

DATE: September 1, 2025  
TO: Migrant Education Program Administrators  
FROM: Joanne Clyde, Director  
Multilingual/Language Development Department  
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 (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 Migrant Education Program director or coordinator should provide documentation of children's migrant status to the district School Food Authority (usually the district superintendent) to confirm free meal eligibility. Documentation to confirm free meal eligibility must consist of the student's name or a list of names; effective date; and the signature of the person, such as a local migrant education coordinator, who provides Certification of Eligibility documentation. A [sample form](#) for this purpose is available. This documentation is in lieu of free and reduced-price meal applications. (See G-4 in the [School Nutrition Programs Administrative Handbook](#).)

A migrant child who is certified as eligible to receive free meals retains such status for the remainder of the school year. 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.