



SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

CLARIFICATION OF FEDERAL POLICY

In Texas, organizations contracting directly with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to operate nutrition programs federally funded through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are called Contracting Entities, or CEs. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is a federally funded nutrition program and, as such, sponsors are considered CEs. CEs operating the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) should reference the *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM) Section 12, Seamless Summer Option*, for guidance.

Each year, the USDA publishes the SFSP *Administrative Guidance for Sponsors (AGS)* which provides federal policy, program guidance and information for all CEs that participate or plan to participate in SFSP. TDA occasionally issues a Clarification of Federal Policy, such as this one, to supplement and clarify federal policy set out in the AGS.

Duration of Income Eligibility Determinations in SFSP

On October 31, 2014, USDA issued policy memorandum [SFSP 01-2015, Duration of Income Eligibility Determinations: Guidance and Q&As](#), which provides guidance on the duration of income eligibility determinations already in effect for SFSP and revises previous guidance related to the income eligibility effective dates.

Non-school CEs

Non-school CEs with closed enrolled and camp sites must collect and report to TDA income eligibility information in order to determine the eligibility of individual participants for free meals. CEs may use the *Income Eligibility Form for the Summer Food Service Program*, which can be found on <http://www.summerfood.org> on the page "Summer Feeding Administration & Forms," or in the *Administrative Guidance for Sponsors* in order to determine eligibility. CEs may also use an alternate form created by the CE as long as the form requests the same information found in the *Income Eligibility Form for the Summer Food Service Program* and is approved by TDA before use.

Income eligibility information must be updated annually and may not be more than 12 months old. Income eligibility forms should be considered current and valid until the last day of the month in which the form was dated one year earlier.

Non-school CEs participating in the SFSP have two options in assigning the effective date of the income eligibility form.

- The signature date of the determining official which certifies eligibility.
- The signature date of the parent or guardian.

NOTE: If the date of the parent's or guardian's signature is not within the month of eligibility determination or the immediately preceding month, the effective date *must* be the signature date of the determining official.

Non-school CEs must decide which date they will use as the effective date and apply that date to all eligibility determinations made. This decision must be documented in the CE's processes and procedures for determining participant's eligibility.

School CEs

School CEs participating in the SFSP have two options in assigning the effective date of the income eligibility form.

- The date of approval by the determining official which certifies eligibility.
- The date of receipt, or when the income eligibility form is received by the CE.

School CEs must decide which date they will use as the effective date and apply that date to all eligibility determinations made. CEs must have a method to document the date of eligibility, such as a date stamp procedure.

The date of the parent or guardian signature may not be used.