

Howard's News From MDE

September 7, 2017



Like the new look of the News? It is the idea and work of Karen Coady, an SNP secretary. Let me know what you think.

Cash Management System (CMS) Deadline

The State of Michigan's implementation of a new financial and business system, Statewide Integrated Governmental Management Applications (SIGMA), will happen on October 1, 2017. Due to this event, the last CMS payment run before system cutover is Thursday September 21, 2017. For fund requests to be included in this CMS payment run, fund requests will need to be certified by noon on this day. CMS payments will not be processed between Friday, September 22, 2017, and Wednesday, October 4, 2017. Please visit the link below for more information:

Key Dates:

September 21, 2017: Last day for CMS payments through old system

October 1, 2017: State of Michigan go live date with SIGMA

October 5, 2017: First projected date for CMS payments through SIGMA

For more information on SIGMA's major improvements, visit [SIGMA Improvements](#).ⁱ

For questions on SIGMA Vendor Self Service, please contact the SIGMA Vendor Customer Support Center (VCSC) at (888) 734-9749 or SIGMA-Vendor@Michigan.gov.

For questions on CMS, please contact the CMS Helpline at (517) 335-0534 or mde-cms@michigan.gov.

Fiscal Responsibility

For important information on fiscal requirements for operating a School Meals Program, please see [Administrative Memo No. 5](#)ⁱⁱ - School Year 2017 - 2018.

School Meal Overview Trainings (SMOT)

MDE has scheduled SMOT trainings throughout the state for SY 2017-18 and summer 2018. While SMOT is tailored for new directors, it is a great opportunity for food service directors to annually get a "refresher" on all USDA requirements. The training format is three days in order to cover all material. Please visit our [website](#).ⁱⁱⁱ Scroll down to Training and click on School Meal Overview Training (SMOT) Workshops. The next SMOT is in November at Northwood University, Midland. To register for this training, click on the link provided. Registration will open approximately 2 months prior to each training.

Professional Standards

MDE has developed a [Professional Standards Webpage](#)^{iv} that shows the most frequently requested training by our Michigan school nutrition professionals and where to find training in each of these areas. The webpage is continually updated, so please bookmark this page and check back periodically for more information. Any questions about Professional Standards can be directed to Linda Stull at stulll@michigan.gov or 517-241-3884.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Estimator Tool

The USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is pleased to announce the release of the updated CEP Estimator Tool with SY 2017-18 reimbursement rates. The Estimator is available on the [CEP Resource Center](#).^v

Benefit Issuance

Attached is a document which describes benefit issuance as it applies to the School Nutrition Programs. Benefit issuance determines which students are free, reduced, or paid.

Free and Reduced-Price Income Calculator Tool

Do you process Free and Reduced Price Applications manually or complete verification manually? Consider using the 2017-18 Free and Reduced-Price Income Calculator tool from Minnesota Department of Education. The tool assists school food authorities in determining whether free and reduced-price applications based on income meet eligibility criteria for the 2017-2018 school year. It must be downloaded directly from the available at [Minnesota Department of Education website](#).^{vi}

Tuesday at 2

Our SNP team has again put together another series of topics for 2017. One Tuesday each month, we will host a teleconference at 2:00 p.m. that will last approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Each teleconference is designed to provide quick updates on the "latest and greatest" information on a designated topic for that month with the opportunity for participants to ask questions. Our next Tuesday at 2 Teleconference topic will be Whole Grain Rich (WGR) Flexibility on September 12, 2017. To join the call, please register here.

With your registration, you will be sent the conference call number and access code. Please take advantage of this opportunity and join us in getting your whole grain rich questions answered!

Recipe for Success

We've only got a couple of entries into our "Recipe for Success" contest so I'm giving it a second plug to get more participation. Here it is: This year's theme for the National School Lunch Program Week (October 9-13) is "Recipe for Success." To help promote the NSLP and this special week, we here at MDE are running a contest!! Attached are three recipe forms – one filled out as a sample "Recipe for Success" and the other two blank forms for you to fill out (pick the one that works best for you). Notice we are not looking for food recipes, we are looking for "Recipes for Success."

Following is just some of the potential "recipes" you could submit:

- Increasing Participation
- Controlling Food Cost
- Outreach for School Lunch
- Successful Parent/Teacher/Student Advisory Committee
- Presenting to Your School Board
- Alternative Serving Methods

Or come up with your own Recipe!! Be creative! Have fun! What was YOUR "Recipe for Success"?!

Who can enter the contest? Food Service Directors, Food Service Managers, Hourly Food Service Staff, students, school groups....pretty much anyone involved in your food service program in some way.

Is there anything for the winner? Glad you asked! The winner will get recognition and a big shout out via Howard's News, a plaque recognizing your accomplishment presented to you by me, and then an appearance by none other than Roary, the Detroit Lions mascot.....and possibly other "stuff."

