

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Principals, Business Managers, Registrars, and Food Service Managers

FROM: Brian Townsend, IT Director; Deb Quackenbush, Director - GSM Division; Laurie M Colgan, Director, Child Nutrition Programs

SUBJECT: Census Reporting and Household Income Forms for Community Eligibility Schools (CEP)

DATE: 08/03/15

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USDA's Community Eligibility Programs changed the way schools must collect and report student-level eligibility for free and reduced price school lunch programs. While easing administrative overhead related to providing free and reduced priced school lunches, this has caused ripple effects nationwide since free and reduced priced lunch eligibility has been widely used as a determining factor for a number of other programs. Under the funding formulas for many state and federal programs both the eligibility for and the amount of funding will be determined based on factors such as demographics of student population, with high poverty, and high numbers of foster youth and ELL students driving the eligibility and the amounts for the funding. Please continue reading for guidance on how to collect and report this important data.

***Student Eligibility Data*** – The school's eligibility to participate in CEP, as well as the level of free reimbursement claimed, is based on the number of directly certified students in the school. The school must continue to collect and identify directly certified students throughout the school year in order to accurately report the level of reimbursement for the next program year. USDA guidance allows schools to adjust their "Identified Student Percentage" each April as long as the student data has been collected and maintained.

***Household Income Data*** –The Student Census data collection requires that student eligibility to receive free and reduced lunch be reported annually. In addition, programs other than the school meals program depend on the household income data. They use this data to determine things like a student's eligibility for services, a family's eligibility for reduced internet service rates, the school's e-rate, and other criteria that are used in federal and state grant applications. They are also used for assessing eligibility for other opportunities like additional assistance and services for your school. Since your school is not permitted to use the federal free and reduced price meal application to determine household income, we have prepared and provided the [Household Income Form](#) for CEP schools to use so that you may collect household income information from those families and households whose children are not on the Directly Certified List. The [federal income guidelines](#) may be used to make the student determinations. Collecting the Household Income information from your families will help ensure that your students and your school will continue to be eligible for all services and opportunities available to them. In addition it will help you fulfill your census reporting requirements.