

Commissioner's Memo
8/31/2021

Application for Alternate I or Alternate II Verification Sample Size

Memo Information

Memo Number **CNU-22-007**

Memo Date 8/31/2021

Memo Type Regulatory

Unit Child Nutrition

Regulatory Authority 7 CFR 245.6a(c); National School Lunch Act Section 9(b)(3)

Response Required YES

Attention Superintendents; Child Nutrition Directors/Managers

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Memo Text

Verification of meal eligibility status is required when meal statuses are determined through the application process. Requirements for the verification process are established in Section 9(b)(3) of the National School Lunch Act and 7CFR 245.6 a (c)(1). Local Education Agencies (LEA)s must follow these regulatory procedures.

Districts are required to request and receive State Agency approval to perform an alternative verification sampling method. If a district chooses to use an alternative sampling method, the attached Alternative Sampling Method Request form must be completed and emailed to ade.chnutverify@ade.arkansas.gov no later than Friday, September 17, 2021. Districts will be notified of their status by the end of the day on Thursday, September 30, 2021. Any district not applying for approval to use an alternative sampling method will use the Standard Sampling Method. Districts placed on the attached 2021-22 Required Standard Sampling List due to verification errors in School Year 2020-2021 do not qualify to use an alternate sampling method.

Standard Sample Size:

Standard

- Three percent of all applications approved by the LEA for the school year, as of October 1 of the school year, selected from the error prone applications; or
- 3,000 error prone applications approved by the LEA for the school year, as of October 1 of the school year.

Alternate Sample Sizes Available to Qualified LEAs

Alternate I – Sample size equals the lesser of:

- Three percent of all applications approved by the LEA for the school year, as of October 1, selected at random; or
- 3,000 applications approved by the LEA for the school year, as of October 1, selected at random.

Alternate II – Sample size equals the lesser of the sum of either:

- 1,000 of all applications approved by the LEA, as of October 1, selected from error prone applications; or
- One percent of all applications approved by the LEA, as of October 1, selected from error prone applications; PLUS
- 500 applications approved by the LEA, as of October 1, which provide case numbers in lieu of income information; or
- One-half of one percent (0.05 %) of applications approved by the LEA, as of October 1, that provide case numbers in lieu of income information.

Qualifying to Use an Alternate Sample Size:

There are two ways an LEA may annually qualify to use an alternate sample size based on lowered non-response rates.

- Lowered Non-Response Rate [7 CFR 245.6a(d)(2)]: Any LEA may use an alternate sample size for any school year when its non-response rate for the preceding school year was less than 20 percent. For example, for SY 2021-2022, an LEA could have used an alternate sample size if in SY 2020-2021 the LEA's non-response rate was 18 percent.
- Improved Non-Response Rate [7 CFR 245.6a(d)(3)]: An LEA with more than 20,000 children approved by application as eligible, as of October 1 of the school year, may use an alternate sample size for any school year when its non-response rate for the preceding school year was at least 10 percent below the non-response rate for the second preceding school year.

Additional information on the sampling methods may be found in the [Eligibility Manual for School Meals Determining and Verifying Eligibility](#) [Eligibility Manual for School Meals \(arkansas.gov\)](http://arkansas.gov) located on the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Child Nutrition Unit webpage.

Attachments:

Alternative Sampling Method Request Form

2021-22 Required Standard Sampling List

Attachments

- [Alternative_Sampling_Method_Request_Form_113255.pdf](#)
- [2021-22_Required_Standard_Sampling_List_113922.xlsx](#)