



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Sponsors of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs

**FROM:** Cheryl Resha, Education Manager  
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

**DATE:** September 19, 2008

**SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum # 27-08**  
Verification of Free and Reduced Meal Applications

By **November 15<sup>th</sup>** local education agencies (LEA) must complete verification of a sample of their approved free and reduced price meal applications. The verification sample is obtained from new meal applications on file as of the first operating day in October. The sample size is selected using one of the methods outlined in the updated United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) guidance: *Eligibility Manual for School Meals* which may be downloaded at: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Nutrition/EligibilityManual.pdf>. (A hard copy was mailed to all LEAs last spring.) Updated Verification forms may be downloaded at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320644>. Additionally, enclosed are two tools to assist you in conducting this process:

1. **Important Points to Remember**, and
2. **The Verification Check List**

Please note that the new Manual uses new terminology for the different types of verification processes. *Standard Sample Size* was previously known as Basic Sample Size Verification; *Alternate One* was known as Random Sampling; and *Alternate Two* was known as Focused Sampling.

As a reminder, LEAs may use the Alternate One or Alternate Two methods of verification if the district meets either of the following conditions:

**Condition #1 known as a Lowered non-response rate**

- Any district where the non-response rate for the prior school year is less **than 20 percent**, or

**Condition #2 known as an Improved non-response rate**

- LEAs with more than 20,000 children approved for free and reduced price meals by application as eligible for free or reduced price meals as of October 1 of the school

year may use an alternate sample size for any school year when its non-response rate for the preceding school year is at least ten percent below the non-response rate for the second preceding school year.

If a school district's 2007-2008 Verification Summary Report indicated that they had a **non response rate** of 20% or more, the school district is **required** to use the Standard Sample Size to conduct Verification.

For more information, refer to Part 8: "Verification of Eligibility for School Meals" in the *Eligibility Manual for School Meals*.

Questions pertaining to this memorandum may be directed to:

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Enclosures