July 1, 2026

Re: Meal Program Income Verification

# **Important Changes to Free/Reduced Application Information**

The USDA has enacted new regulations regarding certain types of meal program applications. This is effective with the 2026-2027 school year. To ensure compliance with USDA regulations (7CFR 245.6a(c)(7), the following type of applications submitted for meal benefits will be ***verified for cause*** immediately after approval of the application:

1. Applications with zero or blank income (Applications with $0.00 listed for income will be subject to further verification requirements including additional documentation)

2. SNAP/TANF applications in which the case number submitted is not found in the Electronic Direct Certification System (Applications with invalid SNAP/TANF case numbers will be subject to further verification requirements including additional documentation)

3. Foster child application in which the student is not found in the Electronic Direct Certification System (Applications claiming a foster child not listed in the Electronic Direct Certification System will be subject to further verification)

4. Any application in which the district has first hand knowledge of unreported income

5. An application in which the family is reapplying after a denial by using a different income or frequency amount.
   per ISBE Sept. 18, 2026

Families will receive requests for financial information via USPS.

****Failure to comply with the requests for additional information will result in a loss of benefits per ISBE regulations.****