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Eligibility Determination and Verification Process Timeline

July 1 or Earlier

- Prepare Free & Reduced-Price Meal Applications and Cover Letters, Household Income Form and Cover Letters (CEP and Provision 2 Schools only), or Free Milk Applications and Cover letters (only for schools without meal programs) using AOE templates.
- Choose Determining Official and Verification Official for your SFA, enter their names and contact information in the site applications in VT-CNP.
- Determine the "Independent Reviewer" if your SFA is on the Independent Review List.
- Complete "Carry-Over" information for students to carry over their prior year benefits in the Point of Sale system. Determine and enter the 30th operating day of school, which is when carry-over benefits will cease.
- If you will be using an electronic free and reduced-price meal application for the first time, contact the State Agency to have the system reviewed and approved. Indicate on your application in the VT-CNP system that you will be using an electronic application.

Early August

- Attend a Child Nutrition Programs Summer Institute class for Eligibility Determination & Verification training. If your SFA is required to conduct Independent Reviews of applications, be sure the Independent Reviewer receives training as well. If your SFA had issues with the Verification Process during your Administrative Review, or has a new verification official, plan to attend Verification training.

August, and then Monthly

- Public Schools: The data manager uploads a DC#03 unofficial enrollment list into the EdFusion system and downloads the direct certification matches the following day. New data is uploaded from DCF around the 20th of each month.
- Independent Schools: Contact the AOE Help Desk to request your list of directly certified students.
- Contact the Homeless Liaison for a list of students may be directly certified because of their Homeless status. Add these students to your list of directly certified students.
- If Head Start students eat school meals, contact the Head Start teacher for a list of Head Start students. Add these students to your list of directly certified students.
- Look for letters to principals and foodservice from the Migrant Education Program with the names of any Migrant students. Add these students to your list of directly certified students.
- Contact the registrar for the names of any students in DCF custody (State-placed foster). Add these students to your list of directly certified students.
- Complete and send out Notice of Direct Certification Pre-Approval Letters to directly certified households.
- Ensure that these students are receiving free benefits in the point of sale system.

First Day of School (if not mailed out prior)

- Distribute Free & Reduced-Price Meal Applications and Cover Letters to all Students.
 - Distribute the Meal Charge Policy as part of your back-to-school materials.
 - If not using an electronic system, start a Master List to track student status of Free Eligibility by Income, Free Categorical Eligibility, and Reduced-Price Eligibility over the course of the year.
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As Applications Are Submitted

- Process applications and notify families of their status as quickly as possible as applications are submitted, taking no longer than 10 operating days to notify families of their determination.
- Enter updated student status into Point of Sale System.
- Be sure to mark all error prone applications during the eligibility determination process; these will be used to determine your verification sample.

20th Operating Day of School

- Distribute “Reminder Letters” notifying that previous year benefits will end on the 30th day of school.

30th Operating Day of School

- Update Point of Sale system to ensure students with prior year benefits who have not submitted a new application are changed in the system to be charged the full price for meals.

October 1

- Begin the Verification Process.
- Determine the number of approved applications on file, this is the Sample Pool.
- Enter the number of approved applications on file in the Verification Calculator to determine the number of applications that must be chosen for verification, this is the Sample Size.
- Select the Sample Size from the error prone applications.
- Record application and eligible student data in the Verification Report.

October 15

- Deadline to submit the Policy Statement for Free and Reduced Meals-Amendment for schools in their base year of Provision 2 or first year of Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

November 1

- Complete and submit the Site Enrollment Report in VT-CNP reporting 10/31 data.

November 15

- Deadline for completing the Verification process.*
- Prepare the Verification Report.
- *SFAs that will not complete the Verification Process by November 15 must request a waiver from the State Agency.
- Deadline to submit the Site Enrollment Report in VT-CNP.
- Complete the Financial Report in VT-CNP.

December 16

- Deadline to submit the Verification Report in VT-CNP.
- Deadline to submit the Independent Review Report (paper copy).

February 1

- Deadline to conduct Site Reviews of each site/school if SFA has more than site/school and complete On-Site Monitoring Form.
- Deadline to complete Food Service Management Company (FSMC) Monitoring Form.

April 1-15

- Submit the Direct Certification Report/Community Eligibility Report in VT-CNP. This report is required of all SFAs.

Early May

- Tri-State Child Nutrition Conference in Vermont, specific date and location TBD.

As new students arrive

- Public Schools: Ask data manager to add new student to the unofficial enrollment and retrieve the Direct Certification Report to determine if students are newly eligible.
 - Independent Schools: Fax the Direct Certification Status Form to AOE to find out the status of the new student.
 - Provide application to new households as part of enrollment.
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