Direct Certification Application Reminders

The purpose of these reminders is to guide Sponsors on the actions that will maximize eligibility for students for Summer-EBT benefits. The system primarily used for processing direct certification and free and reduced applications is the Direct Certification Application (DCA) system. The steps listed below will help the State Agency ensure that your students are able to receive Summer-EBT benefits if eligible. Direct certification should be practiced routinely by all schools, including CEP schools, as per USDA regulations. This document covers the following in more detail:

- ***Work Direct Certification Potential Matches***
- ***Work Direct Certification Extended Eligibility***
- ***Work Manual Direct Certification***
- ***Identify Active Students Not Directly Certified***
- ***Enroll your School in Online Free/Reduced Applications (FRAPP) and Contact Families***
  - ***If you use another on-line application for Free/Reduced evaluation, you will receive instructions at a later time on how to upload your list of eligible students for S-EBT to the DCA.***
  - ***If you use paper applications, you can still opt in to use the OPI FRAPP and enter the data from the paper applications into the system to take advantage of the automation and reporting that occurs via FRAPP-DCA.***
    - ***IF you use FRAPP, all students determined eligible via FRAPP will be automatically picked up for S-EBT benefits, and you will not have to upload them via the S-EBT upload in DCA.***
- ***Process Submitted Applications no matter what method you receive them.***

System Access

- Please access the OPI Secure Portal available here: https://apps.opi.mt.gov/osp/. Favorite this link to easily access the DCA system.
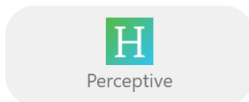
OPI Secure Portal

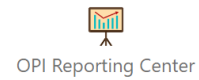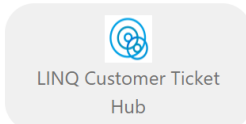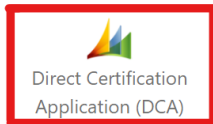Bookmark this page or store it in your favorites, so you can easily navigate here to access the majority of your OPI applications.

👤 username

🔒 password

Login

✉ Contact the Helpdesk
🔓 Reset Password
📄 How to Reset Your Password and Other Frequently Asked Questions

- After logging in, your screen should look similar to that shown below. Click on the Direct Certification Application (DCA).

You can see the list of integrated applications here. After checking the list, if you don't see the icon in your portal below, and you think you should see it, please contact the ✉ OPI HelpDesk (406) 444-0087 to get the app added to your portal.

Direct Certification Application (DCA)

LINQ Customer Ticket Hub

Montana Agreement and Payment System (MAPS)

OPI Reporting Center
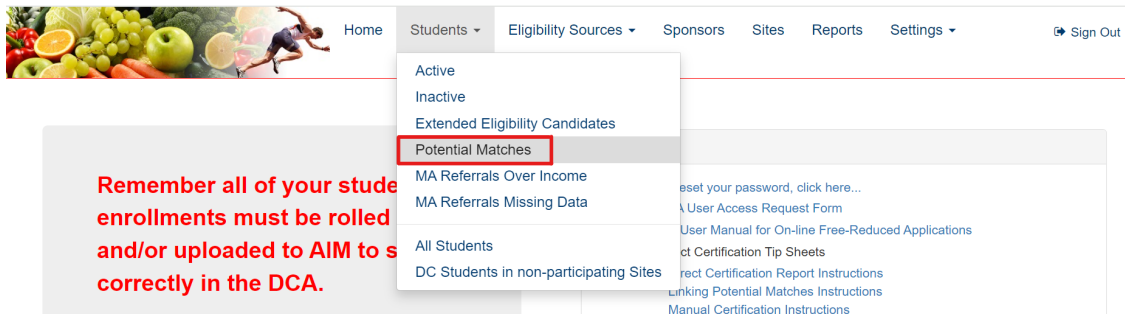
Perceptive

Travel

Direct Certification Application Activities

It is best to perform these steps in the order listed.

