

# *OSPI School Meal Programs Reference Sheet*

## **Meal Application Materials – Web-based and Scanned**

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are encouraged to make electronic applications available and accept applications electronically. LEAs may also use scanned applications. Both formats must meet program requirements and web-based applications must comply with security requirements.

**LEAs are highly encouraged to consult with district legal counsel about signatures, security, and applicable state laws before contracting for a web-based meal application system.**

## **Requirements**

LEAs must ensure web-based and scanned meal applications meet all United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements and accurately approve/deny free and reduced-price meal benefits.

### **Web-based Applications:**

- Data must be secured and protected against loss, disclosure, and misuse.
- Must be able to provide legal binding electronic signatures.
  - Level 2 authentication meets program requirements.
- The system should include a statement explaining how to obtain a paper application should a household need one.

### **Web-based and Scanned Applications:**

- The application must contain the information required on the USDA prototype meal application.
- Must include a question or data field to indicate a child's migrant or homeless status.
- May ask for a student identification number or a child's birthdate.
  - The application is considered complete without this information.
  - The electronic system must advance without the information if it is not provided.

## **Standard Meal Application Requirements**

LEAs must include:

- Opening Paragraph:
  - *This application may qualify you for: meal benefits, Summer EBT benefits (if enrolled in a NSLP/SBP school), reduced fees for other programs and activities, and/or help secure funding for your school district. If your child(ren) are enrolled in a Community Eligibility Provision*



*(CEP) or Provision 2 school, completing this application will not impact your eligibility to receive meals at no cost.*

- Use of Information Statement-
  - *"I certify (promise) that all information on this application is true, that all income is reported, and that my household does not receive Summer EBT benefits through a different State or Indian Tribal Organization (if applicable). I understand that this information is given in connection with the receipt of federal funds and that school officials may verify (check) the information. I am aware that if I purposefully give false information, my children may lose meal benefits, and I may be prosecuted under applicable State and Federal laws."*
- Children's Racial and Ethnic Identities section.
- Indication of *No Income* statement.
- Option for providing a case number for Basic Food, TANF, or FDPIR, as well as foster child.
- Full Non-discrimination statement.
- Public School Districts must include the school district non-discrimination statement on widely disseminated materials.
- Field for reporting total number of household members
  - Web-based application required household to confirm a total computed by the application.
- A section requesting only the last four digits of Social Security Number from households applying for household size and income only. Or box indicating no Social Security Number.
  - This field must be **optional** for CEP and Provision 2 non-base year schools, as this information is not required to receive Summer EBT benefits.
- Should communicate to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) households how they may request language assistance if they need assistance completing the form.
- May allow for Consent to Share information for reduced fees for other programs.

**Households in Washington State may use a case number to apply for meal benefits for the following programs:**

- Basic Food (Washington's version of the Federal program Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

These programs vary from state to state, and you must ensure the electronic system does not approve benefits for non-Washington state programs.

## Reference

- [SP 10-2007 Update on Electronic Transactions in the Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [SP 04-2017 Model Functional Requirements for State and Local Technology Systems](#)

## Resources

- [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#)
- [OSPI Equity & Civil Rights Office](#)

## Acronym Reference

- CEP – Community Eligibility Provision
- EBT – Electronic Benefit Transfer
- FDPIR – Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- LEA – Local Education Agency
- LEP – Limited English Proficiency
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- SBP – School Breakfast Program
- SP – School Programs
- TANF – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture