



Montana  
**Office of Public Instruction**  
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

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To: School Food Authority Administrators

From: Christine Emerson, Director  
School Nutrition Programs

Re: New Direct Certification Application (DCA) Online System

The OPI, School Nutrition Programs in partnership with Aspect Software and InRule Technology have been working diligently on building an online Direct Certification Application (DCA) system. The new system securely matches SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps) and TANF recipients to enrolled students to directly certify their eligibility for free meals. This greatly eases current manual processes by using technology to match students enrolled in the state student information system, AIM, to school aged recipients in SNAP and TANF. Matches will be displayed for district users and reports may be imported into district meal counting and claiming systems. Districts may view various reports to track progress and keep required documentation easily accessible. The annual Summary of Verification report has also been incorporated into the system and can be electronically submitted to the OPI through the new DCA system.

The Direct Certification Application (DCA) is a secure system that will require users to log in with an assigned user name and password to view student level data. The Authorized Representative (AR) from each Local Educational Agency (LEA) will need to complete the attached form to verify the district's Determining Official user. The Determining Official is the district's representative who reviews and approves free and reduced-price meal eligibility information. Please be certain that the listed Determining Official contact is the person responsible for performing daily routine duties and detailed involvement associated with determining free and reduced-price eligibility information and not just overseeing the process. Each district will be assigned only one Determining Official system user. A limited number of "read only" user roles may be available based upon the size of the district. The AR may request a "read only" user role on the attached form. The OPI will review the request and notify if approved or denied.

When completing these forms, please be sure to list the proper contact for assigned access. Under Section 108 of Public Law 103-448, individuals' rights to privacy are recognized by limiting disclosure of free and reduced-price information to persons who are directly connected to the administration or enforcement of certain programs. Those persons directly connected to program administration or enforcement includes federal, state and local program operators responsible for program administration or program compliance and their contractors. For further disclosure and confidentiality information please see the USDA's Eligibility Manual for Schools Meals (Part 7, pages 54-60).

If you have questions about the attached form, please contact the OPI Security Coordinator at (406) 444-3448. If you have any questions about the DCA system, please contact Alie Wolf, School Nutrition Programs Direct Certification Coordinator at (406) 444-4413. These security assignments will remain in effect until the OPI receives a notice of change. The AR may submit the form by fax to (406) 444-2955, or by mailing to OPI-School Nutrition Programs, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501.

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