What is Electronic Direct Certification?

Direct Certification (DC) is a simplified way to determine which children are eligible for **FREE** meal benefits based on who is receiving SNAP, TANF, income eligible Medicaid or a Foster child. When a child is identified through Direct Certification, a Household Eligibility Application is **NOT** needed. The printed report is your documentation to claim that child for free meal and snack benefits. You are still required to have a CACFP Annual Enrollment Form on file to claim meals for any child, regardless of eligibility category. Children approved through Direct Certification must be updated annually and the printed Direct Certification report may not be more than 12 months old. Forms are considered current and valid until the last day of the month in which the form was dated one year earlier.

Why should I do Electronic Direct Certification?

The benefits of conducting Direct Certification are the following:

- One less form for the household to fill out. If a child is found on the DC report, meals are automatically eligible to claim at the **FREE** reimbursable rate.
- Drastically reduces the risk for human error when administrative staff are processing Household Eligibility Applications. Mistakes made while determining if a child should be claimed as free, reduced, or paid leads to non-compliance and fiscal action taken by the State Agency.
- Benefits can be extended from a child listed on the DC report to other children living in the same household, thus making that child(ren) eligible for **FREE** meals as well. To extend benefits from a child on the report to another child(ren) in the household you must record the information on an Extension of Benefit (EOB) form. However, benefits **cannot** be extended from a Foster child to other children in the household. A Foster child is considered their own household.

How to access Electronic Direct Certification?

Step One: Access IWAS at www.isbe.net/nutrition. Click "Log in to IWAS"
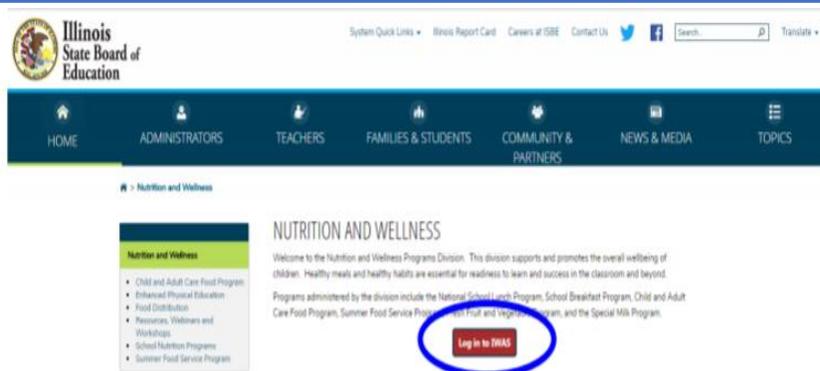
Step Two: Enter Login Name and Password to access IWAS.

For questions regarding IWAS, contact ISBE Technology Support at 217/558-3600

Step Three: Once logged in to IWAS, click on "Systems Listing".

Step Four: Select "Web-Based Illinois Nutrition System (WINS)".

Step Five: From the dashboard of WINS, select "Direct Certification" located in the Reports area.

How to Create a Comma-Delimited File

Creating this report is ideal during your renewal of eligibility for children enrolled in the child care center. A sponsor can look up all children enrolled to see who is receiving SNAP, TANF, income eligible Medicaid or are Foster children to determine **FREE** eligibility. Looking up children by creating a comma-delimited file may be ideal versus looking up each child individually via a Single Child Match, depending on the size of your center.

There are two options for creating a comma-delimited file. The first option is to use Microsoft® Excel and the second option is to use Notepad. Below are instructions for both options. Also keep in mind that the required fields are extremely case sensitive and will not download if any fields are entered incorrectly or out of order.

A common error found is that a header row, identifying each column of data, is included. For example, the first row will read First Name, Last Name, Gender, and Birth Date. The header row must be **removed** before being saved as a comma delimited file for uploading.

Using Excel: Follow the steps below to create a comma delimited file using MS Excel.

