Free & Reduced Price Meal Applications

School Year 2022-2023

Hawall Child Nutrition Programs

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Objectives

- Purpose of applications
- The Free and Reduced Price Meal Application
- Application Materials
- Reviewing & processing applications
- Carryover period
- Master List
- Second / Independent Review of Applications



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Purpose of Applications

- Documentation is required for student to receive free or reduced benefits
 - Direct Certification

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- Categorical Eligibility / Other Source Categorical Eligibility (participates in assistance program, homeless, runaway, migrant, foster)
- Meal Applications

▶ Without documentation, student must pay for meals



 Errors in the Certification and Benefit Issuance process are considered a Performance Standard 1 violation

Potential for Fiscal Action! \$



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Free and Reduced Price Application - Prototype

- DO NOT use last year's application
- Recommend using HCNP's prototype application
 Modeled after USDA prototype
- ▶ The SY 2022-2023 version is available on HCNP's website
- "HCNP Free and Reduced Price Meal Application SY 2022-23"
 http://hcnp.hawaii.gov/overview/nslp/,

Program Resources \rightarrow Free and Reduced Price Application

SP 09-2018 https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP09 <u>2018os.pdf</u> Web-based prototype released by USDA in 2016 Does not 'mimic' paper applications Contains integrity features that ensure completeness & accuracy USDA encourages use of online applications to decrease error

- Check if your POS is capable
- Potential to reach more families

Application Materials Send to all households at or near the beginning of the school year: Free and Reduced Price Meal Application, SY 2022-2023 'How to Apply for Free and Reduced Price School Meals' 'Frequently Asked Questions About Free and Reduced Price School Meals' These are posted on HCNP website http://hcnp.hawaii.gov/overview/nslp/,

Program Resources \rightarrow Free and Reduced Price Application

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Application Materials

Other forms available on HCNP's website:

<u>https://hcnp.hawaii.gov/overview/nslp/</u> → Program Resources → Free and Reduced Price Application

- Notice to Households of Approval/Denial of Benefits
- Sharing Information with Other Programs
- Sharing Information with Medicaid/CHIP



FREE



- Local news media, unemployment office, major employers in school area that are initiating large layoffs within school area
- USDA encourages sharing this information throughout the school year
 School website, newsletters, social media
- A press release template is available on the HCNP website
- Don't pay to publish

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► Keep copy on file for HCNP to review during Administrative Review

STEP 2: Application Packet

- ▶ Free and Reduced Price Application
 - If using HCNP Prototype, ensure school name is on front of application
- Instructions and Frequently Asked Questions Forms
 If using HCNP forms, fill in blanks with appropriate information
- Print copies for every student enrolled at each school
 - Application, Instructions, FAQs



School year begins July 1st Send application packet near beginning of school year to allow time to process

- Best practices for making materials available:
 - Send home with each student on first day of school
 - Mail to household (email as an alternative)
 - Put in registration/enrollment packet
 - Post on school website, if applicable





Remember, you <u>CANNOT</u> require any child or household to submit an application. However, they must be aware that they have the right to do so at any time during the school year.



STEP 4: Processing Applications

- Date stamp applications when they are returned to school
 Application must be processed within 10 operating days of receipt
- Check applications for completeness
- Remember: the sooner you process and certify an application, the sooner that student receives the benefit they are entitled to



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SNAP / TANF Case Number

- When a household submits an application indicating an Assistance Program:
- Verify that case number matches the format used by the applicable program
- ▶ The child must be given free meals
- The determining official should compare the case number to the DC list
 - If there's a match:
 - Retain the application on file, but do not process it
 - Place household on the DC list
 - Eligibility is extended to all children in the household
 - If no match:
 - Contact the household for clarification, or
 - Verify for cause

Incomplete Applications Number of household members does not equal number of names on application Frequency of income is missing Missing SNAP/TANF number (when #2 was checked 'yes')

