

## School Food Authority Election to Use Date Flexibility in Free and Reduced Price Meal Eligibility Determination

School District: \_\_\_\_\_

LEA Number: \_\_\_\_\_

The School Food Authority (SFA) has elected to use Free and Reduced Price Meal Eligibility Date Flexibility as described in United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) School Policy (SP) memo SP11-2014. The SFA will ensure that all Free and Reduced Price Meal Applications are processed and determined within ten (10) operating days of receipt of the application, as required by federal regulation. For SFAs using this flexibility the date of determination of the new eligibility status will be the date the application was submitted to the SFA Child Nutrition Department.

By signing below the Child Nutrition Director and School District Superintendent attest that the SFA has a procedure in place to document the date of submission of household Free and Reduced Price Meal Applications, such as a date stamp, and the SFA agrees to refund any money paid by or on behalf of the child for a reimbursable meal prior to the meal eligibility determination, including forgiving debt accrued after the date of submission of application. The SFA must have supporting documentation for Claims for Reimbursement through revised Daily Records and Monthly Reports to show that student meals were claimed in the newly determined category based on the eligibility determination date. Eligibility determinations must be updated in eSchool database, Child Nutrition Master Rosters and Child Nutrition Point of Sale computer systems.

For example, if a child had paid for full price meals and was subsequently determined eligible for reduced price meals, the LEA could adjust the claim to have the previously-served meals reimbursed as reduced price, rather than paid. In turn, the LEA must refund the difference between the total amount paid for the full price meals and the total amount that would have been paid for reduced price meals from the date the application was submitted to the LEA to the date the eligibility determination was made. Similarly, the same amount must be removed from any debt accrued by the child for meals served without payment. For example, the school has a policy that allows a child to receive a meal even if s/he does not have money to pay for a reduced price or paid meal. Under this policy, a child received five lunches after submitting an application, but prior to being determined to be eligible to receive reduced price meals. If this child was in debt for the full price (\$3.00) for each of the five lunches (\$15.00) and the LEA charges \$0.40 for a reduced price lunch, the LEA may claim the five lunches as reduced price if it adjusts the debt to reflect only the cost of five reduced price lunches (\$2.00). If this child had spent \$15.00 instead of accruing a debt, the LEA must refund the difference between the cost of five paid lunches and five reduced price lunches or \$13.00. **The LEA can only claim those meals at the higher reimbursement rate if the child is given a refund or their debt is discharged.**

This flexibility would assist low income children by allowing them to access free or reduced price school meals during the eligibility determination period. It could also assist LEAs that are experiencing challenges with unpaid debt.

Signatures:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child Nutrition Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date