

**School Food Authority**  
**Verification Collection and Reporting**

*School Nutrition Programs  
Office of School Support Services  
August 2015*

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**What is Verification?**

**Verification is:**

- Confirmation of eligibility for free and reduced price meals under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.
- Only required when eligibility is determined through the application process, not through direct certification.

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**What does Verification Include?**

**Verification must include:**

- Confirmation of income eligibility  
or
- Confirmation that the child or any member of the household is receiving assistance under SNAP, FDPIR or TANF  
or
- That a child is Other Source Categorically Eligible

**Verification can also:**

- Include confirmation of any other information required on the application, such as household size

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## Where is Verification Data Used?

- State Agency's direct certification rate;
- Improper payment reports;
- Non-Response Rate;
- Office of Policy Support (OPS) studies

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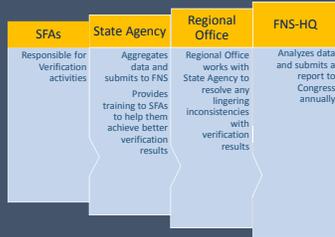
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## Roles in the Verification Process



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## Key Verification Dates

- October 1: School Food Authorities (SFAs) determine the total number of applications on file for the current school year as of October 1.
- October 31: SFAs determine the total number of students enrolled for the current school year as of this date.
- November 15: SFAs complete verification activities.

★ **February 1: SFAs report verification results to the State Agency (SA) The Michigan Department of Education (MDE)**

- March 15: SAs submit complied SFA results to FNS
- March-June: FNS reviews data and follows up with SA

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## Verification Reporting

- Verification results should be reported to the MDE no later than February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Information about Verification is located :
  - In the Eligibility Manual for School Meals Part 9 beginning on pg. 81. The newest addition is August 13, 2014.
  - On the School Meals Website [www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition](http://www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition):
    - ✓ In the Guidance section on the website under "Eligibility Certification and Verification"
    - ✓ In the Administrative Memorandum section updated annually and emailed to SFAs
  - In *Weekly News* reminders emailed to SFAs
- Please make sure the contact information in MEGs+ is correct.

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## Steps to Complete Verification

The *Steps to Complete Verification* contains every document needed to complete verification.

- ✓ Check to see if your SFA is required to complete an independent review of applications
- ✓ Check to see if your SFA is required to complete an improvement plan.
- ✓ Check to see if your SFA is required to use Standard (Basic) Sampling
- ✓ Follow the instructions for sampling
- ✓ Establish the Free and Reduced Price School Application Pool
- ✓ SFAs with an electronic Point of Service (POS) do not have to conduct a confirmation review
- ✓ If the SFA *does not* have an electronic POS then a Confirmation Review is required

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## Independent review of applications

### Who is required to complete an independent (second) review of applications?

- School Food Authorities (SFAs) determined to have a high error rate, greater than 10%, on income-based applications and benefit issuance lists during the Administrative Review Process.
- A second review is required for all applications.
- SFAs with electronic systems used for eligibility determination are *not* exempt from the independent second review of applications.

The Michigan Department of Education School Year 2014-2015 Food Service Administrative Policy No. 1, dated July 7, 2014, *Independent Review of School Meal Applications* direct link:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Administrative\\_Policy\\_No\\_1\\_Independent\\_Review\\_of\\_applications\\_\\_SY\\_2014\\_462215\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Administrative_Policy_No_1_Independent_Review_of_applications__SY_2014_462215_7.pdf)

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## Independent review of applications

- The independent review of applications is a second review that must be conducted by an independent individual or entity that did not make the original eligibility determination.
- This individual or entity is not required to be an employee of the SFA but must be trained on how to make application determinations.
- The second review of applications must be done before the household is notified of eligibility and must not result in the delay of an eligibility determination.
- Households must be notified of the child's eligibility determination within 10 operating days of receiving the application.

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## Improvement plan

- An Improvement Plan for Certification and Verification is required if your SFA reported the following for Verification in the previous school year.
  - Less than 80% of the applications selected for verification did not respond to your request for additional income information.
- And
- (2) Over 20% of the free and reduced price applications in your reported verification sample were changed to pay.

