

## Verification Webinar Questions and Answers

The Verification Webinar aired on September 27, 2011. The main objective of the webinar was to provide detailed instructions and guidance to complete the report.

1. Q. Is the Lunchbox an approved automated system?  
A. School Food Services (SFS) does not endorse or approve any computer based system. A list of available Point of Service computer systems is available on the School Food Services website under Computer Software.
2. Q. Once we have completed verification, can we submit our report immediately?  
A. Once the verification process has been completed and all applications are counted on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and all students are counted on October 31<sup>st</sup>, then yes, the Verification Report can be completed.
3. Q. Is there a place to get a copy of all this?  
A. Yes, on the School Food Services website under the Webinars and Workshops button on the left-hand side, select the Verification Report Webinar, the handouts will be on the right-hand side.
4. Q. I just looked on the DESE website under publications and the Verification Guidance is still from 2010.  
A. The 2011 Edition is now available on the SFS website under Publications as well as Verification Information.
5. Q. After receiving an application and entering their status, they call back later with more information. Is that considered 1 or 2 applications?  
A. This would be considered 1 application since additional information is added to the initial application.
6. Q. Does "number of students" include Pre-K?  
A. If the Pre-K students participate in the National School Lunch Program, then yes, they are included in the enrollment. If they do not participate in the National School Lunch Program, do not include them in the enrollment.
7. Q. I've been told that if a child is 18 only that child's income is used to determine the eligibility?  
A. The income of the entire household will determine the eligibility.
8. Q. As a small school will a pull of only one or two be enough?  
A. If you are using verification method Basic or Alternate I (Random) you will verify 3% of the total approved applications. For example you have 10 approved applications;  
 $10 \times .03 = .30$  - Therefore, you will verify one application.  
If using Alternate II (Focused) a **minimum** of one Food Stamp/Temporary Assistance case number application and one error prone income application will be verified.
9. Q. The 30-day drop for our school is October 3rd. Do we count those students on October 1, just like we had applications for them or do we just disregard them?  
A. On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, count the number of applications received for the 2011-2012 school year. The sample pool depends on the number of applications and is not based on the number of students.
10. Q. Are Homeless students considered an extended case categorical like the Direct Cert?  
A. No. This policy only applies to children receiving Food Stamps/Temporary Assistance or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservation (FDPIR) benefits.
11. Q. If a foster child is on the application but not on the DSS list we understand they are categorically eligible. What about the other children in that household on that application?  
A. The other children in the household would be considered categorically eligible based on Food Stamp/Temporary Assistance case number **OR** income depending on what was submitted on the applications (free or reduced price).

12. Q. Should we download our Direct Certification file again before we do our verification?  
A. The October download of Direct Certification will not be available before October 3<sup>rd</sup>.
13. Q. Foster children change homes often, will their meal status change once they are back with their family?  
A. Once a child is certified free, they are free for the entire school year.
14. Q. If you have a foster child that is listed in with a household application do you include them in the number of students that you count on October 31st as income eligible free?  
A. If the foster child is on the list from DSS or has a letter provided by the household from DSS, they will be counted in the Free – Not Subject to Verification category. If they completed an application and do not have documentation they will be counted in the Free – Categorically Eligible category.
15. Q. How do we determine the sample size for basic if you are a new school?  
A. If you are a new LEA then you will complete the Alternate I (random) or Alternate II (Focused).
16. Q. If an application was sent in and was denied then the family sends in a new application and it is approved. Will we count this as one application or two?  
A. It will count as one because only one was approved. Denied applications are not included in the initial count to determine the verification sample size.
17. Q. For residential setting do we just use the number of students we have in our program from the last year up to Oct 31, 2011?  
A. Students will be counted on October 31, 2011.
18. Q. If a family is selected for verification and responds to verification by stating that they will not be providing income or benefit information, how will that application be reported in the results?  
A. The application will be reported in the Did Not Respond – Changed to Paid section of the results because the household did not actually respond with income or benefit information.
19. Q. The LEA can select any method of verification process they want unless the school district is on the list of non-response rates of 20% from the prior school year.  
A. Correct. The Basic Sample list is available on the School Food Services website under Verification Information.
20. Q. When contacting the local Div of Family Services, information was not given due to privacy act. Is this something that they are required to give to us?  
A. Requesting a list of foster children from your local DSS- Children’s Division is a new process. School Food Services and DSS will continue to communicate to local agencies on this issue. Please contact Crystal Wilson, Program Development Specialist, Children’s Division –Central Office (573-522-9306 or [crystal.l.wilson@dss.mo.gov](mailto:crystal.l.wilson@dss.mo.gov)) if you need assistance.
21. Q. Does it matter if they are not related, when you said if one person in the house gets food stamps they all do?  
A. Eligibility will be extended if the student is living with a person receiving Food Stamps/Temporary Assistance or on the Direct Certification list regardless of the relationship.
22. Q. Will it matter if my total student count on Oct 31st is a greater number than the total number of applications on Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>?  
A. The number of students should be greater than the number of applications reported.
23. Q. If you have a family apply after Oct 1 or 31 due to family income changing, they can still apply and receive meal benefits?

