

NOTICE: Change in Direct Certification Data Collection for **CEP schools/districts** and **Provision 2 Breakfast and Lunch schools/districts.**

USDA MEMO Code: SP54-2016

13. [Revised] How often are LEAs electing CEP required to run direct certification

Under 245.6(b)(1)(v), LEAs electing CEP are required to conduct a data match between SNAP records and student enrollment records **at least once annually**. State agencies may conduct data matching on behalf of LEAs and exempt LEAs from this requirement. See the “Reporting and Recordkeeping” section of this guidance for information on reporting Data Element #3 on the FNS-834 form.

Conducting direct certification at least annually allows LEAs participating in CEP to take advantage of any ISP increases. Additionally, running direct certification helps LEAs observe demographic trends. For example, if direct certification rates are trending toward a decrease that makes CEP fiscally unfeasible, running direct certification could help LEAs plan in advance to return to standard counting and claiming.

To comply with the requirement, LEAs will report Direct Certification numbers as of October 31 by Individual School on the **FRL 001 Report (FTE Report)**. There are two fields Direct Certification data fields on the report. One is titled **Pre-K Direct Certification** and the other is titled **KK-12 Direct Certification**. Directly Certified Students include ALL students categorically free for school meals without an application. Included are:

- DC’s from the statewide look up
- Extended eligibles of the above DC’s
- Homeless (official list signed, usually by School Social Worker)
- Migrant (official list from portal)
- Runaways (official list signed)
- Foster without Application (list from DFACS)
- Headstart students sponsored by the school system (No contracted meals)

Some suggestions to accomplish this data collection task are:

1. Upload the Statewide Look-up of Directly Certified students. If possible and available, use a GTID field in matching since it is used in the state matching process along with name and birthdate.
2. Using the local system’s Student Information System (SIS) and recruiting assistance of the district’s IT department to create an address match. This address match will allow you to compare DC’s to other household members and therefore make extended eligible matching by household.
3. Develop relationships with other qualifying departments that can provide official list of categorically eligible students without applications. Gather list and compile data.