



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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SNP Memo #2012-13-01

TO: Directors, Supervisors, and Contact Persons Addressed

FROM: Catherine Digilio Grimes, MS, RD, LDN, SNS
Director, School Nutrition Programs

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Catherine Digilio Grimes'.

DATE: August 31, 2012

SUBJECT: REVISED Eligibility Manual for School Meals Updated August 2012

The U. S. Department of Agriculture has updated the Eligibility *Manual for School Meals* effective August 2012.

This new version **REPLACES the October 2011 version**. It incorporates several clarifications and, as applicable, any guidance issued since the last revision. A few sections have been rearranged or reformatted.

Please review this manual as you process any new applications for meal benefits.

The changes are highlighted throughout the manual and are effective immediately. The highlighted version is attached and will be available on the USDA website for three months. After that, only an un-highlighted version will be available.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/policy.htm>.

The highlighted updates have already been discussed at meetings or address with school divisions.

Some of the areas of clarification are:

- Verification and Reporting of Foster Children
- Direct Certification and Zero Benefit Households
- Applications and Other Household Materials for Limited English Proficient Households
- Verification for Cause in the School Meals Programs
- Preventing Overt Identification of Children Certified for Free or Reduced Price School Meals

Two areas that USDA has put emphasis on in this manual:

1. **Limited English Proficiency**: Complying with requirements related to families with limited English proficiency (LEP) (See USDA memo SP42-2012)

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Policy-Memos/2012/SP42-2012os.pdf>). School divisions are responsible for ensuring that their applications and other household materials (letter, application, instructions, notices, and verification materials) are available in a language the LEP household can understand and that there is an appropriate means of communication with LEP households. Most schools have a system in place to identify primary language for communications regarding the child's education. Some use information gained from a Home Language Survey, which is conducted at enrollment to determine the dominant language in the home. USDA FNS has an "*I speak*" list to identify the appropriate language for communications regarding school meals.

(<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/frp/Ispeak.pdf>). School division must ensure that all LEP households applying receive language services if necessary; simply offering the most common alternative language is not sufficient. The VDOE provides prototype material in English and Spanish translations. The Department of Agriculture has prototype materials on their website for more than 30 other languages (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/frp/frp.process.htm>)

2. **Preventing overt identification.** See USDA memo SP 45-2012
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Policy-Memos/2012/SP45-2012os.pdf>

If you have any questions, please contact the school nutrition specialist assigned to your division or the School Nutrition Programs Office at (804) 225-2074.

Good luck for a successful school year!

CDG/idl
Attachment