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## Improvement plan

- **Required actions to help maintain benefits for eligible students:**
  - ✓ Establish a toll-free or local telephone number that is free of charge and email address.
  - ✓ Conduct a Confirmation review (if the SFA does not have a technology based solution)
  - ✓ Formal Follow-up and Assistance with Verification
  - ✓ Participation in Direct Certification
- **Optional Activities:**
  - ✓ Third Party Assistance with Verification Follow-up
  - ✓ Exemption of up to 5% from the Verification sample

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## Verification Sample

- Sample Size means the number of applications subject to verification.
  - *The minimum and maximum = 3%*
- Sample Pool is the total number of applications approved as of October 1.
- Random Sampling means each application has an equal chance of being selected.

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## Verification Sampling

During the previous school year, if less than 80% of the applications selected for verification did not respond:

- *Standard Verification (Basic Sampling)*

During the previous school year, if more than 80% of the applications selected for verification responded:

- *Standard Verification (Basic Sampling)*
- *Alternate One Verification (formerly Alternative Random Sampling)*
- *Alternate Two Verification (formerly Alternative Focused Sampling)*

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## Sampling Methods and Direct Certification

- Children that are directly certified for free meals, do not need to be verified.
- Do not include directly certified children in total number to determine the number or applications to verify.
- Children that are documented as migrant, runaway, homeless, foster, and children participating in Head Start/Even Start are exempt from verification.
- Children in RCCIs except for children with applications that are non-residential students attending the institution.
- Schools that **only** participate in the Special Milk Program.
- SFAs that have all buildings in the district participating in the Community Eligibility Provision.
- SFAs that have both buildings participating in CEP and buildings that are not participating in CEP are subject to verification for the non-CEP buildings.

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## Sampling Methods and Direct Certification

- If a student in the household is on the direct certification list then all students in the household are directly certified as categorically eligible for free meals.
- These households are not subject to verification.

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## Verification for Cause

- With the exception of verification for cause, SFAs must not verify more than or less than the standard sample size or the alternate sample size.
- The SFA has an obligation to verify all questionable applications such as applications with zero income. The same process of sending letters, notifications, etc. apply.
- Do not verify 100% of the applications.
- Verification for cause is done in addition to the required sample size and these applications cannot be used as part of the sample.

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## Standard (Basic) Sampling

- The required sample size is 3% or 3,000, whichever is less of all approved applications on file on October 1.
- Count the total number of approved applications (SNAP, foster children, income-based) on file on October 1.
- Multiply the total number of approved applications by 3% (.03).
  - Round up
  - At least one application must be verified

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## Standard (Basic) Sampling

- Separate out all income-based, error-prone applications reporting monthly household income within \$100 or annual household income within \$1,200 of the free or reduced price eligibility limit.
- The 3% sample should come from error-prone applications.
- If there are not enough error-prone applications to meet the sample size requirements, additional applications must be selected at random from other income-based approved applications.

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## Error Prone Applications

- Applications within \$100.00 per month or \$1200 annually of the applicable Income Eligibility Guideline.
- Error Prone replaces the term "Focused Sample"

**Income Eligibility Guidelines for Use in Schools**  
*(This form is for school personnel use only.)*

Family income criteria to be used for the 2015-2016 school year for School Lunch, School Breakfast, or Special Milk Programs.

Total Family Size	A. Scale for Free Meals or Free Milk					B. Scale for Reduced Price Meals				
	Annual	Monthly	Twice per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly	Annual	Monthly	Twice per month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$15,303	\$1,276	\$638	\$589	\$295	\$21,775	\$1,815	\$908	\$838	\$419
2	\$20,709	\$1,726	\$863	\$797	\$399	\$26,471	\$2,456	\$1,228	\$1,134	\$567
3	\$26,117	\$2,177	\$1,089	\$1,005	\$503	\$37,167	\$3,098	\$1,549	\$1,430	\$715
4	\$31,525	\$2,628	\$1,314	\$1,213	\$607	\$44,863	\$3,739	\$1,870	\$1,726	\$863
5	\$36,933	\$3,078	\$1,539	\$1,421	\$711	\$52,559	\$4,380	\$2,190	\$2,022	\$1,011
6	\$42,341	\$3,529	\$1,765	\$1,629	\$815	\$60,255	\$5,022	\$2,511	\$2,318	\$1,159
7	\$47,749	\$3,980	\$1,990	\$1,837	\$919	\$67,951	\$5,663	\$2,832	\$2,614	\$1,307
8	\$53,157	\$4,430	\$2,215	\$2,045	\$1,023	\$75,647	\$6,304	\$3,152	\$2,910	\$1,455
\$5,408*	\$451*	\$226*	\$208*	\$104*	\$7,696*	\$642*	\$321*	\$296*	\$148*	

