



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

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**DATE:** August 27, 2012

**MEMO CODE:** SP 46-2012

**SUBJECT:** Revised Edition of *Eligibility Manual for School Meals*

**TO:** Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Directors  
Child Nutrition Programs  
All States

Attached is the August 2012 version of the *Eligibility Manual for School Meals*. This version replaces the October 2011 version and incorporates clarifications requested by State agencies and FNS regional offices as well as applicable guidance issued since the last revision. In addition, we have re-arranged a few areas in several sections and reformatted some areas. Major changes are highlighted throughout the manual. Any additions added for clarification or areas where there have been any adjustments have been highlighted. The highlighted version will remain available online for three months on our website. After that, only an un-highlighted version will be available.

We would like to point out two areas that are now emphasized in this manual. These are complying with requirements related to families with limited English proficiency (LEP) and to preventing overt identification. This manual incorporates the policies and procedures found in guidance issued this year on these areas (see below). The manual serves as a reminder that local educational agencies (LEAs) have a responsibility to assist LEP families as needed and to assure that children eligible for free or reduced price meals are not overtly identified.

We would also like to remind State agencies and LEAs that as of the previous update in October 2011, temporary approvals are no longer applicable because of year long duration of eligibility. The authority for temporary approvals was removed by the final rule, *Applying for Free and Reduced Price Meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program and for Benefits in the Special Milk Program, and Technical Amendments* which was published on October 28, 2011. Please see Part 3, G. "Duration of Eligibility" for more information on the prohibition against temporary approvals.

Please note that additional definitions were added to Part 1, B, "Terms Used in this Manual." For example, definitions of "Homeless," "Migrant" and "Runaway" were added. These definitions are the same as the ones already found in Part 5, "Categorical Eligibility," but they are highlighted for easier reference. In Part 5, "Categorical

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Eligibility,” we added a general explanation regarding acceptable documentation of status and ways to exchange information to facilitate direct certification of other source categorically eligible children.

The recent guidance addressed in this version is:

- SP 02-2012: Verification and Reporting of Foster Children, October 24, 2011
- SP 03-2012: Direct Certification and Zero Benefit Households, October 25, 2011
- SP 06-2012: Applications and Other Household Materials for Limited English Proficient Households, December 9, 2011
- SP 13-2012: Verification for Cause in the School Meals Programs, February 10, 2012
- SP 42-2012: Application and Other Household Materials for Limited English Proficient Households-Reminder, August 16, 2012
- SP 45-2012: Preventing Overt Identification of Children Certified for Free or Reduced Price School Meals, August 24, 2012

State agencies are reminded to distribute this memo and attachment to program operators immediately. LEAs should contact their State agencies for additional information. State agencies may direct any questions concerning this guidance to the appropriate Food and Nutrition Service Regional Office.



Cynthia Long  
Director  
Child Nutrition Division

Attachment