Direct Certification (DC)

Direct Certification is the process by which eligible children are certified eligible for free or reduced price meals without the need for a household application. Eligibility is based on household participation in one or more Federal assistance programs such as FoodShare, W-2 cash benefits, some types of Medicaid, the Wisconsin foster care system and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). A benefit of Direct Certification is that it reduces the number of household applications that must be distributed and processed by the school food authority (SFA).

Resources
DC User Manual
DC Webcast
DC Website
DC School Codes
Eligibility Manual for School Meals

DC Calendar of Requirements

Full enrollment DC runs are required four times a year for most SFAs.
RCCI are exempt from Direct Certification requirements.
**SFAs participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) SFA-wide are only required to conduct a run before November 1 and in March.

Run 1: At the start of the school year (between July 1 and the first day of school)
Run 2: Three months after the first run (between October and December)
Run 3: Six months after the first run (between January and March)
Run 4: Between March 15 and April 1 for the CEP proxy report.

Getting Started with Direct Certification

Problem: I don't know who is responsible for Direct Certification.

Solution: Usually the person listed as the Determining Official on the school nutrition online contract is responsible for conducting DC. There may be more than one DO at your SFA.

Problem: I just found out I'm responsible for conducting DC and have no idea what to do or where to get started.

Solution: First, watch the DC Webcast which will walk you through the process of gaining access, creating a student input file, uploading it to the database, and what to do with the student match file. Then set up a WIEXT Username, and complete and submit a DC Access Request Form making sure all fields are complete and the form is signed by your supervisor. Once you receive confirmation of your account activation, you may begin conducting Direct Certification. Please reference the DC User Manual for step-by-step instructions.

Accessing Direct Certification

Problem: I got a "not assigned to group" error when trying to log in to DC.

Solution: Complete the DC Access Form, remembering to include your WIEXT Username, have it signed by your supervisor, and return the form by email to DPIFNS@dpi.wi.gov or fax to (608) 267-0363 for processing. Once submitted, you will receive confirmation by email in two to three business days.

Problem: I used to conduct DC for a different School Food Authority (SFA) and now require access for a new SFA.

Solution: If you have conducted DC for a different SFA in the past, you can use the same WIEXT username/password and do not need to create a new username, but you must complete and submit the DC Access Form in order to have access for the new SFA. You may also need to update the email address associated with your WIEXT ID.

Problem: I've run DC before and tried to log in today and it says I'm locked out.

Solution: Call the DCF Service Desk at (855)264-6323. They can unlock your account over the phone.

Problem: I forgot my password.

Solution: Go to the Password Recovery Page of WIEXT and follow the prompts.

Problem: I forgot my username.

Solution: Go to the Username Recovery Page of WIEXT and follow the prompts.

Problem: The person who used to conduct Direct Certification retired and gave me their username and password. Is this allowed?

Solution: No! The User ID for Direct Certification is considered the personal property of the person who created it, and it may never be shared with another individual. Please email dpifns@dpi.wi.gov if a staff member with Direct Certification access for your SFA has a change of employment or duties so their access can be removed.

Conducting Direct Certification

Problem: I got an error saying my student input file was incorrectly formatted.

Solution: The student input file must be correctly formatted to successfully conduct DC. Using spreadsheet software like Microsoft Excel, Open Office, or Google Sheets, follow this formatting:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
	Last Name	**First Name**	**Middle Initial** (May leave column blank)	**Date of Birth** (MM/DD/YYYY)	**School use** (May leave column blank)	**School Code**
Row 1	Adamson	Edward	B	11/13/2013	Acme Elementary	40

You must delete the header (title) row before saving the file as a .txt (tab delimited file) to upload into DC.

Problem: I got an error code (B, F, L, ###) for one or more students in my student match file.

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Solution: Most often, this occurs when the formatting above is not followed for a few students in your upload file or an unallowed punctuation mark is included in one of the name columns. Apostrophes and hyphens are permitted in the first, middle, and last name columns, but other punctuation marks may cause errors.

Problem: I got an error that says the district enrollment differs by 5% or more.

Solution: DC has a feature to prevent users from conducting partial enrollment runs as full enrollment runs and vice versa using enrollment data to verify. If you get this error, please email DPIFNS@dpi.wi.gov with the total number of students enrolled at each site in your SFA and DPI School Nutrition Team Staff will verify the reported enrollment against claim data and update the system. The first DC run of the year will set the enrollment edit check until February when the enrollment from the October lunch claim will be used.

Other Issues

Problem: I uploaded my SFA's student input file and got a "Unassigned to School" or "Unknown School Code" error.

Solution: In a full-enrollment DC run, all students listed in your student input file must have a valid school code listed in Column F. The school code listed on a student's line should match their primary enrollment. Students with secondary enrollments must not be listed twice on the full enrollment run. Students who are not enrolled may never be included in any DC run.

Problem: Which students do I include in my SFA's full enrollment DC runs?

Solution: Include only students who are enrolled in your SFA who have access to a meal while in attendance. Students who attend a "not in program" site in your SFA may have their eligibility discovered in a partial enrollment run but should not be included in a full-run for reporting purposes.

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