

DATE: ` September 7, 2004

TO: Migrant Education Program Directors

FROM: Robin M. Lisboa, Division Administrator
English Language Learning

RE: Migrant Child Eligibility for Free Meal Benefits

Migrant children with documented eligibility for the Migrant Education Program are categorically eligible for free meal benefits under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs, effective July 1, 2004 (Section 107 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004).

Migrant children with a Certificate of Eligibility that documents current migrant status on file will be eligible for free meal benefits during the school year. The local district Migrant Education Program director should provide documentation of children's migrant status to the district School Food Authority (usually the district superintendent) to substantiate free meal eligibility. Documentation will consist of a dated list with each eligible child's name and the signature of the local Migrant Education Program director. This documentation is in lieu of free and reduced price meal applications.

Once a migrant child is certified as eligible to receive free meals, eligibility remains effective for the remainder of the school year. The U.S. Department of Agriculture policy further allows School Food Authorities to continue a child's eligibility from the previous year for 30 operating days into the subsequent school year or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever occurs first. Because of this and to avoid disruption of services and benefits, districts should attempt to share the child's free meal eligibility status with the new district when a migrant child moves.

If you have questions in this regard, please contact Beth Robinson in the English Language Learning Division at (312) 814-3850 or Sandra Dunkel in the Nutrition Programs Division at (217) 782-2491.

Cc: Beth Robinson
Sandra Dunkel