



Office for Safety, Health and Nutrition  
Jennifer Miller  
Director

Superintendent of Public Instruction

## MEMORANDUM

To: National School Lunch Program Sponsors

From: Jennifer Miller, Director, Office for Safety, Health and Nutrition

Date: October 13, 2004

Re: **Duration of Households' Free and Reduced Price Eligibility Determination**  
FY 04 School and Community Nutrition Programs Policy Memorandum #04-21

Effective July 1, 2004, households' eligibility for free and reduced price meals shall remain in effect beginning on the date of eligibility for the current school year and ending on or before the first 30 operating days of the subsequent school year. This provision does not apply when the initial eligibility determination was incorrect or when verification of household eligibility does not support the level of benefits for which the household was approved. In those instances, Approval and Verification Officials must make appropriate changes in eligibility. Additionally, this provision does not apply when a household is given temporary approval.

Beginning school year 2004-2005 Approval Officials will determine household eligibility for free and reduced price meals in the traditional manner, at or about the beginning of the school year. Once approved for free or reduced price benefits, a household will remain eligible for those benefits for a maximum of 30 days after the first operating day in the subsequent school year or when a new eligibility determination is made in the new school year, whichever comes first. The household is no longer required to report changes in circumstances, such as an increase in income of \$50 per month (\$600 annually), a decrease in household size or when the household is no longer certified eligible for food stamps or Ohio Works First (OWF).

The current Free and Reduced Price School Meals application package includes instructions for households to report the changes in household income and household size mentioned above. We do not expect school food authorities (SFA) to make changes in their free and reduced price application materials for the 2004-2005 school year because this change occurs so late in the year. However, SFAs may use other means to notify households that they do not have to report changes. For example, households may be notified via the annual Public Release or their Notification Letter of approval for free and reduced price school meals.

National School Lunch Program Sponsors  
Page 2  
October 13, 2004

Please note that households may continue to apply for benefits any time during the school year. As noted above, this provision does not apply to households who are provided “temporary” approvals. We continue to encourage Approval Officials to approve households on a temporary basis when their need for assistance appears to be short-term, such as when the household reports zero income or a temporary reduction in income. A suggested time period for temporary approvals is 45 days. At the end of the temporary approval, the Approval Official must re-evaluate the household’s situation.

If you have any questions, please contact our Office at 614-466-2945.

RZ:kb