

VERIFICATION FOR CAUSE

Verification for Cause – The school has an obligation to verify all questionable applications (verification “for cause”). If an application is complete and indicates that the child is eligible for free or reduced price benefits, the application must be approved at face value. Only after the determination of eligibility has been made can the school begin the verification for cause process.

Why conduct Verification for Cause?

1. Reduces the number of non-responders during the traditional verification process
2. Ensures integrity of the program by verifying all questionable applications
3. Reduces likelihood of mandatory error prone verification during the traditional verification process

Tips on Verification for Cause

- ✓ Remove any applications verified for cause from the total number of applications when conducting traditional verification
- ✓ Automatically verify for cause all non-responders from previous school year
- ✓ Flag all error prone applications (close to income guidelines) and verify for cause
- ✓ Verify all applications with zero income
- ✓ Verify SNAP (food stamp)/TANF applications that cannot be found on the [Direct Certification & Verification](#) website
- ✓ Verify foster applications that do not result in a clear identification of foster status during the approval process
- ✓ See [SP 13-2012 Verification for Cause in the School Meals Programs](#) regarding the submission of school district employees’ applications. School employees *should not* be approving their own applications.

Procedure

1. If an application is complete and indicates that the child is eligible for free or reduced price benefits, approve the application. Only after the determination of eligibility has been made can the school begin the verification for cause process.
 - Pull any applications verified for cause from the rest of the applications.
2. Send the household pulled for verification for cause a [We Must Check Your Application](#) letter explaining that they must submit verification of eligibility information for continued eligibility.
 - The [We Must Check Your Application](#) letter may be sent at the same time as a notice of eligibility.
3. The school verifies applications for cause by following the same procedures during the regular verification process.
4. After the requested information has been submitted, the household must be sent a [We Have Checked Your Application](#) letter stating the findings of verification.
 - Any household that fails to submit requested verification documentation by the date specified in the *We Must Check Your Application* letter must be sent a *We Have Checked Your Application* letter stating that their student(s) will go back to paid status
 - If a household submits another application after they have been terminated due to non-response in the same school year, then they must submit proof of eligibility (income, food stamp, or TANF) at the time that they reapply.
 - If a household submits another application after they have been terminated due to non-response the following school year, process the application. If approved for benefits, apply benefits immediately. After applying benefits, verify the application for cause.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.