Step 1: Work Potential Matches

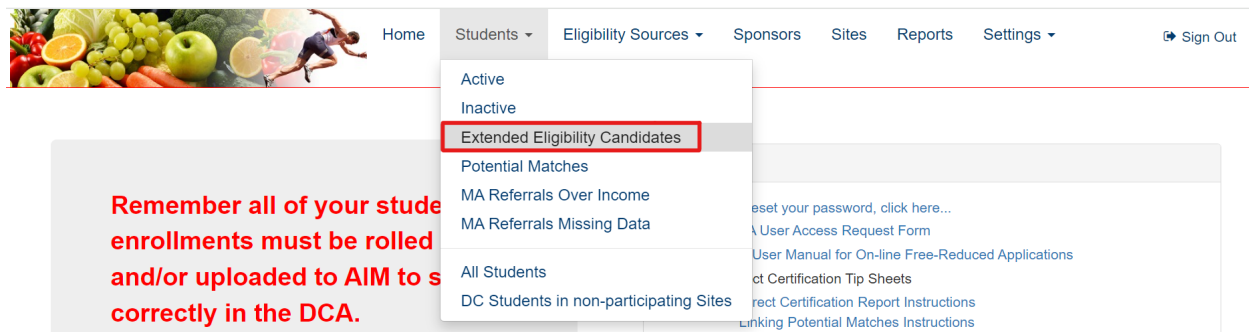- Click on "Students," "Potential Matches."

- You will see students from your district that may match to a SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, Foster Care, or FDPIR referral.
  - *Note:* If the program/case and student are active, this match will directly certify them for free or reduced lunch.
- If the AIM student listed matches the referral, link with the green + button.
- If the AIM student listed does NOT match the referral, mark the link as invalid, and it will not show up again in your potential matches.
- If you want more information on linking potential matches, see here.

Step 2: Work Extended Eligibility

- Click on "Students," "Extended Eligibility Candidates."

- You will see students who may qualify for Direct Certification because of the status of their household or siblings.
  - *Note:* Extended Eligibility – If any student in a household is directly certified through SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, or FDPIR, school meal eligibility benefits should be extended to all students in that household. Manually certify extended eligible in DCA. Extended Eligibility only applies to SNAP, TANF, Medicaid & FDPIR programs.
- Verify the student's eligibility by confirming the student resides in an eligible household.
- Link the match with the green + button.

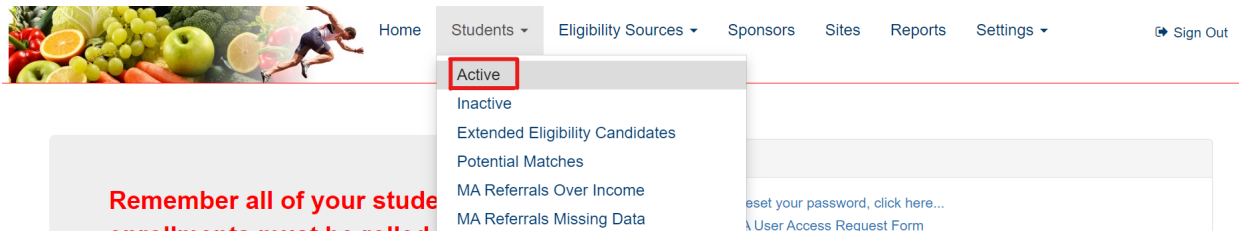| Name		Current DC	State Id	Gender	DOB	Sponsor	School	Grade	Enrollment Start	DC Eligibility	Case	Address	
➕	██████	Medicaid Reduced	██████	●	██████	██████	██████	●	██████	SNAP - EE	██████	██████	
➕	██████		██████	●	██████	██████	██████	●	██████	Medicaid Free - EE		██████	

Step 3: Manual Direct Certification

Students can be manually directly certified in some circumstances if they are not found on the potential eligibility list or the extended eligibility list. Students can be manually certified when documentation of program eligibility is confirmed through agency records. Eligibility Sources include: SNAP, TANF, FDPIR, Foster, Homeless/Runaway, and Migrant.

- See instructions as needed [here](#).

Step 4: Identify Active Students Not Directly Certified

- Click "Students," "Active."

	Home	Students ▾	Eligibility Sources ▾	Sponsors	Sites	Reports	Settings ▾		➜ Sign Out
		Active							
		Inactive							
		Extended Eligibility Candidates							
		Potential Matches		eset your password, click here...					
		MA Referrals Over Income		A User Access Request Form					
		MA Referrals Missing Data							

Remember all of your stude

- You will see a list of active students at your school. Those without a "DC Source" listed are not directly certified and can only be determined eligible for Summer-EBT via a household application, preferably using the on-line free and reduced application (FRAPP).
  - Encourage families who have not submitted a Free and Reduced application to do so if they wish to be evaluated for Summer-EBT benefits as determined by free and reduced income eligibility guidelines.

