State of New Jersey

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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: May 23, 2019

Subject: Direct Certification Process Information for SY 2019-2020 and Webinar Date

Direct Certification (DC) is the process of identifying, via electronic matching, school age children who are members of households receiving assistance under NJ-SNAP, (Food Stamps), TANF, (Temporary Assistance) or FOSTER CARE programs, to certify them as eligible for free meal benefits in the school nutrition programs. This matching process is done in the School Nutrition Electronic and Reimbursement System, (SNEARS). The link to perform DC for the 2019-2020 school year will be available beginning July 15, 2019.

Below are the requirements for all School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Program, for the 2019-2020 school year. **Please note the dates below and the file upload process for DC for this upcoming school year:**

1. Direct Certification **must be done a minimum of <u>four</u> times** during the school year according to the following time schedule:

         1. **July 15th – August 30th, 2019**
         2. **September 1st – September 30th, 2019**
         3. **October 1st – October 30th, 2019**
         4. **March 1st – March 30th, 2020**

SFAs are strongly encouraged to do the matching process monthly. This will increase the total number of DC students, therefore reducing the total number of applications to determine and verify.

2. Direct Certification must be done using a student enrollment file upload into the SNEARS web-based system.

There are two file upload processes to choose from, **depending on the SFA's total enrollment with access to meals:**

1. **<u>Batch Process</u>:** SFAs whose total enrollment (with access to meals) is greater than or equal to 1000 must use the Batch Process. This will allow large SFAs to upload multiple enrollment files at the same time for processing. The system will send a notification e-mail to the SFA when the files are ready to view to complete the matching process. The turnaround time may take up to twenty-four hours.

2. **<u>Regular DC Process:</u>** SFAs whose total enrollment (with access to meals) is less than 1000 can use either the batch process or the regular DC process to obtain direct certification matches the same day.

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

A webinar will be conducted on **Thursday, June 20th, 2019 from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM** to explain the DC process. To register for the webinar, click on the following link:

https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5365764476984173571

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 labeled "Training."

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.