



Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

Park Office  
Center

3101 Park  
Center Drive  
Alexandria  
VA 22302

DATE: June 29, 2017

MEMO CODE: SP 36-2017; CACFP 15-2017; SFSP 11-2017

SUBJECT: 2017 Edition of the Eligibility Manual for School Meals

TO: Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Directors  
Child Nutrition Programs  
All States

Attached is the 2017 edition of the *Eligibility Manual for School Meals*. This manual provides comprehensive information on Federal requirements, policies, and procedures, and is intended to help State agencies and local educational agencies (LEAs) accurately determine, certify, and verify children's eligibility for free or reduced price school meals and free milk.

The manual is divided into six sections: Getting Started; The Basis of Eligibility; Establishing Eligibility; The School Meal Application; Confidentiality and Disclosure; and Verification.

This edition replaces the version released in July 2016, SP 50-2016, CACFP 19-2016, SFSP 17-2016: *2016 Edition of the Eligibility Manual for School Meals*.

**New in the 2017 Edition**

This edition incorporates clarifications requested by State agencies and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Offices, as well as applicable guidance issued since the last revision in July 2016. Notable changes are highlighted in yellow throughout the manual. Formatting changes and minor changes to the language are not highlighted, as they do not represent a change in policy.

New this year, regulatory citations were added throughout the manual. Additional citations for FNS policy memoranda were also added, along with links to the School Programs Policy Page.

FNS also added "Questions and Answers" (Q&As) to the end of each section of the manual. These Q&As give State agencies and LEAs guidance on eligibility-related issues that have raised questions in the past. The Q&As will be updated in future editions of the *Eligibility Manual* to address new questions from State agencies and LEAs.

Regional Directors  
State Directors  
Page 2

State agencies are reminded to distribute this information to Program operators immediately. Program operators should direct any questions regarding this memorandum to the appropriate State agency. State agency contact information is available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/school-meals-contacts>. State agencies should direct questions to the appropriate FNS Regional Office.

**Original Signed**

Angela Kline  
Director, Policy and Program Development Division  
Child Nutrition Programs

Attachment