Name ▽		State Id ▽	Local Id ▽	Gender	DOB ▽	Sponsor ▽	School ▽	Grade ▽	Enrollment Start ▽	DC Source ▽	DC Date
██████		██████	██████	●	██████	██████	██████	██████	██████	Medicaid Reduced	██████
██████		██████	██████	●	██████	██████	██████	●	██████	☐	
██████		██████	██████	●	██████	██████	██████		██████	☐	

Sponsor Online Free and Reduced Application (FRAPP) Instructions

Step 5: Enroll your School in Online Free/Reduced Applications, if feasible, and Contact Parents

- Click on "Sponsors."

opi.mt.gov

- Click on the "Use Online Free/Reduced Applications" hyperlink.

0966 - Billings Public Schools

Sponsor Number	0966	**Determining Official**	Craig Van Nice
Sponsor Name	Billings Public Schools	**Email**	vannicec@billing
Address	415 North 30th Street	**Use Online Free/Reduced Applications**	
City	Billings		
Zip Code	59101-1252		
County	Yellowstone		
Phone	(406) 281-		

- You may now use a direct link for your district, as shown below that will lead directly to your district's application welcome page.

Free/Reduced application opt-in   ✕

☑ Use the online Free/Reduced application?

[Daily ▼]   Frequency of email notifications

The link for your Free/Reduced application is: https://dcatest.opi.mt.gov/FRApp?
sponsorNum=0366

Ok   Cancel

0966 - Billings Public Schools

Sponsor Number	0966	**Determining Official**	Craig Van Nice
Sponsor Name	Billings Public Schools	**Email**	vannicec@billingsschools.org
Address	415 North 30th Street	**Use Online**	✔
City	Billings	**Free/Reduced Applications**	The link you can use to direct parents to your Free/Reduced application is: https://dcatest.opi.mt.gov/FRApp?sponsorNum=0966
Zip Code	59102		
County	Yellowstone		
Phone	(406) 281-5116		
Fax	(406) 281-6179		
Email	vannicec@billingsschools.org		

- Your district will now also appear as an option in the Dropbox when accessing the application via the OPI website link, here.

Welcome!

This is the State of Montana OPI's electronic application for free and reduced-price meals for the USDA's National School Lunch & School Breakfast Programs. This application will also be used to issue benefits for the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (S-EBT) that will provide $120 per eligible child in the form of preloaded cards that your family can use to purchase groceries. Children must be directly certified or income eligible to qualify. The program is intended to help fulfill hunger gaps when children are not in school. Please contact the hot-line at (406) 444-0044 or email S-EBT@mt.gov if you with to opt out of the S-EBT program benefits.

This interactive application will guide you through the application process.

You cannot save and return to this application after you have started it. You will receive an application number for reference once you have submitted the application. The time it will take you to finish this application depends on your household circumstances and the information you have on hand when you begin. You will need to provide information regarding DOBs, grades, schools, and income information for children and adults in your household, as well as case numbers for SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR assistance programs. When you are ready to apply, select the school district in which you are applying to begin.

You are submitting this application on or before June 30th. If you are deemed eligible based on your income, you will receive school meal benefits for the remainder of the current school year as long as school is in session (through June 30th) and Summer-EBT benefits for the current summer (June – August). **You need to fill out another application on July 1st or after to be evaluated to see if your children are eligible to receive free/reduced meals for next school year and Summer-EBT benefits next summer.**

Note: Students attending a CEP school will continue to receive school meals at no cost during the regular school year even if deemed reduced-price eligible or denied Summer-EBT benefits via this application.

Please see the OPI Summer EBT webpage for more details.

If you're unable to fill this application out on-line, a paper application is available for you to print and return to your school.

If the school district you child attends is not in the below list, your school will provide information to you on how you should submit a free and reduced application.

Step 6: Process Submitted Applications

- Submitted applications will be visible in the middle of your "Home" screen. Click on the date hyperlink beneath "Date."

Id	Date	Application Status ❶	Sponsor	Transferred Out	Transferred In	Household Members	Number of Students	Annual Household Income	Household Status	SNAP Case	TANF Case	FDPIR Case	Contact
20663	7/12/2023		0978 Broadview Public Schools			3	2	$23,340.00	FREE				▬▬
22053	8/7/2023		0595 Clinton Elementary			5	1	$24,976.00	FREE				▬▬

- Underneath "Household Status" the application's eligibility status will be stated based on Household's Income and the USDA Free and Reduced Thresholds. These include:
  - Free
  - Reduced
  - Does not qualify

📄 Free / Reduced price school meals application

Original from the Application

App Id	Date	Children in Household	Adults in Household	Estimated Monthly Household Income	Assistance Programs
1116	7/17/2020	2	2	$2,710.00 ❶	

Revisions

Revision Date	Children in Household	Adults in Household	Calculated Yearly Household Income	USDA Annual Free Threshold	USDA Annual Reduced Threshold	Household Status
There are no revisions	2	2	$32,520.00	$34,060.00	$48,470.00	FREE

- There may still be children who qualify even if the Household (HH) does not. Check each child's eligibility status before determining the final status of the application as a whole. Further instructions are provided later in the instructions.
- If an application modification is necessary, click the options to add or edit in the upper righthand corner of each section. An audit note of your change will be recorded on the page.