Step One: Open Microsoft® Excel.
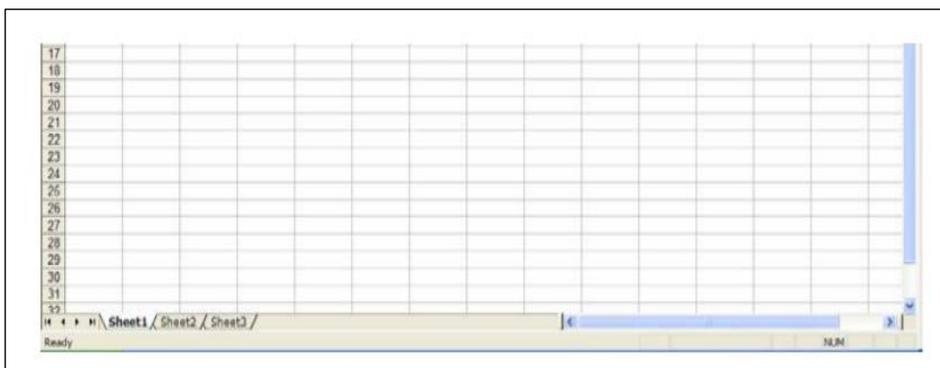
Step 2: Enter the required data. The file format is as follows:

- • Column A: First Name
- • Column B: Last Name
- • Column C: Gender (F = Female, M = Male)
- • Column D: Birth Date (Month/Day/Year, 01/01/1970)
- • Column E: Unique Identifier (Optional)
- • Column F: Unique Identifier (Optional)

The number of children entered will vary by sponsor. Once the file contains all of the required data for all children to be uploaded, proceed to the next step. **NOTE**: File **cannot** contain a header row and must follow this format exactly.

Step Three: Select *File, Save As* from the Excel menu.
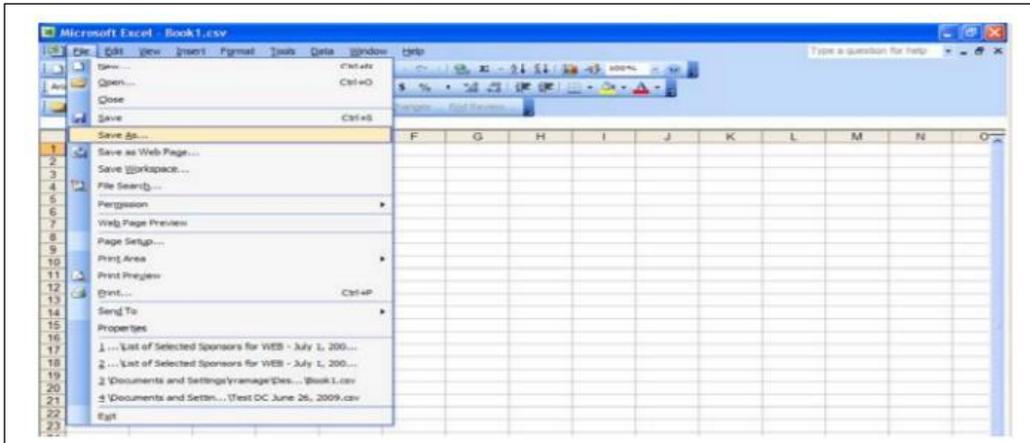
Step Four: Enter a file name as requested. For the *Save as Type*, select *CSV (comma-delimited) (*.csv),* and then click *Save*.
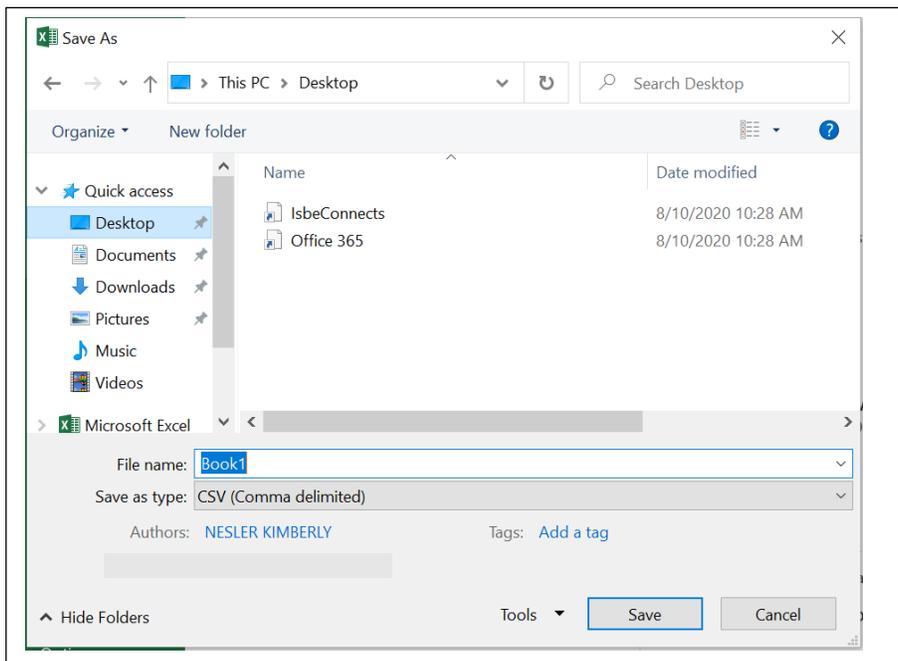
Step Five: The following message may appear. If so, Click Yes to keep the file in the CSV format.
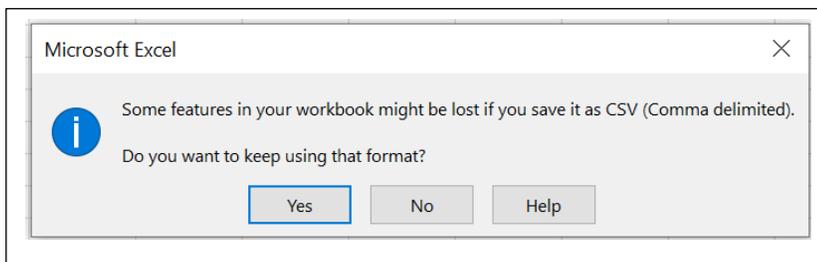
Step Seven: The file is now ready to upload to the Electronic Direct Certification System.
Follow the directions for the Sponsor File Upload found in this Guidance Document.