- A. Applications can be completed and approved at any time during the school year.
24. Q. Where do we go to see what type of verification is required?  
A. The Basic Sample list and Verification Guidance is available on the School Food Services website under Verification Information.
25. Q. Where we can find info on locating our local social services agency?  
A. <http://dss.mo.gov>
26. Q. If they opt out of filling out the original application is it not considered not replying, is it?  
A. It is the family's option to complete the application only approved applications will be selected for verifications.
27. Q. We have an option in our system to manually enter extended eligibility status. When there is extended eligibility, are the students entered as a Direct Cert student? If extended because of Food Stamps, enter the other student's DCN# or should they be set aside manually as extended eligibility?  
A. If the student is extended eligibility based on Direct Certification, they would be counted in Direct Certification. If a student is extended eligibility based on Food Stamps/Temporary Assistance then the student will be counted in Categorically Eligible.
28. Q. Can you use income tax return as proof of income?  
A. Yes.
29. Q. So if one child is homeless on an application then do we process the application according to the info provided on application for the other students listed?  
A. The other students will have to qualify based on income or Food Stamps/Temporary Assistance case number.
30. Q. If a student transfers out and then returns to a district, should new paperwork be completed? Also if a student was Direct Certified when school started then left and came back are they still Direct Certified?  
A. It is not necessary for them to complete the application again. Once they are approved for free or reduced price meals they should receive them for the entire year.
31. Q. Do we count denied applications?  
A. No.
32. Q. If a family supplies verification materials with its application, can it be included in the 3% random verification?  
A. Yes, however, an LEA cannot require a household to submit income information with the initial application.
33. Q. If a family has children of their own and foster children, do they need two separate applications or do they need to list their children with the foster children?  
A. All household members should be listed on one application.
34. Q. Is it true that we don't have to ask for Social Security information this year?  
A. Correct, the Verification Guidance has been updated to reflect this change.
35. Q. If the family does respond saying that they no longer want to be on free/reduced meals why would it be that we put it on the did not respond? That just makes our non response rate go up higher.  
A. The household didn't respond with income information or proof of Food Stamps/Temporary Assistance participation, which is considered non-response.
36. Q. Would we count residential youths as well as day treatment youths in the total count for our % pull?

- A. You will need to count all approved applications.
37. Q. What if you know info you receive from family for verification is not correct?  
A. The LEA should contact their legal council.
38. Q. Applications counted on October 1 and Students on October 31? Because the verification process could be done by the 31<sup>st</sup>, you want the number after verification is complete?  
A. Report the number of students enrolled on October 31<sup>st</sup>, regardless of whether verification is complete or not.
39. Q. Homeless students are not categorically eligible?  
A. Students who have been certified as homeless by the Homeless Liaison at your LEA are Free – Not Subject to Verification on the Verification Report.
40. Q. Do I put the verification on Oct 1 and 31 on the website somewhere or is this info and the final is reported on website Dec 15?  
A. It is not necessary to complete the verification until after October 31<sup>st</sup> after the students have been counted.
41. Q. If you have 2 separate families living in the same household and only one family receives Food Stamps, would both families receive Free lunches?  
A. Yes.
42. Q. When you said enter the number of buildings participating in NSLP, is that how many points of sale there are? Or how many actual sites we feed?  
A. The number of actual sites you feed. It should match the number of building applications you have on file in the application packet.
43. Q. If a family applied for the lunch program and was approved from the application. Then looking through the Direct Certification list it was found the family should have been a direct Certification should that family be pulled for verification?  
A. No. As soon as it was discovered that family was on the Direct Certification list, the family should have been notified that they were eligible for free meals based on the Direct Certification list and the application is no longer eligible for verification.
44. Q. What type of application does a homeless child use?  
A. If a student has been certified as homeless by the Homeless Liaison, an application is not necessary; they are considered Free – Not Subject to Verification.
45. Q. If a person was on full or reduced at the beginning of school, but should have been on free because of food stamps and have been since the beginning of school, can they be back dated to the beginning of the year?  
A. Benefits are allowed as of the approval date on the application. If additional clarification is needed, contact School Food Services at 573-751-3526.
46. Q. First submitted app qualified as reduced husband lost his job family submitted second application qualified as free. Husband then got a job they have submitted a third application and they no longer qualify for free or reduced meal benefits. Do we change them to full pay or are they free all year?  
A. The family qualifies for free meals as of the approval date of the second application and should continue receiving free meals for the remainder of the school year. However, if the family no longer wants the free meal benefits they may decline benefits.
47. Q. A new direct certification list is due out in October. If a family is on that list but filled out an application prior should they be on the verification list?

- A. The October Direct Certification list will not be available before the verification process starts. If a household has filled out an application you will need to count that application and student(s) in the appropriate category.
48. Q. Can I suggest that on the application there be a spot where we can mark if they have changed categories (went from full to reduced, free to full, etc.) from year to year? It would make it much easier when the verification report is due. This will be my first time doing this and I wish I had've known I would need this info.
- A. The previous year's status is irrelevant when approving applications and during the verification process. If clarification is needed please contact School Food Services at 573-751-3526.
49. Q. I thought income verification documents were to be provided between the month prior to applying and the time the household is required to provide income documentation, how can tax documentation be used?
- A. Tax documentation may be the only income verification for self-employed individuals.
50. Q. What if the foster child is not in school but other children are?
- A. The foster child can be counted as a household member.
51. Q. I have had families bring in approval letters from the district that they are coming from. I was told in a training meeting that we can approve the students for the free and reduced meals. With that said should they be in my verification list?
- A. They would be subject to verification unless they were on the Direct Certification list that was downloaded by the previous school.