



Verification for Cause Fact Sheet

Verification for Cause – The school has an obligation to verify all questionable applications (verification “for cause”). If an application is complete and indicates that the child is eligible for free or reduced price benefits, the application **must** be approved at face value. Only after the determination of eligibility has been made can the school begin the verification for cause process.

Why conduct Verification for Cause?

1. Reduces the number of non-responders during the traditional verification process
2. Ensures integrity of the program by verifying all questionable applications
3. Reduces likelihood of mandatory error prone verification during the traditional verification process

Tips on Verification for Cause

- ✓ If conducted prior to October 1, remove any applications verified for cause from the total number of applications when conducting traditional verification.
- ✓ Consider automatically verifying all non-responders from the previous school year.
- ✓ Verify all applications with zero income.
- ✓ Verify SNAP (food stamp)/TANF applications (categorical applications) that cannot be found on the Direct Certification & Verification database in CNPweb.
- ✓ Verify foster applications that do not result in a clear identification of foster status during the approval process.
- ✓ See [SP 13-2012 Verification for Cause in the School Meals Programs](#) regarding the submission of school district employees' applications. School employees *should not* be approving their own applications.

Procedure

1. If an application is complete and indicates that the child is eligible for free or reduced price benefits, approve the application. Only after the determination of eligibility has been made can the school begin the verification for cause process.
 - Pull any applications verified for cause from the rest of the applications.
2. Conduct [Direct Verification](#), if available. (Open from October to January each year.)
3. If an application cannot be verified through direct verification, send the household a [Confirm Your Eligibility for Free/Reduced Price Meals](#) letter explaining that they must submit verification of eligibility information for continued eligibility.
 - The [Confirm Your Eligibility for Free/Reduced Price Meals](#) letter may be sent at the same time as a notice of eligibility.
4. The school verifies applications for cause by following the same process as regular verification.
5. After the requested information has been submitted, the household must be sent a [We Have Checked Your Application](#) letter stating the findings of verification.

- Any household that fails to submit requested verification documentation by the date specified in the *Confirm Your Eligibility for Free/Reduced Price Meals* letter must be sent a *We Have Checked Your Application* letter stating that their student(s) will go back to paid status.
- If a household submits another application after they have been terminated due to non-response in the same school year, then they must submit proof of eligibility (income, food stamp, or TANF) before the application is reviewed.
- If a household did not respond and submits another application the following school year, process the application. If approved for benefits, apply benefits immediately. After applying benefits, verify the application for cause.