All Children in the household   ➕ ☑

Found in DCA	Eligibility Status	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Birth Date	Gender	School	Grade	Homeless	Runaway	Migrant	Foster Care
	FREE-Income	Duey		Duck	3/15/2010	M	Big Sky Elementary	05				
	FREE-Income	Huey		Duck	1/24/2006	M	Billings West High School	09				

- At the bottom of this page, select the "Application Status" from the Dropbox.

- If you select **APPROVED**, the application will ask for a reason for your status selection.

- Select **FILED All Students DC** if all students on the application are directly certified.

- If you select **CANCELLED,** you must select the reason why the application is being withdrawn.

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Application Status ✕

CANCELLED
○ HH declined benefit
○ More than one application for same students – split HH or accidental double submittal.
○ Submitted without income – unable to verify categorical eligibility – requested new application
○ New application overrides previous application eligibility determination
○ [Other]

[Save] [Cancel]

- If you select **DENIED** because the household does not qualify, select the reason.
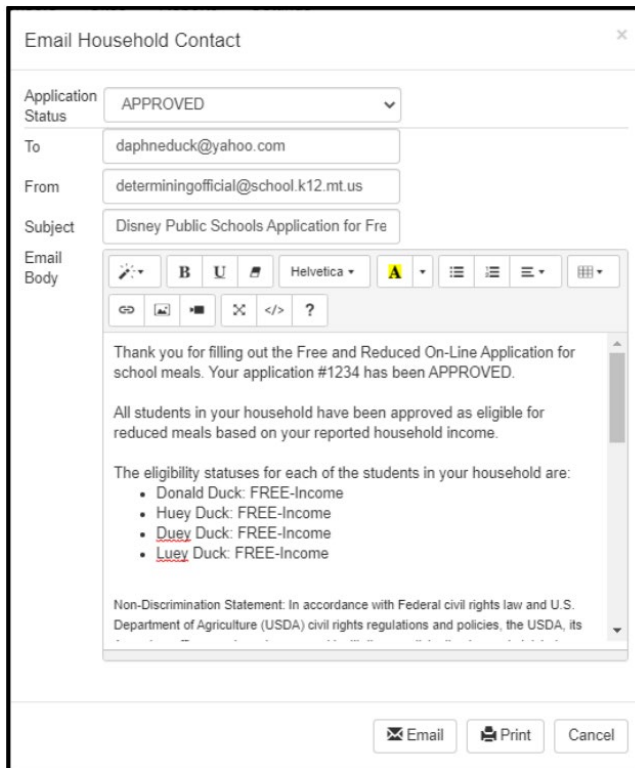
Application Status ✕

DENIED
○ PAID INCOME for all students
○ Partial HH Denial – Some students PAID Income and some students directly certified in DCA (any category, including extended eligibility)
○ [Other]

[Save] [Cancel]

- Send correspondence to the household regarding their application's determination.
  - After selecting Application Status, an email icon appears next to the email address provided.
  - If you click on this icon, an email regarding their status will be displayed for you with the option to edit. When complete, click email or print to send the household their notice of determination.

Contact Info

First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Mailing Address	Apt #	City	State	Zip	Phone	Email	Last 4 SSN
▬	▬	▬	▬		▬	▬	▬	4064656831	afakeEmail@mt.gov ✉ ❶	

opi.mt.gov

- Once processed, students and their eligibility status will be listed under the **Free/Reduced/Paid Students** tab on the "Sponsor" page. Those with free and reduced eligibility status will receive Summer-EBT benefits.

Additional Resources:

- **Webinars**
  - On-Line F/R Applications Introduction
  - On-Line F/R Applications Dashboard in DCA
  - On-Line F/R Applications Detail Page Features
  - On-Line F/R Applications App Transfer to Another Sponsor
  - On-Line F/R Applications Reports
- **F/R Application Processing Manual**

If you have further questions, please contact the hot-line at (406) 444-0044 or email s-ebt@mt.gov.