



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the School Child Nutrition Programs

FROM: John Frassinelli, Chief 
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

DATE: August 4, 2014

SUBJECT: **Operational Memorandum #46-14**
Direct Certification

During the past few months, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has conducted several trainings throughout the state addressing the new procedures for direct certification. Direct certification is the process of determining children eligible for free meal benefits based on documentation obtained directly from the appropriate State or local agency or other authorized individual. For further information, refer to the United States Department of Agriculture's [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#).

As a reminder to all local education agencies (LEAs) participating in the school Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs) and claiming free meals/milk (including the Special Milk Program), the use of direct certification is *not* optional and all LEAs must review this important (and highly confidential) information in order to ensure that eligible children receive access to free meals or milk. Each LEA should have a designated direct certification contact person (only one per LEA) and this is the person who is responsible for retrieving and securing this information. Click on this link for the [list of district direct certification contacts](#). If the information needs to be updated for your school or institution, please contact Maria Santini at maria.santini@ct.gov.

Effective July 2014, working with the Department of Social Services, the CSDE will update this direct certification information weekly during the day on Mondays. Therefore, LEAs should check the information weekly on Tuesdays (at a minimum) to ensure that new students added to the list receive access to free meals/milk benefits. As a reminder, the *Benefit Source Key* uses the following codes to demonstrate how a student is directly certified:

1. FS = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
2. AF = Temporary Family Assistance (TFA or TANF).
3. OT = Foster, Homeless, Runaway, Head Start, Pre-K Even Start.

Students that are directly certified based on SNAP (FS) or TFA or TANF (AF) are automatically eligible for free meals/milk without further application AND their free eligibility status extends to all children in the household as outlined in the *Eligibility Manual for School Meals*. Students that are directly certified based on either their Foster Child, homeless, runaway, Head Start or Even Start status, are directly certified and automatically eligible for free meals/milk without further application. However, their free eligibility does NOT extend to other children in the household.

Additionally, LEAs must notify the households in writing when a child is determined to be eligible for free meals/milk based on direct certification. An example of the direct certification notification letter may be found clicking on [FORMS](#) on the CNP Web site.

As part of the new direct certification process, the CSDE has established a [Direct Certification website](#). Important information may be found on this Web site including the [Direct Certification Web Application Sign In](#) link which is where the direct certification contact person may sign in to gain access to the data. There is also a [New Look of Direct Certification webinar](#) that is available which provides an overview of the new direct certification process.

Note: Two additional trainings on *The New Look of Direct Certification* will be provided for those LEAs that have not attended this workshop. They will take place at the CSDE in Middletown on **August 13, 2014** and **August 20, 2014**. The time for each workshop is 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. Interested LEAs should contact David Donovan at 860-807-2077 or david.donovan@ct.gov to register. Space is limited so do not delay!

Questions regarding technical support (i.e., accessing the direct certification application sign in page; using the district's direct certification contact's login ID and password; issues with direct certification data that is displayed, etc.) may be directed to either David Donovan, the CSDE direct certification program manager (860-807-2077 or david.donovan@ct.gov) or Bill Bowden, direct certification technical support consultant (860-807-2146 or William.Bowden@ct.gov.)

Questions pertaining to student enrollment or demographics, should be directed to your central office or applicable personnel within your district.

Questions regarding regulations pertaining to direct certification may be directed to:

Consultants for School Nutrition Programs	
County	Consultant
• Fairfield County	Fionnuala Brown fionnuala.brown@ct.gov 860-807-2129
• Hartford County (towns/cities beginning with A-R)	Teri Dandeneau teri.dandeneau@ct.gov 860-807-2079
• Hartford County (towns/cities beginning with S-W) • Windham County	Susan Alston susan.alston@ct.gov 860-807-2081
• Litchfield County	Allison Calhoun-White allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov 860-807-2008
• Middlesex County • Tolland County	Andy Paul andrew.paul@ct.gov 860-807-2048
• New Haven County	Jackie Schipke jackie.schipke@ct.gov 860-807-2123
• New London County	Monica Pacheco monica.pacheco@ct.gov 860-807-2073