

Direct Certification Application (DCA) Tasks for CEP Districts

CEP schools do not collect free/reduced applications. If a family at a CEP school wishes to apply for SUN Bucks, please direct them to the DPHHS SUN Bucks website:

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/HCSO/SUNBucks>

How often are LEAs electing CEP required to “run” direct certifications?

Under 7 CFR 245.6(b)(1)(v), LEAs electing CEP are required to conduct a data match between SNAP records and student enrollment records **at least once annually**. LEAs must continue to provide direct certification eligibility notifications to households, even if the children in that household attend a CEP school (7 CFR 245.6(c)(6)(ii)). The LEA’s public notification cannot fulfill this requirement.

Conducting direct certification at least annually allows LEAs participating in CEP to take advantage of any ISP increases and ensures directly certified households are aware of their eligibility status which may be used for other programs and benefits, such as Summer EBT or for other educational and school-level benefits.

Additionally, “running” direct certification helps LEAs observe demographic trends. For example, if direct certification rates are trending toward a decrease that makes CEP fiscally unfeasible, “running” direct certification could help LEAs plan in advance to return to standard counting and claiming.

The Direct Certification Application (DCA) is provided to you by the OPI so you can see automatic matches that occur nightly between students and eligibility sources including SNAP, TANF, Income-eligible Medicaid programs, Foster Care, FDPIR, Homeless, Migrant, and Runaway. It is located at: <https://apps.opi.mt.gov/osp/>

You also use this system to process further direct certifications that have not automatically occurred due to data matching gaps, run reports, and generate notifications to the families.

The following DCA activities should be performed at least once annually (and prior to the annual April 1st CEP eligibility snapshot)

DCA - Direct Cert Activities

Review Students with Potential Matches List

- Link applicable matches & invalidate sources that do not match to students

Review Extended Eligibility Candidates Student List

- Extend eligibility to students residing in the same household as those actively receiving public assistance programs (SNAP, TANF, FDPIR or Medicaid)

Manually Certify Qualifying Students

- Manually save a direct certification status to applicable student records








Download Direct Certification Report

- Run Direct Certification Report and save copy with the date noted or in the file name
- Qualify eligible students as directly certified and update POS system or benefit issuance list
- Send qualifying households the Notice of Direct Certification Letter

Additional details can also be found online for how to [Prep the DCA data for the CEP Eligibility Snapshot on April 1st](#).

There are instructions for Potential Matching and Manual Matching in the Links section of the Home Page in DCA.

Links

-  [To reset your password, click here...](#)
-  [DCA User Access Request Form](#)
-  [DO User Manual for On-line Free-Reduced Applications](#)
-  [Direct Certification Tip Sheets](#)
 - [Direct Certification Report Instructions](#)
 - [Linking Potential Matches Instructions](#)
 - [Manual Certification Instructions](#)
 - [Uploading Non-OPI-accredited Private School Student Enrollment Data Instructions](#)
-  [On-Line Free and Reduced Application \(FRAPP\) Webinar](#)
 - [FRAPP Entry and Processing 2025](#)
-  [DCA Webinars](#)
 - [DCA Operations 2025](#)
 - [2023-2024 Updates - Medicaid DC, Extending Eligibility, POS Comparison Upload](#)
-  [Send us feedback](#)

Staff changes? Determining Officials may request access to DCA [here](#).

If you need further assistance, please contact the School Nutrition Program for help.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

