



# State of New Jersey


DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Division of Food & Nutrition  
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To: School Business Administrators  
Charter School Leads  
Non-Public School Administrators  
Food Service Directors

From: Arleen Ramos-Szatmary, Coordinator   
School Nutrition Programs

Date: June 8, 2015

Subject: Direct Certification Information for SY 2015-2016 and Webinar Date

Direct Certification (DC) is the process of identifying, via electronic matching, school age children that are recipients of NJ-SNAP (Food Stamps), TANF (Temporary Assistance) or FOSTER benefits, to certify them as eligible for free meal benefits in the school nutrition programs. This matching process is done in the SNEARS system and the link to perform DC for the 2015-2016 school year will be available beginning July 15, 2015.

Below are the requirements for all Local Education Agencies (LEAs) participating in the National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Program, for the 2015-2016 school year. Please note the date changes and new file upload process for DC for this upcoming school year:

1. Direct Certification **must be done a minimum of three times** during the school year according to the following time schedule:
  - a. **July 15 – September 5, 2015**
  - b. **October 5 – October 30, 2015**
  - c. **March 5 – March 30, 2016**

*LEAs are encouraged to do the matching process more frequently; the NJ SNAP/TANF data is updated monthly throughout the school year, and the FOSTER CARE data is updated each night.*

2. Direct Certification must be done using a student database file upload into the SNEARS web-based system;
  - a. **Each district must adhere to the county assignments listed below.**
  - b. Doing direct certification solely by a manual matching process will not be accepted.
  - c. Doing direct certification solely by individual matching in SNEARS will not be accepted.

LEAs that do not comply with the above requirements will be notified by email. Failure to comply will result in reimbursement funds being placed on hold until requirements are met.

<b>FIRST ROUND DATES</b>	<b>COUNTIES</b>
July 15 - 17	Hudson, Cape May, Ocean
July 20 - 24	Essex, Mercer, Gloucester
July 27 - 31	Camden, Bergen, Burlington
August 3 - 7	Atlantic, Passaic, Salem, Somerset
August 10 - 14	Monmouth, Union, Warren
August 17 - 21	Hunterdon, Middlesex
August 24 - 28	Cumberland, Morris, Sussex

<b>SECOND ROUND DATES</b>	<b>COUNTIES</b>
October 5 - 9	Bergen, Cape May, Gloucester, Hudson, Mercer, Ocean
October 12 - 16	Essex, Camden, Burlington, Hunterdon, Middlesex
October 19 - 23	Atlantic, Monmouth, Passaic, Somerset, Union, Warren
October 26 - 30	Cumberland, Morris, Salem, Sussex

<b>THIRD ROUND DATES</b>	<b>COUNTIES</b>
March 7 - 11	Bergen, Cape May, Gloucester, Hudson, Mercer, Ocean
March 14 - 18	Essex, Camden, Burlington, Hunterdon, Middlesex
March 21 - 25	Atlantic, Monmouth, Passaic, Somerset, Union, Warren
March 28 - 31	Cumberland, Morris, Salem, Sussex

A webinar will be conducted on **Tuesday, June 30, 2015 from 10:00AM - 12:00PM** to explain the new changes to the DC process. To register for the webinar, click on the following link:  
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4828662910193926913>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. The webinar will be recorded and available to view in SNEARS, under the upper menu tab “Training”. There are other resources to assist with the process under the upper menu tab “Resources”, in the category “Direct Certification”, including a step by step training manual.

Feel free to contact this office at 609-984-0692, if you have any additional questions or concerns. If you have computer related issues during the DC process, please contact the IT Help desk at 609-341-3817.

Thank you for your cooperation with this important process to identify students eligible to receive free school meals.