Officials form submitted each school year
- During a review, the State Agency will verify that the persons listed as the Determining Officials are actually the persons performing those duties

The PRE-VERIFYING OFFICIAL

- Responsible for validating status determination made by the Determining Official
- Cannot be the Determining Official
- Can be reported as a computer in systems that utilize a computerized application approval process

The pre-verification of applications is necessary only for applications selected for Verification

THE VERIFYING OFFICIAL

- Responsible for the annually-required verification process:
 - Selection process
 - Notification of selection
 - Follow-up
 - Verification of submitted information
 - Notification of results of verification
- The Verifying Official can be the Determining OR the Pre-Verifying Official

Remember: Only applications *selected* for verification require a signature from the Pre-Verifying (Confirming) Official and the Verifying Official. However, all apps (or batch of apps) require a signature from the Determining Official

THE HEARING OFFICIAL

- Responsible for reviewing a household's challenge of a status determination
- Should be independent of any activity involved in the application approval or verification process

APPLICATION DISTRIBUTION

- Each year an application packet must be distributed to the households of all enrolled children
- Application packets may not be distributed at the end of school for the next school year
- Applications cannot be accepted or processed prior to July 1

APPLICATION DEADLINES

- Once a complete and accurate application has been submitted, eligibility must be determined by the SFA within 10 operating days
- Meal benefit status from the previous school year remains in effect for the first 30 operating days of the new school year
- If an application has not been submitted by the end of the 30 operating days, that student must be changed to paid status

CATEGORIES OF MEAL BENEFIT APPLICATIONS

- SNAP, TANF (FITAP), or FDPIR on Household Application
- Homeless, Migrant, or Runaway Child on Household Application
- Foster Child on Household Application
- Income-Based Application
 - Zero Income Application

Items in red with asterisk indicate required information for applications to be considered complete

SNAP, FITAP, OR FDPIR ON HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION

- Households receiving benefits from assistance programs (SNAP, FITAP, or FDPIR) must list a case number on the application
- SFAs should review the DC list to determine if any applications with case numbers can be matched with children on the DC list:
 - If a match is found, the application must be disregarded, the family must be placed on the DC list, and eligibility is extended to all children in household
 - If no match is found, SFA can contact household for further clarification OR verify application for cause

SNAP, FITAP, OR FDPIR ON HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION

Step 1:

- Complete the **names of all children*** in the household, include all children up to and including grade 12
- Complete the grade of each child if applicable
- Check “Yes or No” as to whether the child is a student

SNAP, FITAP, OR FDPIR ON HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION

Step 2: Provide the **case number*** for SNAP, FITAP, or FDPIR

Step 3: Skip

Step 4: Provide contact information and the **adult completing the form signs*** to certify that that all information is true and completely reported

Optional:

- Children's Racial and Ethnic Identities
- LaCHIP: A check mark and signature must be provided in this section if the parent does not want to share application information with the LaCHIP Program

HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY CHILD ON HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION

- Households with homeless, migrant, or runaway children (Other Source Categorically Eligible) must indicate the appropriate status on the application (check box)
- Only the children designated as homeless, migrant, or runaway on the application may receive free benefits
 - Their free status is NOT shared with other household members
- SFA must confirm the child's status before meal benefits can be provided

HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY CHILD ON HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION

Step 1:

- Complete the **names of all children*** in the household, include all children up to and including grade 12
- Complete the grade of each child if applicable
- Check “Yes or No” as to whether the child is a student
- Check the **applicable box for homeless, migrant, or runaway child***

HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY CHILD ON HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION

Step 2: Provide the case number for SNAP, FITAP, or FDPIR (skip step 3) or leave blank

Step 3: Report the child's and all adult household members' income and frequency, number of household members, and the last four digits of the primary wage earner's social security number (check box if no SSN is available)

Step 4: Provide contact information (phone number or email is preferable but not mandatory) and the **adult completing the form signs*** to certify that that all information is true and completely reported

Optional:

- Children's Racial and Ethnic Identities
- LaCHIP: A check mark and signature must be provided in this section if the parent does not want to share application information with the LaCHIP Program

FOSTER CHILD ON HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION

- Foster children are listed with other household members
- Only the children designated as foster on the application may receive free benefits
 - Their free status is NOT shared with other household members
- Foster children may be included in the total household number count if the foster family chooses to also apply for benefits for other non-foster children

FOSTER CHILD ON HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION

Step 1:

