



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Health and Nutrition Services
1535 West Jefferson Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Free and Reduced-Price Policy Statement

Revised Summer 2015

Introduction

In accordance with 7 CFR 245.10, each Local Educational Agency (LEA) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and/or the Special Milk Program (SMP) with the free milk option must have an approved free and reduced-price policy statement on file with the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) that accurately describes its current free and reduced-price policies. LEAs just beginning participation in the NSLP, SBP, or SMP must submit their policy statement to ADE for review as part of the new sponsor application process. The policy statement becomes a permanent document, but must be amended when the LEA makes a substantive change to its free and reduced-price policy. Amendments must be submitted for review by ADE by October 15 each year.

Policy Statement

Sponsor Name: Heber-Overgaard USD #6

This statement applies to the programs in which the sponsor will be participating as indicated on the application and agreement.

In fulfilling its responsibilities to implement a policy that conforms to United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations regarding determination of children's eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits, Heber-Overgaard USD #6 wishes to state the following:

- A. Heber-Overgaard USD #6's CNP Web Sponsor Application will be updated each school year to reflect the following:
 - a. The household application, application letter, and notification letters provided to households applying for benefits will be those provided by ADE;
 - b. And/or a customized household application, application letter, and notification letters have been developed and will be provided to households applying for benefits. Customized applications and letters must be reviewed and approved by ADE prior to use.

- B. Brenda L. Samon, Business Manager is the LEA official that has been designated to make eligibility determinations.
- C. The following direct certification procedures have been implemented:
 - a. The district runs Direct Certification three times a year. The first Direct Certification takes place after July 1 of the school year and before August 1st. The second Direct Certification is run prior to running Verification sample to capture any new students prior to October 1st. The last Direct Certification will be run six months after the initial effort.
- D. The following procedures for accepting applications for benefits have been implemented:
 - a. Applications are available two weeks before the opening of new school year. Once the district has completed direct certification in July, those students who were not Direct Certified will receive an application in the mail with instructions on how to complete the application. The district also provides applications in Spanish for families who are not proficient in English. Parents are informed that they can drop the applications off at any school site or mail the application to the district office. The receiving individual initials and records the date received on the application and forwards the application to the district office for approval process. In most cases, the application is approved the same day it is received in the district office or the day after receipt in the district office.
- E. Eligibility will be determined in accordance with the current Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs).
- F. A foster child will be categorically eligible for free meals. A foster child may be included as a member of the foster family if the foster family chooses to also apply for benefits for other children, as including children in foster care as household members can help other children in the household qualify for free or reduced-price meals. If the foster family is not eligible for free or reduced-price meal benefits, this does not prevent a foster child from receiving free meal benefits.
- G. Households with children who are categorically eligible under Other Source Categorically Eligible Programs will be instructed to contact the school for assistance in receiving benefits and to mark the relevant box on the application to indicate their status.
- H. ADE and Heber-Overgaard USD #6 will ensure there are no barriers for participation in the NSLP, SBP, and/or SMP for Limited English Proficient (LEP) families and will communicate with parents and guardians in a language they can understand throughout the certification and verification processes.
- I. Heber-Overgaard USD #6 will abide by the hearing procedures set forth in 7 CFR 245.7 and nondiscrimination practices set forth in 7 CFR 245.8.
- J. Heber-Overgaard USD #6 will verify approved free and reduced-price applications by November 15 each year as specified by 7 CFR 245.6(a) using the following procedures:

- a. Prior to October 1st the district will run Direct Certification to capture any students that may have been missed in the initial process in July and also any students approved for free lunch by submitting an application.
 - b. The district runs a Eligibility/Application List in Nutrikids using October 1 date and verifies Eligibility report with the applications on file.
 - c. The district reviews the Verification Non-Response Rate Report located on Arizona Department of Education website to determine what sampling method will be required.
 - d. Once Sampling method is determined the district initiates Verification in NutriKids. Once the sampling method is indicated the software will determine how many applications must be verified. The computer displays the applications available to be verified and the number of required applications to be verified are selected randomly.
 - e. Nutrikids software provides a report to track Verification.
 - f. Applications selected to be verified a confirmation review is performed by a determining official other than the official who made the initial eligibility determination.
 - g. Direct Verification on Arizona Department of Education, Common logon, is run for those students listed on the application to see if a state match is returned.
 - h. District continues with verification of those application with no state match, by informing parents that need to submit proof of income within 10 days.
 - i. Proof of Income is then compared to the information contained on the application to verify that the application was filled out properly and approved for the correct eligibility. Parent is notified of the results of the verification process.
 - j. If proof of income is not received within 10 days, a second notice is mailed to the parent to notify them of the potential loss of benefits. The district makes every attempt possible to reach the parent.
 - k. If no response is received, the student's benefits are terminated.
- K. Heber-Overgaard USD #6 will maintain a description of the verification activities as required by 7 CFR 245.6(a)(3)(c).
- L. Heber-Overgaard USD #6 will submit to ADE a summary report of verification activities performed as required by 7 CFR 245.6(a)(h) by February 1 each year.
- M. The following measures have been taken to prevent disclosure of confidential free and reduced-price eligibility information, as is required by 7 CFR 245.6(f-k):
- a. The district uses the downloaded application available under Health and Nutrition located on Arizona Department of Education website, which contains a disclosure notice to parents on the backside of the application.
 - b. The district also includes a Sharing Information with Other Programs which lists the local programs in the district allowing parents to opt into reduced fee bases on Free and Reduced Status.

- c. Each year the district prepares and completes a Disclosure of Free and Reduced Price Information Agreement and has those employees read and sign the agreement so they are aware of the confidential status of student's eligibility.

- N. Heber-Overgaard USD #6 has implemented the following policies per site regarding meal charges:
 - a. The district allows students to charge up to 3 meals.
 - b. After the third charge, the district notifies the parent to let them know that their student has charged the maximum number of meals and that they must send in money to cover the charged meals in order for their student to purchase a meal in the cafeteria.
 - c. If they are unable to pay for the charges we inform them that their student must bring a sack lunch from home until the charges are paid.

- O. When more than one lunch, breakfast, or type of milk is offered which meets the requirements of 7 CFR parts 210.10, 220.8 or 215.2, children eligible for free or reduced-price benefits will have the same choice of meals and/or milk that is available to those children who pay the full price for their meals and/or milk. To prevent overt discrimination of children receiving free or reduced-price meals, the following methods of collecting payment from children paying the full- or reduced-price of the meal will/will NOT be implemented:
 - a. All payments for meals purchased in our cafeteria are first processed in our school offices.
 - b. The cafeteria personnel, receive the prepayments from the school office and enter into our POS machine.
 - c. The only money taken at the register is for a la carte items.

- P. When selling competitive foods during a meal service, the following practices will be implemented to prevent overt identification of the children receiving free or reduced-price meals:
 - a. Students grade 4-12 have the availability to purchase competitive items.
 - b. All students are treated equally because all competitive items are on cash basis only.
 - c. Grades 4-6 competitive items are only sold after lunch is served.
 - d. Grades 7-12 some students purchase during lunch and after lunch.

- Q. Heber-Overgaard USD #6 will notify the public through a public/media release which will be provided to applicable local media, unemployment offices, and major employers contemplating large layoffs in the attendance area of its schools. The release will include the name(s) of the school(s) approved to operate the NSLP, SBP, and/or SMP in CNP Web, Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs) for free and reduced-price meals, and other information required to be contained in the letter to households. A copy of the public/media release which will be used is attached to this statement.

Brenda L. Samon, Business Manager



Heber-Overgaard USD #6

10/14/15

(Date)