

OSPI School Meal Programs Reference Sheet

Beginning Verification before October 1

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) may begin verification once they start the application approval process for the current school year and have approved applications on file. Conducting verification on a rolling basis helps LEAs mitigate receiving a large amount of documents to process at one time. Starting verification early allows for a longer window to complete the process and may be especially helpful for LEAs with a large number of applications to verify. All regulatory requirements apply, and verification must be completed by November 15 each year.

Requirements

- LEAs must decide how often to sample applications.
- LEAs must include in each sample pool only applications approved since the last sample was selected.
- LEAs must select either 3 percent or 1.5 percent of approved applications, as required by the sampling method, each time they process verification.
- When selecting samples prior to the last sample interval, round down to the next whole number to avoid oversampling.
- On, or around October 1, LEAs must complete the following steps:
 1. Sample the final set of applications, selecting only from the applications approved since the last sampling.
 2. Calculate the number of applications selected for verification *to date* (including the October sample).
 3. Calculate 3% or 3,000 (or 1.5%, if applicable) of *all applications approved as of October 1*, rounding up to the next whole number.
 - If the number of applications selected for verification to date is less than the 3% (3,000) / 1.5% (1,500) number, fill the remainder of the sample by selecting randomly from error prone, categorically eligible, or all applications, *approved since the beginning of the school year* as required for the sampling method.
 - If there are not enough applications of the required type, then sample randomly from all applications.



Example

An LEA conducting verification selects 3% of approved applications every two weeks from August 1 – October 1 (or 5 times (see table below)).

Time Frame	Aug. 1-13	Aug. 14-27	Aug. 28-Sept. 10	Sept. 11-24	Sept. 25-Oct 1		TOTAL
Approved applications	703	455	296	273	167		1,894
Calculation for Sample	703 x .03= 21.09	455 x .03= 13.65	296 x .03= 8.88	273 x .03= 8.19	167 x .03= 5.01	Final Double check	1894 x .03= 56.82
# to verify	21	13	8	8	5 = 55		57

On October 1, the LEA had approved 1,894 applications, so the 3% sample size should be 57

applications: The LEA only sampled 55 applications so far. On October 1, the LEA must randomly select two more applications from all approved applications received since the beginning of the school year.

Additional Details

- The minimum requirements associated with the verification process still apply. These requirements include one follow-up attempt to contact non-responding households and a 10-operating day advanced notification of a reduction or termination of benefits.
- LEAs that send out their initial verification notices on a rolling basis may carry out these requirements on a rolling basis or send all notices on October 1.
- LEAs may issue change, reduction, or termination of benefit notices on a rolling basis.
 - When households selected for verification submit adequate evidence of income (either through written documents or verbally through collateral contacts) indicating eligibility for a greater or lesser level of benefits, a change of benefits or notification of adverse action must be issued promptly.

Reference:

- [SP 42-2017 Beginning Verification before October 1: Guidance to Local Education Agencies](#)
- [7 CFR 245.6a\(c\)\(3\)](#)

Acronym Reference

- LEA – Local Education Agency
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- SBP – School Breakfast Program
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture