

OSPI School Meal Programs Reference Sheet

Direct Certification with Medicaid Data

Direct Certification with Medicaid Data (DCM) allows states to directly certify students for free and reduced-price meals using Medicaid data. The only Medicaid categories directly certified are those Medicaid programs with income eligibility similar to the Income Eligibility Guidelines used by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the school meal programs.

Requirements

- DCM should be accessed as often as the direct certification list for Basic Food, TANF, Foster, and Migrant.
- Washington state law requires Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to access DCM at least once each month.
- Students directly certified with DCM can be accessed through the Education Data System (EDS) Direct Certification List.
 - Use the report titled *All Matches for Free/Reduced by Medicaid*.
 - Students on the list are eligible for either free meals **or** reduced-price meals.
 - Eligibility category, free or reduced, is located in the column titled CEDARS Code.
 - 12 – Directly Certified Medicaid – Reduced
 - 6 – Directly Certified Medicaid – Free
 - Eligibility established with DCM may be extended to all students in the household.
 - Student certified for free meals = free meals extended.
 - Student certified for reduced-price meals = reduced-price extended.
- Applications with Medicaid IDs may **not** be accepted nor approved for free or reduced-price meals. The DCM list in EDS is the only method to approve students for free or reduced-price meals for Medicaid.
- DCM-certified households must be:
 - Notified in writing of meal eligibility and that no application is required.
 - Households certified for reduced-price must be offered the opportunity to apply for free meals.
- Import data into the point-of-service meal counting system or manually enter.
- DCM certified students are **not** subject to verification.
- When students participate in more than one assistance program, system business rules allow for a hierarchy with reason qualified.
 - Example: Basic Food trumps other reason qualified options like TANF. Foster children receiving basic food benefits will display reason qualified Basic Food and



in the foster column, "yes", when the student is foster. This student will display CEDARS code 19.

Direct Certification-Medicaid and Community Eligibility Provision (CEP):

- DCM Free = contributes toward CEP Identified Student Percentage (ISP).
- DCM Reduced = **do not** include in ISP.

Determining Eligibility – Scenarios:

Students certified for free or reduced-price meals based on an application or direct certification with another program must not be negatively impacted by DCM.

Students already certified through the application process or directly certified for free meals may not be changed from free to reduced-price or paid meals based on the DCM list. Students already certified for reduced-price meals through the application process may not be changed to paid meals based on the DCM list.

See the guidance below for specific scenarios:

Direct Certification – Medicaid		
Application on file for student:	DCM Lists student as:	Then student is:
Free	Free	Free
Free	Reduced	Free
Reduced	Reduced	Reduced
Reduced	DC Free	Free

Determining Eligibility for students previously on the DCM list		
If the DCM List previously list the student as:	But the current DCM List has the student as:	Then the student is now:
Reduced	Free in future month	Free
Reduced	DC List Free Basic Food, TANF, Migrant, or Foster in future month	Free

Reference

- [RCW 28A.235](#)
- [RCW 28A.300](#)
- [RCW 28A.300.255](#)

Resources

- [Direct Certification Reference Sheet](#)
- [Education Data System Administration Webpage](#)

Acronym Reference

- CEP – Community Eligibility Provision
- DCM – Direct Certification with Medicaid Data
- EDS – Education Data System
- ISP – Identified Student Percentage
- LEA – Local Education Agency
- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture