

STATE OF COLORADO

John W. Hickenlooper, Governor
Larry Wolk, MD, MSPH
Executive Director and Chief Medical Officer

Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

4300 Cherry Creek Dr. S.
Denver, Colorado 80246-1530
Phone (303) 692-2000
Located in Glendale, Colorado
www.colorado.gov/cdphe



Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

CDPHE-CACFP PROCEDURE MEMO FDCH-#14-02

DATE: January 31, 2014

TO: Directors of FDCH Sponsors

FROM: Tracy Miller, MSPH, RD, Director
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CDPHE-CACFP)

SUBJECT: **Accessing the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) School Year 2013 Free and Reduced Price School Data for Determining Area Eligibility in Family Day Care Homes (FDCH) effective January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014**

Each year, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) posts current year school data on the CDE website, based on each school's prior October Free and Reduced-price meal household qualifications. USDA regulations require CDE to have the data compiled and available to the CDPHE-CACFP by February 1 each year. This year, the SY 2013 School Data was published on the CDE's website on January 14, 2014 and is now available for access.

USDA regulations require the CDPHE-CACFP to make this data available to FDCH Sponsors by February 15 of each year. The SY 2013 School Data is effective from January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014. The data is available at the following link:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/pupilcurrentschool>

To access the Microsoft Excel version of the list, find the School Level Data. Select the "K-12 Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility by District and School" link with the Excel abbreviation (.xls).

The current school year data is effective for the January 2014 claims for reimbursement. Sponsors are required to obtain income data from providers whose five year eligibility expires (beginning in February of the current year) and who are losing school area eligibility. Providers who lose eligibility in January 2014 must be reclassified by area or income by January 31, 2014 to continue receiving Tier I reimbursement.

Sponsors should refer to the Sponsor's Manual, Section 5; pages 79-82, for information regarding determination and documentation of area eligibility for family child care home providers.

In most instances, charter or magnet schools are not representative of the income status of any particular area because these schools typically draw students from a very broad area, and sometimes from an entire city, town, or county. Data from magnet and charter schools, or schools with mandatory bussing may not be representative of any defined geographic area. Therefore, it is usually necessary for Sponsors to exclude magnet and charter school data, and use data from the neighborhood elementary school, middle school, or high school, or use census data to determine whether a home is located in an eligible area. In addition, schools listed as an "Academy" in the school data may or may not be considered charter schools. When using "Academy" schools to determine area eligibility, Sponsors must verify with school authorities to ensure the "Academy" school is not considered a charter school.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided additional guidance regarding use of school data when determining area eligibility in situations when the school attendance areas may not accurately reflect the population of the school for which eligibility data is used. The new guidance acknowledges that when children in the public system regularly attend school outside a designated attendance area, the effective use of school data to determine area eligibility may be compromised. In these situations, the percentage of children eligible for free and reduced price meals in a school is not necessarily an accurate reflection of the children living in the attendance area of the school.

In school systems where students are transported by bus outside of their neighborhood schools, choose a school they wish to attend, or attend charter or private schools that draw students from multiple areas, the school data may not accurately reflect the economic conditions of the surrounding area.

According to the new USDA guidance, in school districts where busing or school of choice policies are in place, if the site is located in the school for which data is pulled, CACFP Sponsors may use the free and reduced school data for that individual school.

Additionally the new guidance states that when busing or school of choice is in place but school attendance areas are still defined, Sponsors may determine school and non-school site eligibility based on the enrollment or attendance data obtained for:

- The school children attend, or
- The school the children would have attended (i.e., the neighborhood school where children live) if school busing or school choice policies were not in effect.

CACFP Sponsors may determine a provider to be area eligible under the second option described above only if the school food authority (SFA) is able to document the percentage of children eligible for free and reduced-price meals at each school before and after students are reassigned. The same method of determining site eligibility must be used for all sites participating under that program Sponsor to avoid duplicate counting.

If the school district does not have a defined school attendance area, the use of school data is not permitted for non-school sites. Census data may be used as the first choice for determining area eligibility for FDCH providers instead of the option described above.

The CDPHE-CACFP recommends that Sponsors contact the School District if any conflicting information arises regarding charter schools and area eligibility.

The CDPHE-CACFP continues to observe different trends and changes in the structure of schools across the state and expect changes in school names and/or statuses in future school data reporting. As indicated above, Sponsors are required to continue to verify information with school authorities or by other methods to ensure accurate determination of area eligibility for Tier I homes. The Sponsor must document this verification.

Please contact the CDPHE-CACFP office at (303) 692-2330 if you have questions.