

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Monthly Participant Eligibility Tips — Child Care

Monthly Participant Eligibility

Participant eligibility information is collected on the Enrollment Income Eligibility Application (EIEA). Institutions are responsible for making an eligibility determination for each participant based on the family's income or benefits received. Completed EIEAs and monthly attendance are used to develop each site's unique reimbursement rate for claimed meals and snacks. The monthly reimbursement rate will fluctuate depending on monthly attendance. Errors in participant eligibility determination or reporting may result in fiscal action.

Participant Eligibility

Enrollment Income Eligibility Applications (EIEAs)

- ✓ Evaluate EIEAs for completeness as they are submitted to ensure:
 - All sections are legible.
 - The parent/guardian has signed/dated the form.
 - If income is reported:
 - Social Security Number (SSN) is included or box is checked indicating "no SSN".
 - Annual income is reported (not monthly/weekly).
 - If Case Number is reported, it appears accurate:
 - Consists of 7–9 digits.
 - Does not include letters.
 - Does not start with a 200 series number (may start with 002, 003, etc).
 - Is not a social security number.
 - Is not an EBT number.
 - Is not a number for state-paid childcare.
- ✓ Incomplete **EIEAs should be returned** to the parent/guardian to be completed.
- ✓ A **new EIEA should be completed by the family** when corrections are needed. Institutions may not alter a returned EIEA in any way.
- ✓ The EIEA must be completed by the parent/guardian. Institutions may only complete the "center use only" section.

Considerations when determining eligibility based on income

- ✓ Income received for foster children should not be reported as household income.
- ✓ If self-employed, last year's income may be used to project current year's **net** income. Business expenses subtracted from gross receipts equal net income.
- ✓ Student loans and grants should not be listed as income.
- ✓ When grandparents (or other people) are living in the household, their income should be included in the total monthly income reported if they are considered part of the same economic unit. An economic unit is one in which the household

members pool money together to pay for rent, utilities, food, etc.

Head Start/ECEAP Participant Eligibility

- ✓ Children enrolled in Head Start or an Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) are automatically eligible for free meals in the CACFP without further application. Documentation from the grantee agency must confirm the child's enrollment in Head Start or ECEAP.
 - For Head Start, this could be confirmation of enrollment on formal letterhead.
 - For ECEAP, ELMS enrollment report should be maintained for the month October. Additional monthly reports may be needed when new children enroll.
- ✓ Head Start/ECEAP free eligibility does not extend to siblings. EIEAs must be completed for enrolled siblings.
- ✓ A parent/guardian of a Head Start or ECEAP enrolled child must complete a CACFP Enrollment Form.

Homeless Child Participant Eligibility

- ✓ Homeless children are eligible for meals at the free rate.
- ✓ It is acceptable for the director of the emergency shelter where the child resides or a McKinney-Vento school liaison to complete an EIEA on behalf of a homeless child.

Foster Child Participant Eligibility

- ✓ Foster children are eligible for meals at the free rate.
- ✓ Ensure the EIEA for a foster child is signed and dated by the child's legal guardian, foster parent, or other official representative, such as a social worker.
- ✓ The child must be placed in the home by the court or the state. (Informal arrangements do not apply.)

Determining Participation Eligibility Effective Dates

EIEAs

- ✓ When using the **Institution Signature Date**, EIEAs are effective in the month that the institution signs the form.
- ✓ When **Parent Signature Dates** are used, EIEAs are effective in the month that the parent signs the form only if the institution signs the EIEA in the same month or the immediately following month.
 - If the institution does not sign the EIEA within this timeframe, the EIEA will default to the institution signature date as the effective date.
- ✓ Institutions must choose only one of these two methods for their effective dates that must apply to all EIEAs.

- ✓ EIEAs are effective for 1 year, through the last day of the effective month.

Head Start/ECEAP

- ✓ Head Start and ECEAP participants are eligible for free meals for one year, starting with the month of documented enrollment.

Compiling the Monthly Participation Eligibility Totals

- ✓ All participants in attendance must be included in monthly participation reporting totals, even if the participant only attended on one day during the month.
 - **Exception:** If the center participates in the At-Risk Afterschool Program:
 - A school-age child who attends only after school on school days during the month **must not be listed** with monthly participation totals. This child is not part of child care.
 - A school-age child who is in attendance before school or on a non-school day during the month **must** be listed with monthly participation totals.
- ✓ Monthly participation totals are compiled by site.
- ✓ If an institution has more than one center, children that are in attendance at more than one site during the month should be included with each site's monthly participation totals.
- ✓ If a center enrolls infants they must be included with monthly participant totals regardless if the center claims infant meals.
- ✓ If an EIEA is completed for a child who was not in attendance during the month, do not include the child with monthly participation totals.

For Profit Eligibility

- ✓ To be eligible to claim meal reimbursement, proprietary (for-profit) institutions must ensure monthly that at each site at least 25 percent of the children in care (based on total attendance or license capacity, whichever is less) are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.
- ✓ When sponsors have one or more sites that do not qualify in a month, they must **NOT CLAIM MEALS** at that site. Once the site qualifies again, meals may be claimed.

Monthly Participant Reporting

- ✓ Enter monthly participant eligibility totals into WINS for each site when entering your monthly claim.

- ✓ Keep documentation of monthly participant eligibility on file for 3 years plus the current fiscal year. This documentation does not need to be submitted to OSPI; however, a sample of this documentation will be requested when OSPI conducts an Administrative Review.

Reference

- [CFR Part 226-CACFP](#)

Resources

- [Enrollment Income Eligibility Application](#)
- [Sample Letter to Parents Income Eligibility](#)
- Monthly Participant Eligibility Reference Sheet – [Monthly Participant Eligibility dropdown](#)
- [Participant Eligibility Roster](#)
- [Participant Eligibility Report](#)

Acronym Reference

- CACFP – Child and Adult Care Food Program
- CFR – Code of Federal Regulations
- CNS – Child Nutrition Services
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- WINS – Washington Integrated Nutrition System