- SNAP/TANF number is questionable
- No adult signature
- No SS# and 'none' box is not checked



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Incomplete Applications

The SFA "should make reasonable efforts to contact the household in order to clarify or obtain the required information"

- Contact household to obtain missing information
- Document the communication
 - Initial/date, who was contacted in the household, and the outcome
 - Do not use white out!
- ► For missing signature: request parent come to school to sign the application
- If unable to contact the household, send "Notice of Approval/Denial of Benefits"
 - Denied for incomplete application

Indication of 'No Income'

- Application instructions explain how a household should report income
 - If a household member(s) does not have income, they should mark 'zero' in income field
 - Leaving income field blank is indicative of 'no income'
- An application with a blank income field is considered <u>complete and can be processed</u>
 - Suspicious applications Verify for Cause (October)

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Income Eligibility Guidelines

- Not available to general public
- Ensure the SY 2022-23 guidelines are being used
- Income conversion factors are on bottom back of HCNP prototype application
- If application indicates multiple income frequencies:
- Convert to annual income then make determination



Use	for all Ct	ild Netrit	ion Progr	ams to de	termine	eligibility f	or Free a	nd Reduc	ed-Price	Meals or N	lik.			
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2	27,378	2,282	1,141	1,053	527	2	38,961	3,247	1,624	1,499	750			
3	34,437	2,870	1,435	1,325	663	3	49,007	4,084	2,042	1,885	943			
4	41,496	3,458	1,729	1,596	798	4	59,052	4,921	2,461	2,272	1,136			
5	48,555	4,047	2,024	1,868	934	5	69,098	5,759	2,880	2,658	1,329			
6	55,614	4,635	2,318	2,139	1,070	6	79,143	6,596	3,298	3,044	1,522		K.	
7	62,673	5,223	2,612	2,411	1,206	7	89,189	7,433	3,717	3,431	1,716			
8	69,732	5,811	2,906	2,682	1,341	8	99,234	8,270	4,135	3,817	1,909			
9	76,791	6,400	3,201	2,954	1,477	9	109,280	9,108	4,554	4,204	2,103			
10	83,850	6,989	3,496	3.226	1,613	10	119,326	9,946	4,973	4.591	2,297			
11	90,909	7,578	3,791	3,498	1,749	11	129,372	10,784	5,392	4,978	2,491	X		
12	97,968	8,167	4,096	3,770	1,885	12	139,418	11,622	5,811	5,365	2,685	< Y .		
13	105,027	8,756	4,381	4,042	2,021	13	149,464	12,460	6,230	5,752	2,879			
14	112,085	9,345	4,676	4.314	2,157	14	159,510	13,298	6,649	6,139	3,073			



Notice of Approval or Denial

ALL households must be notified of their eligibility status

Make two copies of the letter:

Send the original to the household

Keep a copy on file at school

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A letter template is available for use on HCNP's website





Discontinuing Benefits

- At end of 30 operating days, benefits must be stopped if an application for current SY was not submitted
- If the child has been determined ineligible based on new application, new status is effective immediately
 Do not wait until end of 30 day carryover period

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Helpful Tips

- Keep a separate log with a tally of the answers to the ethnicity/race questions
 - ► This will be useful for completing the Ethnic Data Report
- Identify error prone applications
 - ►Add a check mark, use post-its, etc.
 - MUCH easier when verification rolls around in October

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Master List

- Each school <u>MUST</u> have a system for issuing benefits and updating each student's eligibility status
 List must be maintained onsite
- This is what is referred to as the Master List
 - Consists of name of each student enrolled (updated continually throughout the year), eligibility status/changes, start and end dates
- Separate from meal counting system and POS
- Helpful in completing edit checks



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STEP 1 LISTALL	Household Members who are infants, ch	hildren, and students up to and includir	ng grade 12 (if more spa	ices are required for additional names, attach another sheet o	f paper
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