



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program's Seamless Summer Option and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

FROM: John Frassinelli, Chief
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

DATE: June 26, 2014

SUBJECT: **Operational Memorandum #40-14 and #04-14-SFSP**
Area Eligibility Using Census Data

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide new information regarding the availability of census data used to establish area eligibility in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Summer Seamless Option (SSO). This memorandum includes recently clarified flexibility in using census data for area eligibility determinations.

The Secretary may use census data in determining area eligibility for the SFSP and CACFP, as authorized by the National School Lunch Act [42 USC 1761(a)(1)(A)(II) and 1766(f)(3)(A)(ii)(I)(aa)]. Under existing CACFP and SFSP regulations, census data may be used to determine area eligibility for CACFP day care homes and certain SFSP and SSO sites. Eligibility is established when census data indicate that at least 50 percent of the children residing in the area are members of households that meet the income standards for free or reduced-price meals [7 CFR 225.6(c)(3)(B) and 226.15(f)]. Previous policy guidance identified the Census Block Groups (CBGs) to be the geographical unit used to assess eligibility for CACFP, SFSP, and SSO when using census data [CACFP 07-2012, SFSP 09-2012, *Eligibility Based on Census Data: 2012 Data Release*, February 13, 2013].

Occasionally, a potential CACFP day care home, SFSP or SSO site is determined not to be area eligible, but is located immediately adjacent to an eligible area. This proximity suggests that the children residing in the area from which the homes or site would most likely draw participants would have a likelihood of similar census demographics. In recognizing that likelihood and allowing additional flexibility in the use of census data to establish area eligibility, we can ensure area eligibility determinations accurately identify areas in which poor economic conditions exist. Therefore, CACFP day care homes, SFSP and SSO sites may be determined area eligible using either CBG's or Census Tracts. Census Tracts are geographical units that consist of one or more CBGs.

Additionally, based on analysis of the proposed location, with both State agency and Regional Office approval, up to three adjacent CBGs may be averaged, using a weighted average, to determine eligibility. In all CBGs being averaged, at least 40 percent of children must be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Census Tracts may not be combined.

Therefore, using these flexibilities, CACFP day care homes, SFSP and SSO sites are considered area eligible if:

- 50 percent or more of the children in a CBG are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals;
- 50 percent or more of the children in a Census Tract are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals; or
- the percentage of children eligible for free or reduced-price meals in up to three adjacent CBGs when averaged is 50 percent or more, provided that at least 40 percent of children in each of the combined CBGs are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, as described above.

Data Availability

Census Tract and CBG data is now available through the Food and Nutrition Service [Area Eligibility Mapper](#).

Instructions for determining eligibility using these data are provided in the same folder as the data. The instructions offer two different tools to determine eligibility:

1. The FNS Area Eligibility Mapper.
2. A map developed by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC).

The FRAC map is constructed from the same data files and may be used to determine eligibility.

Questions may be directed to:

COUNTY ASSIGNMENTS	CONSULTANT	E-MAIL AND PHONE
Fairfield County	Fionnuala Brown	fionnuala.brown@ct.gov 860-807-2129
Hartford County (towns/cities beginning with A-R)	Teri Dandeneau	teri.dandeneau@ct.gov 860-807-2079
Hartford County (towns/cities beginning with S-W) Windham County	Susan Alston	susan.alston@ct.gov 860-807-2081
Litchfield County	Allison Calhoun-White	allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov 860-807-2008
Middlesex County Tolland County	Andy Paul	andrew.paul@ct.gov 860-807-2048
New Haven County	Jackie Schipke	jackie.schipke@ct.gov 860-807-2123
New London County	Monica Pacheco	monica.pacheco@ct.gov 860-807-2073

JF:tdd

Attachment

This is a numbered Operational Memorandum that contains important program information. Please read carefully and retain in a binder for future reference. Operational Memoranda are posted on the Connecticut State Department of Education’s Child Nutrition Web site at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320676>.