Using Notepad: Follow the steps below to create a comma delimited file using Notepad.

Step One: To open Notepad, select the *Start* button, type *Notepad* and then select it in the search results.
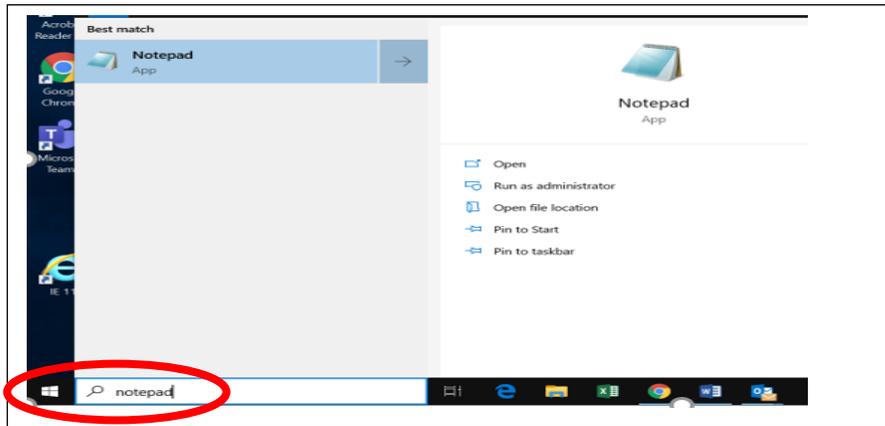
Step Two: Enter the required data. The file format is as follows:

First Name, Last Name, Gender (F = Female, M = Male),Birth Date (Month/day/year, 01/01/2017)

Example: Susan,Jones,F,01/01/2017

DO NOT include spaces in the file format. After each record, select *Enter*.
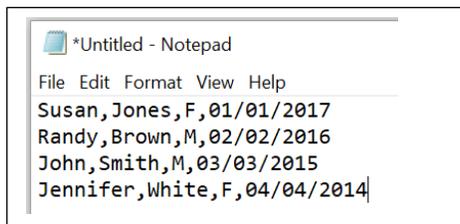
Step Three: Enter a *File Name* and select *Save*. Make sure that the Save As type is Text Documents (*.txt).
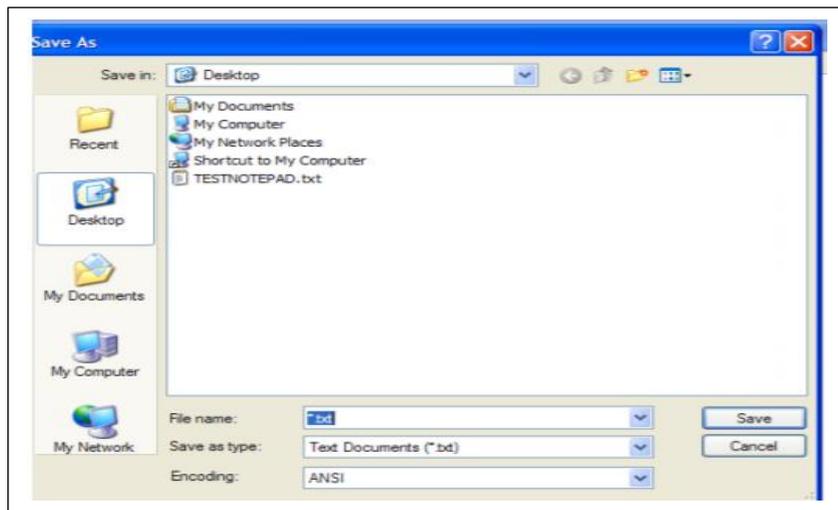
Step Four: The file is now ready to upload to the Electronic Direct Certification System.
Follow the directions for the Sponsor File Upload found in this Guidance Document.

