

## DIRECT CERTIFICATION IMPORTANT REMINDERS

This document provides important reminders regarding the direct certification process for school nutrition programs. For technical questions about accessing the system or data collection efforts, please contact the direct certification Help Desk at 860-713-6681. For questions about free and reduced-price application processing and direct certification regulations, please refer to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) *Eligibility Manual for School Meals*, or contact your Child Nutrition Programs [technical support person](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).

- Only one person per local educational agency (LEA) may be the direct certification contact with access to the [Direct Certification Web Application Sign In](#). For information regarding the direct certification process, see The New Look of Direct Certification [Webinar](#) and [PowerPoint presentation](#).
- To determine the LEA's direct certification contact, refer to the [LEA Direct Certification Contact Person List](#).
- If the direct certification contact changes, notify Maria Santini at [maria.santini@ct.gov](mailto:maria.santini@ct.gov) with the name, e-mail address and phone number of the new contact. Also notify the food service director so the online agreement can be updated with the new contact information. The new online agreement now requires the name and contact information of the LEA's direct certification contact. When Maria has received and processed the new contact request, the new contact will receive a confirmation e-mail with instructions on how to set-up a user ID and password.
- If the district has an intersponsor agreement with a **private** school and is claiming those meals or assisting with the processing of the school's free and reduced-price meal applications, the district must work with the private school to gain access to their direct certification information. Private schools have a different process for obtaining direct certification data. For more information, see the [Direct Certification Manual for Private Schools](#).
- If the district has an intersponsor agreement with a **public** school and is claiming those meals or assisting with the processing of the school's free and reduced-price meal applications, the district may request (with the other district/school's approval) a login ID and password from the CSDE to access the district's direct certification database.
- Accessing the direct certification system is **not** optional. All LEAs that are collecting and approving free and reduced-price meal applications must access the direct certification Web site at least once weekly. The information is updated on Monday, unless it is a holiday. The database should be accessed on Tuesdays (the day after the batch is matched) to allow the information to be completely updated. If you have questions regarding accessing the information, please contact the Help Desk at 860-713-6681.
- Students that were not matched at the CSDE/Department of Social Services level are placed in Case Management on the direct certification Web site. LEAs must access Case Management **weekly** to determine if any students in the LEA are directly certified.
- The "Benefit Source" column on the direct certification spreadsheet shows the codes for each type of direct certification. It is important that the determining official uses these codes when recording a student as being directly certified as free. This will help to ensure that the students are included in the appropriate section on the FNS 742 Verification Collection Report. The USDA wants to know which students are directly certified as "FS," "AF" and "OT." In addition, the LEA must extend free benefits to all children in the household if a child is listed as "FS" or "AF" on the direct certification list. If a child is listed as "OT," benefits are **not** extended to all children in the household.

## DIRECT CERTIFICATION IMPORTANT REMINDERS, continued

- Remember to extend free eligibility to all children in the household if a child’s name is found on the direct certification list. For more information, see the USDA’s [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#).
- If the “State Wide Search” is used to find a student and a student is located, you must **take and print a screen snapshot** as proof that the child was found in the direct certification system.
- An additional feature within the “State Wide Search” tab is the ability to search by the **Authorized Unit (AU) Number**. The AU is a data element that can be found on the **Review Matched** report and represents the unique number for a **household**. This AU Number will be shared by each child within the same household. It is therefore a good way to track households with multiple last names, and to track siblings within the household that attend different schools within the district (see example below).

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Records shown below have been matched to the PSIS SASID module and Direct Certification databases. Status on the Direct Certification has been set to Certified.  
Benefit Source Key: FS=SNAP; AF=TFA (or TANF); OT=Foster, Homeless, Runaway, Head Start, Pre K Even Start.  
Note: A child in the Other (OT) benefit source category DOES NOT automatically determine that additional children in the same household qualify for benefits.

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SASID	Client Number	Last Name	First Name	MI	DOB	Street Number	Street	City	Zip Addr	Au Num	Benefit Source	Date Certified	School Name

### QUESTIONS? Contact the Help Desk at 860-713-6681.



For more information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Direct Certification](#) Web page or contact the [school nutrition programs](#) staff in the CSDE Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

This handout is available at [www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/directcert/dcremind.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/directcert/dcremind.pdf).

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*To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:*

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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