



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch, School Breakfast and Special Milk Programs

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

DATE: June 19, 2018

SUBJECT: **Operational Memorandum No. 10-18**

- I. Overview of Available Free and Reduced-price Application Materials
- II. Information for the Implementation of Free/Reduced-price Meals and Free Milk Benefits for SY 2018-19
- III. Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEG) for July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

IMPORTANT: Old free and reduced-price application forms and letters (dated prior to June 2018) cannot be used for school year 2018-19. They must be discarded.

I. Overview of Available Free and Reduced-price Application Materials

The updated forms to implement benefits for free and reduced-price meals, afterschool snack, and milk are available on the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Forms for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Most materials are available in both PDF and Word formats (see links below). Two new forms provide guidance that addresses notifying households and processing free and reduced-price applications. Determining officials must review this information prior to beginning the application certification process.

As a reminder, school districts are encouraged to use foreign language free and reduced-price materials when necessary. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides samples of [foreign language materials](#). Note that the CSDE's Spanish forms will be available soon.

The following tools assist districts with approving applications:

- [USDA Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#) (Note: The most recent issue is dated **July 18, 2017** and USDA indicated that a new version will not be issued for SY 2018-19.);
- *Points to Remember When Notifying Parents of Free and Reduced-price Eligibility;*
- *Important Reminders Regarding Processing Applications;* and
- [Procedures for Processing Free and Reduced-price Meal Applications Providing a SNAP/TFA Number.](#)

II. Information for the Implementation of Free/Reduced-price Meals and Free Milk Benefits for School Year 2018-19

1. *Sample Parent/Guardian Letter to Households – School Meals and Snacks*
A parent letter must be completed with the school district's specific program information.
2. *Sample Parent/Guardian Letter to Households – Special Milk Program (SMP)*
The SMP sample letter is appropriate if the sponsor:
 - a. operates only a SMP with a free milk option; or
 - b. operates a SMP with a free milk option in split-day session kindergarten.

3. *Sample Application and Instructions for Free or Reduced-price Meals or Free Milk Family/Household Application*

Many households have different sources of income at different frequencies, such as weekly, bi-weekly wages and/or monthly. School Food Authorities (SFAs) must follow the procedures below (refer to the USDA's *Eligibility Manual for School Meals* for more information).

- a. If a household has only one income source, or if all sources are the same frequency, do not use conversion factors. Compare the income or sum of the incomes published in the Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEG) for the appropriate frequency and household size to make the eligibility determination; or
- b. If a household reports income sources at more than one frequency, the preferred method is to annualize all income by multiplying weekly income by 52, income received every two weeks by 26, income received twice a month by 24, and income received monthly by 12.

Note: *Do not round the values resulting from each conversion.* Total all unrounded converted values, and compare the unrounded total to the published IEG for annual income for the appropriate household size.

4. *Addenda A, B and C*

The application samples on the CSDE's [Forms for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage include three additional addenda (Addendum A, Addendum B, and Addendum C) to the application for free or reduced-price meals or free milk benefits. These addenda are included because schools increasingly use income eligibility data to offer other benefits to students. **Note:** USDA regulations require that school districts must have parents/guardians' written permission to release certain information. If a school district wishes to offer additional benefits to students, attach the addenda to the free and reduced-price meal application. Exclude the "Optional wording for sponsors" on the *Parent/Guardian Letter to Households* if not using addenda A or B.

- *Addendum A – Sharing Information with Other Programs.* Use this addendum only if the school district offers additional benefits to students based on the student's income eligibility. The parent/guardian must specifically authorize (sign) to allow information to be released for each benefit. This form requires the district to list each benefit being offered, and to **specify the entity** that is offering the benefit. **Do not distribute a blank addendum.** Please contact the CSDE with questions.
- *Addendum B – HUSKY Insurance Plan.* In cooperation with the Department of Public Health and the school nurse, each district is strongly encouraged to include Addendum B in the distribution mailing to parents. This form is currently under revision and will be released soon.
- *Addendum C – Information on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).* The Connecticut General Statute Section 10-215i **requires** that all local educational agencies (LEAs) notify parents and guardians about SNAP benefits. Addendum C was developed for this purpose, and must be used by all LEAs. Refer to [Operational Memorandum 07-16](#) for further guidance. This form is currently under revision and will be released soon.

5. *Sample Parent/Guardian Notification Letter*
SFAs are required to notify parents/guardians of children’s eligibility for benefits as soon as possible upon determination. This includes households of children who were directly certified based on the direct certification list. There are four Parent/Guardian Notification letters including a new form addressing a student that is directly certified as Reduced Medicaid.

6. *Sample Media/Public Release*
SFAs are **required** to publicly notify their communities that benefits are being offered. SFAs are not required to pay for this notification. However, SFAs are required to develop a media/press release and document the date the information was released to the media. Additionally, SFAs must make every effort to notify the community of these benefits by utilizing other means, e.g., sending a notice to a large corporation anticipating layoffs or posting information on a community bulletin board.

III. Income Eligibility Guidelines for July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

The updated guidelines are available on the CSDE’s [Income Guidelines for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Questions pertaining to this memorandum may be directed to your school nutrition consultant.

Consultants for School Nutrition Programs	
County	Consultant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fairfield County (Includes Region 9) ● Litchfield County (Includes Regions 1, 6, 7, 12, and 14) 	Fionnuala Brown fionnuala.brown@ct.gov 860-807-2129
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hartford County (Includes Region 10) ● Middlesex County (Includes Regions 4, 13, and 17) 	Teri Dandeneau teri.dandeneau@ct.gov 860-807-2079
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New Haven County (Includes Regions 5, 15, and 16) ● New London County ● Tolland County (Includes Regions 8 and 19) ● Windham County (Includes Region 11) 	Susan Alston susan.alston@ct.gov 860-807-2081

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Important: This is a numbered Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) operational memorandum that contains important program information. Please read carefully and retain in a binder for future reference. All CSDE operational memoranda are posted on the CSDE’s [Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.