



# WISCONSIN SCHOOL NUTRITION IN A NUTSHELL

## Verification

To maintain the integrity of the USDA Child Nutrition Programs, each School Food Authority (SFA) must annually verify the eligibility of children from a sample of household applications approved for free and reduced price meal benefits for that school year. Verification is required to confirm eligibility determined through the application process, not through Direct Certification.

### **Step One: Completed by the Verifying Official**

To get started with verification your SFA must complete the following:

- Determine who is listed in the School Nutrition Online Contract as the Verifying Official. This person conducts verification.
- Consult the verification letter, sent before October 1, to the Authorized Representative and Food Service Director of your SFA from the DPI School Nutrition Team, to find out which sample method is required at your SFA. The sample method determines how many applications need to be verified.

Sample Methods	Details
<b>Standard</b>	Verify 3% of applications considered <i>error-prone</i> income applications on file as of October 1. <i>Error-prone</i> applications are within \$100.00 a month or \$1200.00 a year of the cut off for receiving free or reduced meals.
<b>Alternate One</b>	Verify 3% of all approved applications on file as of October 1, selected at random.
<b>Alternate Two</b>	Verify 1% of all approved applications on file as of October 1 selected from error prone applications <u>and</u> 0.5% of applications that provide a case number in lieu of income information.

- Determine the number of approved applications on file as of October 1 from the current school year.
- Start the verification around October 1.

If your SFA is completing verification manually, the [Sample Method Worksheet](#) must be used.

If your SFA is completing verification using free and reduced application software, you must ensure that the correct sample method is applied.

## Step 2: Completed by the Confirming Official

Before reaching out to the household(s) selected for verification, the following steps are required:

- The Confirming Official must review only the application(s) selected for verification to ensure the initial determination was accurate. This person is listed in the School Nutrition Online Contract.
- The Confirming Official signs and dates the back of the application after checking the accuracy of initial determination.
  - Refer to the [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#) if errors on the initial determination are identified.

## Step 3: Completed by the Verifying Official

Verification must be completed by **November 15** and the following steps are required:

- Provide the “[We Must Check](#)” notification letter to household(s) whose application are selected for verification.
- Review documents provided by households to determine if they support the information provided on the application and the eligibility determination.
- Documents that may be provided can include:
  - Paycheck stubs, Social Security retirement benefit letter, statement of benefits received, or pension award notice.
  - Notice of eligibility from State employment security office or letter from the Worker’s Compensation’s office.
  - For child support, a court decree, agreement, or copies of checks or bank statement showing the amount received. Information that shows the amount of income received, name of person who received, how often it is received, and the date received.
  - For no income, a brief note explaining how you provide for your household expenses (food, clothing, and housing, etc.).
- At least one follow-up attempt is required to contact the household if there is no response or insufficient documents are received.
  - When following up with households, the SFA must inform them failure to complete the verification request will result in termination of benefits.
- Once documents are reviewed, provide the notification letter “[We Have Checked](#)” to the household(s). This notification letter informs households of the outcome of verification and if there was a change in eligibility. If no documents are submitted, the household will change to a paid status.
- Verifying Official signs and dates application or tracking tool.
- If a Hearing is requested by the household to contest the outcome of verification the original benefit status remains until the hearing process is complete.
- Update the Point of Service (POS) and Benefit Issuance list (BI) if there are any changes to eligibility.
  - The eligibility must be changed within 3 days if the student will receive a benefit increase due to verification.
  - A household must be provided 10 calendar days before the benefit is decreased or terminated as a result of verification.
- Maintain all records on file from verification for three years plus the current school year.

## Step 4: Verification Collection Report

For the final steps the following is required:

- Report the results of verification on the Verification Collection Report (VCR).
- Review [Verification Collection Report instructions](#) and submit data online.
- Verification Collection Report must be completed by February 1.