\*For each additional household member add this amount

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## Example: Standard (Basic) Sampling

1,300 total applications x .03 = 39 applications

Example Scenario #1

- 445 error-prone applications.
- All 39 applications would be selected just from the 445 error-prone applications.

Example Scenario #2

- 25 error-prone applications.
- All 25 error-prone applications, plus 14 applications randomly selected from income-eligible applications.

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## Alternate One - (Alternative Random Sampling)

- The required sample size is 3% or 3,000, whichever is less of all approved applications on file on October 1.
- Count the total number of approved applications (SNAP, foster children, income-based) on file on October 1.
- Note if a child appears on the direct certification list by Oct 31, count them as directly certified and not as part of the application sample pool.
- Multiply the total number of approved applications by 3% (.03).
  - Round up
  - At least one application must be verified

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## Example: Alternate One- (Alternative Random Sampling)

340 total applications x .03 = 10.2 applications.

Round up to 11 applications

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## Alternate Two: (Focused Sampling)

Must verify a minimum of:

- The lesser of 1% or 1,000 of the total number of approved applications (both income and categorical). The 1% sample is selected from income applications with total household income within \$100 monthly or \$1,200 annually of the income eligibility guidelines (IEGs) for free and reduced price meals for that size household.

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## Alternate Two: (Focused Sampling)

Plus:

- The lesser of one-half (0.5%) of 1% or 500 of the total number of applications that were approved based on categorical eligibility, selected from applications with a SNAP or FIP number.

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## Example: Alternate Two- (Focused Sampling)

300 income applications

200 categorical applications

500 total applications in the application pool

500 total applications      x.01 = 5

200 categorical applications      x.005 = 1

Total Sample      6

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## Example: Alternate Two- (Focused Sampling)

- A sample of 5 applications must be selected from income applications with total household income within \$100 monthly or \$1,200 annually of the income eligibility guidelines (IEGs) for free and reduced priced meals for the size household;

Plus:

- 1 from the 200 categorical applications that provided a SNAP/FIP case number in lieu of income on the application.

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## Verification Sampling

How do I randomly select the required number of applications as determined in Basic, Alternate One, and Alternate Two sampling methods?

Selection Methods:

- Selection interval, or
- Put all applications in a container and draw out the number of applications needed to equal 3%.

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## Selection Interval

700 total applications x .03 = 21 applications for verification

700 total application / 21 applications for verification = 33

Choose every 33<sup>rd</sup> application until 21 applications are pulled from the 700.

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## Steps to Complete Verification continued....

- ✓ If an application with a FAP or FIP case number is selected the forms for contacting the Department of Human Services are provided.
- ✓ Conduct a Follow-up Review for any household that has not responded by the original due date and document results.
- ✓ Notify all households of final determination using the "We have Checked Your Application" form.
- ✓ Households must be given a 10 day advance written notice for any changes in eligibility.
- ✓ Make changes to the benefit issuance documentation by November 15<sup>th</sup>.

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## Steps to Complete Verification

- ✓ Complete all required Verification documents, Worksheets and Check Lists.
- ✓ Complete the School Food Authority - Verification Collection Report (SFA-VCR).
- ✓ Keep all this documentation for 3 years including the current year.
- ✓ Plan ahead and organize this information for the administrative review.

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## School Food Authority Verification Collection Report (SFA-VCR)

The SFA-VCR is the last step in completing Verification.