So the deadline for getting your recipe to me is September 27, 2017. Email or US mail are both fine.

For mailing use:
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Hope you are having a great new school year!!

Howard Leikert, MBA, SMS

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Our collective efforts can help make Michigan a Top 10 education state in 10 years! Here are the goals and strategies:
<http://mi.gov/top10in10/>



ⁱ <http://www.michigan.gov/budget/0,4538,7-157-79033---,00.html>

ⁱⁱ http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Admin_Memo_No_5_599169_7.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-66254_50144---,00.html

^{iv} http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-66254_50144_76830-386580--,00.html

^v <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/community-eligibility-provision-resource-center>

^{vi} <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/FNS/SNP/proc/App/>

Office of School Support Services School Nutrition Programs Benefit Issuance

Benefit Issuance is the link in the accountability system between the eligibility determination and benefit delivery. Eligibility determinations happen via either:

1. Approval of an Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals based on applicant eligibility as determined from the information provided on the application, or
2. Direct Certification.

Either of those processes may result in free and reduced-price meal benefits being issued to eligible persons who apply or automatically qualify for meal programs. Benefit delivery is the Point of Service where the student receives the reimbursable meal and it is counted and recorded in the correct free, reduced price, or paid category.

Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals

Applicants are expected to fill out each section completely. If an incomplete application is received, SFAs should be aware of the following information to get an incomplete application completed:

1. Income Fields: Income fields left blank are considered zero (0). There is no need to request additional information for those fields.
2. Other Empty Fields: Information fields such as names, date, complete case number, frequency of income higher than zero, checkboxes that confirm information, need to be filled out completely. If they are not:
 - a. Contact the applicant and request missing information.
 - b. Enter missing information and document date, name of the employee collecting information and the person providing information.
 - c. If unavailable by phone or in person, send a copy of the application home with a written request for missing information (highlighting fields for missing information can be helpful).
3. Signatures: SFAs cannot collect signatures by phone verification. Signatures must be hand written by the original applicant. Send a copy of the application to the applicant to get the signature or ask them to sign in person the next time they are at the school.

Once the application is complete, verify that the applicant is eligible according to the Critical Information for the Free and Reduced Price School Meals Family Application found under Guidance on the [Eligibility Certification and Verification¹](#) website. This guidance describes all steps required for approving or denying applications and all the complete 2017-2018 Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application packet.

The Direct Certification Report lists students that are automatically certified as eligible for free school meals. Student enrollment data that Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) upload to the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) are matched with the following programs from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services:

- SNAP (S)
- TANF (T)
- Foster Child (F)

The major benefits of directly certifying students are:

- Reduce the burden of school lunch applications for households and school districts.
- Improve the accuracy of eligibility determinations and benefit issuance.
- Increase the number of eligible children certified for benefits.
- Improve the Direct Certification percentages to help schools qualify for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

MDE encourages schools to access the Direct Certification Report monthly to ensure all eligible students are receiving proper meal benefits. The Direct Certification Report is refreshed bi-weekly during August, September, and October and then monthly thereafter. The second refresh in October will be the best data you can use to report the Direct Certification numbers in the SFA-VCR.

Guidance for meeting Direct Certification requirements can be found at the School Nutrition Programs website [Direct Certification Page²](#). Questions regarding the technical MSDS computer applications may be directed to the Center for Education Performance and Information (CEPI) customer support by e-mail to cepi@michigan.gov or phone 517-335-0505 and select option "3." Questions regarding the National School Lunch Program Direct Certification requirement may be directed to Lisa Taylor, School Nutrition Programs Consultant, by email to browntaylorl@michigan.gov or phone 517-241-3885.

¹ http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-66254_50144-194552--,00.html

² http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-66254_50144-194535--,00.html

Name _____ School _____

Recipe: _____

Serves: _____

Ingredients:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Directions: _____

Return completed form by September 27, 2017 to: MDE-Schoolnutrition@michigan.gov

Name Jim Avocado School ABC Elementary

Recipe: Grab n Go Lunch

Serves: As many as we can!!

Ingredients:

<u>Students not near Cafeteria</u>	<u>Method to count reimbursable meals</u>
<u>Reimbursable Meals</u>	<u>Advertising new site</u>
<u>Great Cashier</u>	<u>Willing to change</u>
<u>Administration Support</u>	<u>Quality Food</u>
<u>Lunch Bags</u>	

Directions: Start by loading Quality Food
into strong lunch bags making sure they are
reimbursable meals. Have one positive, friendly
great cashier take meals to new location. Count
reimbursable meals. Let your supportive administration
know of the success. Continue to advertise.
Enjoy the increased participation and revenues!!