- Complete the **names of all children (including foster child's name*)** in the household, include all children up to and including grade 12
- Complete the grade of each child if applicable
- Check “Yes or No” as to whether the child is a student
- Check the **box next to Foster Child for the appropriate child***

FOSTER CHILD ON HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION

Step 2: Provide the case number for SNAP, FITAP, or FDPIR (skip step 3) or leave blank

Step 3: Report the child's and all adult household members' income and frequency, number of household members, and the last four digits of the primary wage earner's social security number (check box if no SSN is available)

Step 4: Provide contact information (phone number or email is preferable but not mandatory) and the **adult completing the form signs*** to certify that that all information is true and completely reported

Optional:

- Children's Racial and Ethnic Identities
- LaCHIP: A check mark and signature must be provided in this section if the parent does not want to share application information with the LaCHIP Program

INCOME-BASED APPLICATION

- Eligibility is determined by the income received by all household members and the household size
- Each household must provide the total amount of current gross income
- A Zero Income Application is considered an Income-Based Application even though there is no income received

ZERO INCOME APPLICATION

- Household members must be asked to report their status as “zero income” earners (“zero”, “no income”, or “\$0”)
- Any income field left blank must be interpreted as no income to report and the application is still considered complete
- If the SFA has information that the household has intentionally misreported its income, the SFA must verify the application for cause

INCOME-BASED APPLICATIONS

Step 1:

- Complete the **names of all children*** in the household, include all children up to and including grade 12
- Complete the grade of each child, if applicable
- Check “Yes or No” as to whether the child is a student

INCOME-BASED APPLICATIONS

Step 2: Income applications should not have a case number for SNAP, FITAP, or FDPIR

Step 3:

- Report any **child income and frequency*** if applicable
- List **all adult household members' names***
- Report **all adult income and frequency***
- Report total household size
- Provide the **last 4 digits of the social security number for the primary wage earner*** (check box if no SSN is available)

INCOME-BASED APPLICATIONS

Step 4: Provide contact information (phone number or email is preferable but not mandatory) and the **adult completing the form signs*** to certify that that all information is true and completely reported

Optional:

Children's Racial and Ethnic Identities

LaCHIP: A check mark and signature must be provided in this section if the parent does not want to share application information with the LaCHIP Program

SOURCES OF INCOME

- Income Based Applications must include the income for both the children (if applicable) and adults living in the household
- There are both reportable (pg 23) and non-reportable (pg 27-28) sources of income listed in the Eligibility Manual

CALCULATING INCOME

- All reportable income is added together to determine the household's eligibility status
- If income is reported in multiple frequencies (weekly/monthly/bi-weekly/twice per month), the determining official must annualize income

CALCULATING INCOME

- The determining official must use these conversion factors to annualize income:

Weekly = x 52

Monthly = x 12

Bi-Weekly = x 26

Twice per month = x 24

- Cannot “monthalize” income
- If HH provides only annual income, SFA must ensure the amount is an accurate reflection of the HH’s current income

DETERMINING MEAL BENEFIT STATUS

- Use the current year's Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs)
 - July 1 – June 30
 - Found on the CNP website under Memos
- The determination is based on household size and the total reported income on the application

“FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY” SECTION

- The For School Use Only Section is to be completed by the Determining Official
- For scanned applications, a batch form with the Determining Official’s signature is acceptable
- The Pre-Verifying and Verifying Officials will complete this section if the application is selected for verification

TRANSFER OF ELIGIBILITY

Within an SFA

Non-CEP to Non-CEP

- F/R eligibility must transfer from previous school

Non-CEP to CEP

- Receives free meals

CEP to Non-CEP

- Must provide free meals for up to 10 operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made

Between SFAs

Non-CEP to Non-CEP

- F/R eligibility *may* transfer from one SFA to another

Non-CEP to CEP

- Receives free meals

CEP to Non-CEP

- *May* provide free meals for 10 operating days (effective July 1, 2019, *must* provide free meals for 10 operating days)

ELIGIBILITY MANUAL

- Section 2: Basis of Eligibility (pg 19-36)
 - Special Situations for Household Composition
 - Special Situations for Reportable Income
- Section 3: Establishing Eligibility (pg 37-59)
 - Denied Applications
 - Special Situations When Determining Eligibility
 - Reviewing Direct Certification for Assistance Programs
- Section 4: The School Meal Application (pg 60-67)
 - Application Formats

QUESTIONS?

If you have additional questions,
contact the Division of Nutrition Support:
225-342-9611