

The U.S. Department of Agriculture extended the opportunity for schools nationwide to provide free school meals in SY 2021-22 to all students through its National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option.

While this waiver is in place from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, there is not a corresponding waiver from the U.S. Department of Education to release us from the use of family income data. This family income data is gathered by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) from the schools via the Free and Reduced Meal (FRAM) Eligibility application process. This FRAM data is reported in the Student Information System [AIM/Infinite Campus] by the districts and is used by the OPI to allocate federal and state funding to the districts

We are strongly encouraging districts to collect and submit this data as it has an impact on state and federal reporting. The first time this year that districts should be submitting this data to the OPI Achievement in Montana (AIM) system is during the Fall Enrollment and Program Participation Collection starting 10/5/21 through 10/20/21. It is also included in the AIM Test Window Program Participation Collection in April and the AIM End of Year Program Participation Collection in May. Districts may choose to use the paper Free and Reduced Meal applications that they have used historically to collect this information from families, or, districts may choose to use an online platform to allow families to submit the data from a computer or mobile device.

Please see your local Student Information System for guidance on collecting the eligibility information from families using the online submission tools.

Here is the [AIM user guide](#) for the submission of the data once it has been collected.

Please contact Gerrad Bohl [gerrad.bohl@mt.gov](mailto:gerrad.bohl@mt.gov) with questions on how to submit this data to the OPI AIM system.