Sponsor File Upload

All sponsors may upload a comma-delimited file to the Electronic Direct Certification System by using Microsoft® Excel or Notepad. Once the file is uploaded, a Sponsor File is created identifying children on the sponsor-created upload file that are receiving SNAP, TANF, income eligible Medicaid or are Foster children. There are no limits to the number of files that may be uploaded to the Electronic Direct Certification System.

To utilize the Sponsor File Upload match, log into the Electronic Direct Certification System and follow the "How to access Electronic Direct Certification" instructions. Before going into the Electronic Direct Certification System, sponsors will need to create their comma-delimited file using either Microsoft® Excel or Notepad (see instructions above "How to create a comma-delimited file").

Step One: Select *File Upload Match* from the main menu on the upper left-hand corner of the Electronic Direct Certification System.

Step Two: Select *Choose File* from the main menu on the lower right-hand corner of the Electronic Direct Certification System. Select the comma-delimited file created for this upload and click *Open*.

Step Three: The file will appear in the *Select a File* area of the screen. Click *Upload*.

Step Four: The system will process the request. Once complete, users will automatically be taken to the SNAP/TANF/MEDICAID page. This process will take just a few minutes. The name of each file uploaded will be "Sponsor File with the date and time".

Step Five: Select *Print* to obtain a copy of the Sponsor File. The results of each search will appear on the screen. Exact and close matches will be displayed. View the list of children, to determine if a match is found.

Step Six: Update the current fiscal year's master list with this information. Checkmark the Electronic DC and free columns for each child that appears on the DC Sponsor Report currently enrolled in the child care center. REMEMBER → A Household Eligibility Application is NOT needed for these children. They are approved to receive FREE meal benefits for 12 months. You are still required to have a CACFP Annual Enrollment Form on file to claim meals.

How to do a Single Child Match

All sponsors can search for individual child(ren) who may receive SNAP, TANF, income eligible Medicaid or are Foster children to determine FREE eligibility. A sponsor may search using the first and last name with an option to add a city. The Single Child Match report will identify those children that the sponsor looked up in the system. All children listed on the Single Child Match report receive SNAP, TANF, income eligible Medicaid or are Foster children and are eligible to claim at the FREE reimbursement rate if enrolled in the child care center. There are no limits to the number of single child matches that a sponsor may conduct. It is suggested that sponsor limit each Single Child Match report to eight children.

A best practice is to search a child's name as part of the enrollment process. If the DC system yields a match, a Household Eligibility Application is NOT needed. However, the household must still complete the CACFP Annual Enrollment Form on file to claim meals for any child, regardless of eligibility category.

Step One: Select *Single Child Match* from the main menu on the upper left-hand corner of the Electronic Direct Certification System.

Step Two: Select *Name and Address* to search for an individual child. Enter the first and last name with an optional city or the case number. Click *Search*.

Step Three: The results of each search will appear on the screen. Exact and close matches will be displayed. View the list of children, and if a match is found (a child enrolled in the child care center), select *Add to Report*.

Step Four: Once a child is added to a report, the following choices will appear: Edit Report, Print Report, or Clear Report.

- Edit Report: A list of the children added to the report will appear. From this screen, a child may be removed from the report.
- Print Report: Select Print to obtain a copy for sponsor records. This is required for documentation of FREE meal benefits. **IMPORTANT** – Don't forget to print!
- Clear Report: This selection will remove all children from the report.

Step Five: Update the current fiscal year's master list with this information. Checkmark the Electronic DC and free columns for each child that appears on the Single Child Lookup Report currently enrolled in the child care center. REMEMBER → A Household Eligibility Application is NOT needed for these children. They are approved to receive FREE meal benefits for 12 months. You are still required to have a CACFP Annual Enrollment Form on file to claim meals.