- Directions are included on the flash drive provided and
- The SNP website: [www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition](http://www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition)

This report can only be submitted online through the Michigan Nutrition Data System (MiND)

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## Noteworthy Information for Verification Collection and Reporting

- Residential Child Care Institutions are required to complete the School Food Authority Verification Collection Report (SFA-VCR).
- SFAS participating in the Community Eligibility Provision(CEP) are required to complete the SFA-VCR.
- If you are a SFA with all CEP schools or a RCCI without day students you are not subject to **verification** and will only complete certain sections on the SFA-VCR.
- The SFA with some buildings participating in CEP and RCCIs with day students that have **applications must complete** verification collection and reporting.
- Many of the sections are prepopulated from the October claim and the last October refresh of the Direct Certification report.
- Direct Certification is separated by **SNAP in 3-2 B** and **other programs including TANF and Foster in 3-3 B.**

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## Direct Certification Report timeline for School Year 2015-2016

School Year 2015-2016 proposed direct certification timeline:

Cutoff	Refresh
7/24/2015	8/3/2015
8/13/2015	8/17/2015
8/26/2015	8/31/2015
8/31/2015	9/14/2015
10/6/2015	10/9/2015
10/20/2015	10/23/2015
11/25/2015	12/2/2015
1/4/2016	1/7/2016
2/9/2016	2/12/2016
3/7/2016	3/4/2016
4/6/2016	4/11/2016
4/29/2016	5/4/2016



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## Direct Certification Report timeline for School Year 2015-2016



### Explanation of the Direct Certification timeline process:

- ✓ The "Cutoff" is the last day a school may submit data that will be used for the refresh.
- ✓ There are a minimum of 2 business days between the cutoff and the refresh dates to complete matching and validate the data.
- ✓ The refresh date is the results of the match and validation process so the districts can download the refreshed data.

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## SFA VCR Section 1

Section 1: Total Schools, Residential Child Care Institutions(RCCI) and Enrolled Students		
	A. Number of Schools or Institutions	B. Number of Students
1-1. Total Schools (Do not include RCCI)	0	0
1-2. Total RCCI (Do not include schools counted in 1-1)	0	0
1-3a. RCCI with day students (Report ONLY day students in 1-2a)	0	0
1-3b. RCCI with institutionalized students	0	0

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## SFA VCR section 5 (5-6)

5-6: Results of Verification by Original Benefit Type: For each original benefit type (A, B, & C), report the number of applications and students as of November 15th for each result category (1, 2, 3, & 4).

A. FREE: Categorically Eligible Certified as FREE based on DRAUGHT/FREE documentation (e.g. case number) on application			B. FREE: Income Certified as FREE based on income/household size application			C. REDUCED PRICE: Income Certified as REDUCED PRICE based on income/household size application		
Result Category	A.Applications	B.Students	Result Category	A.Applications	B.Students	Result Category	A.Applications	B.Students
1. Responded, NO CHANGE	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	1. Responded, NO CHANGE	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	1. Responded, NO CHANGE	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2. Responded, Changed to REDUCED PRICE	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	2. Responded, Changed to REDUCED PRICE	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	2. Responded, Changed to FREE	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3. Responded, Changed to PMAID	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	3. Responded, Changed to PMAID	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	3. Responded, Changed to PMAID	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4. NOT Responded, Changed to PMAID	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	4. NOT Responded, Changed to PMAID	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	4. NOT Responded, Changed to PMAID	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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## SFA-VCR: Section Verification for Cause

VCR-1: Total questionable applications verified for cause.  
Report the number of applications as of November 15th verified for cause in addition to the verification requirement.

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## SFA VCR email and certify

\*\*\* Click "Save" button anytime to save the data entered! \*\*\*

Class:

Reg.Type:

\*\*\* Verify all data prior to certifying the report! \*\*\*

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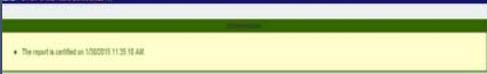
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## SFA-VCR Success!



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## Don't make me call you.....

If you need help completing Verification...  
please start calling in December and call often!  
Lisa Brown Taylor 517.241.3885 or [browntaylorl@michigan.gov](mailto:browntaylorl@michigan.gov)



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## Questions?

**School Nutrition Programs**  
> (517) 373-3347  
> [MDE-schoolnutrition@michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-schoolnutrition@michigan.gov)

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