Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Child Nutrition Program Benefits

For the most current and detailed guidance on determining and verifying eligibility for Child Nutrition Programs, go to https://cnw.ksde.gov, SNP, Food Service Facts, Chapters 7 and 8.

Required Information for Households NOT Receiving Food Assistance, Temporary Assistance to Families (TAF) or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservation (FDPIR) Benefits

Four items of information must appear on the Application for Child Nutrition Program Benefits prior to determining eligibility:

1. Names of **ALL** household members must be listed on the application, even if the household member has no income.
2. Current income received and identified by source and frequency for each household member
3. Signature of parent, guardian or adult household member
4. Last four digits of the Social Security number of the adult household member signing the application or an indication that this person has no SSN. SSN is not required for an emancipated child.

If **ANY** of the four required items have not been completed, the information **MUST** be obtained before an eligibility determination can be made. The application may be returned to the household or the household may be contacted by phone or in writing to get the information. If the application is missing the signature, the application **MUST** be returned to the household.

Required Information for Households Receiving Food Assistance, TAF or FDPIR Benefits

1. Name(s) of child(ren)
2. The Food Assistance, TAF, or FDPIR case number for any household member receiving benefits
3. Signature of an adult household member

A Food Assistance case number and a TAF case number consist of eight (8) digits. It is a computer-generated number beginning with 0, 1, or 2. Reported numbers with more or less than eight digits **are not valid**. Determining officials must use KSDE's online direct certification process, contact the household to obtain the valid number, or obtain income information from the household before an eligibility determination can be made. When adding any information to an application, always initial and date the addition and indicate who provided the information. Note: Households cannot include a Medicaid case number on the Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals and be considered categorically eligible for free or reduced price meals.

Required Information for Foster Children

1. Name(s) of child(ren)
2. Check the Foster Child box in Step 1
3. Sign

Applicants NOT Receiving Food Assistance, TAF or FDPIR Benefits

Applicants not receiving Food Assistance, TAF, or FDPIR benefits are instructed to "report names and gross income by source for each household member from last month." They must also select a frequency code to indicate how often each source of income is received. The application instructions indicate types of income that should and should not be reported. Persons with self-employment income should follow the additional instructions printed on the back of the application. USDA has approved using data from the most recent U.S. Individual Income Tax Return - Form 1040 to determine income from private business operations. Income tax information **cannot** be used to report salaries and wages. All household members, including children, must be listed on the application.

Other Information

If the household does not complete the racial/ethnicity information on the application, the eligibility determination cannot be delayed if all USDA required information is completed.

If a school official is aware of a child from a needy household that is unwilling to apply for reduced price or free Child Nutrition Program benefits, the school official may certify the student eligible based on household size and income information obtained from other sources. The school official must note the source of the information, complete and file an application, and make a decision on the student's eligibility. The household must be notified of the student's eligibility. For detailed instructions, refer to *Food Service Facts*, Chapter 7.

Determining Official Responsibilities

1. Review applications and make determinations of eligibility based on household size and income or categorical eligibility based on Food Assistance, TAF or FDPIR benefits or foster children. Under no circumstances should school personnel erase information provided by the household applying for benefits. School personnel should never use "white-out" to cover any information provided by a household applying for benefits. If it is necessary to change information on an application, draw a single line through the incorrect information, initial and date the change, and document the source of revised information.
2. Sign and date each application.
3. Notify each household of approval or denial of benefits. Households whose applications were denied must be notified in writing. A copy of the notification letter should be attached to the application and filed.

Determination of Eligibility

1. Applications are to be reviewed based on information presented on the applications.
2. Incomplete applications require follow-up for completion or must be denied as incomplete.
3. Applicants must not be required to provide documentation to be reviewed.
4. All verification must take place after application approval.