



State of New Jersey


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To: School Business Administrators
Charter School Leads
Non Public School Administrators
School Food Service Directors

From: Janet Hawk, Coordinator
School Nutrition Programs 

Date: September 4, 2012

Subject: Free/Reduced Price Eligibility Carryover from Prior School Year

Based on USDA requirements a change has been made on the timelines for carrying over free or reduced price eligibility from the prior school year.

Previously, carryover was allowed up to September 30 of each year. However, the required eligibility carryover is “up to the first thirty operating days, beginning with the first day of the school year”. Operating days are defined as days in which school is open (even if no food service is provided on some of those days). Carryover applies to direct certification, categorical eligibility determinations and income applications.

Carryover eligibility only applies until a new eligibility determination is made, either approved or denied. **The new eligibility determination supersedes the carryover eligibility.** Once the eligibility determination is made, students must be notified of their new status. If a household does not submit an application or children are not directly certified by the end of the carryover period, the LEA is not required to send the household a denial letter or a notice of adverse action.

The number of **current school year** free and reduced price applications on file as of October 1 must be used to determine the number of applications that must be verified. The carryover status is NOT included in these numbers to determine the verification pool.

In addition, USDA has just released an updated version of their “Eligibility Manual for School Meals”. The updated manual is available under SNEARS Resources and also on USDA’s website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/guidance/default.htm>

PLEASE PASS THIS MEMO ON TO ANY SCHOOL OFFICIALS THAT DETERMINE FREE/REDUCED PRICE ELIGIBILITY FOR THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY.