# SNP Memo #2019-2020-01

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**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA   
Department of Education**

DATE: July 1, 2019

TO: School Nutrition Directors, Supervisors, and Contact Persons (Addressed)

FROM: Sandra C. Curwood, PhD, RDN, Sandy

## SUBJECT: Direct Certification Procedures for the 2019-2020 School Year

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information on direct certification procedures for the 2019-2020 school year and an update on the statewide direct certification project.

### Direct Certification Procedures for the 2019-2020 School Year

Direct certification procedures for the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year will be unchanged and will follow the same process as in previous school years. The direct certification source file, from the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), will be uploaded each month in SNPWeb to the local educational agency (LEA) that corresponds to the students in the file. The monthly schedule for the file to be available in SNPWeb is below. Private schools and RCCIs will continue to send their enrollment data file to VDOE for direct certification matching. Specific directions for private schools/RCCIs will be sent to each point of contact by email during the last week of July.

Each LEA is required to match data from the VDSS source file data to the LEA Student Information System (SIS) enrollment data to make a direct certification determination each time the file is made available. LEAs are advised to use the “All” download option for files after July and to match all enrolled students each time a new file is released to maximize results.

#### Direct Certification Data File SNPWeb Availability Schedule

* July - Week of July 15
* August - Week of August 12
* September - Week of September 16
* October - Week of October 14

New to the VDSS file this year will be school-age children placed in foster care in Virginia. This new eligibility status will be identified as FC in the student record. The FC-Foster Care eligibility type joins the existing free direct certification types in the data file as follows: SN-SNAP; TO-TANF Only; MF-Medicaid Free and the reduced price direct certification type MR-Medicaid Reduced.

These direct certification procedures will continue while VDOE, VDSS, the software developer, and school divisions continue to test the new process to ensure the system will meet expectations with the new statewide direct certification process. It is anticipated that LEA training will be completed in the fall and the new software will be available in SNPWeb by January 2020.

### Statewide Direct Certification Software Project Status and Implementation

Beta testing of the new direct certification software was performed by six local school nutrition programs, five public school divisions, and one private school. Feedback on the software was very positive. Testers determined the results produced were equal to or greater than the number of students directly certified by local methods and the software was easy to use. However, software performance issues identified during the testing need more time to be addressed. Additionally, the beta test group advised VDOE that more time would be needed for all LEAs to work with local free and reduced eligibility software and point of sale software vendors to incorporate the direct certification results from the export file into existing systems. For those reasons, full implementation of the new statewide direct certification software in SNPWeb was delayed beyond the original July 2019 timeline. The new anticipated timeline for full implementation is no later than January 2020.

To continue preparation for the software to be implemented, webinars on how to produce and test the required LEA enrollment data file will be offered by VDOE SNP staff leading the DC project. The webinars will be scheduled for multiple dates during the weeks of July 22, 29, and August 5. To maximize results, webinars will be limited to 25 participants each and advance registration will be required. Webinar registration information will be released next week. If additional sessions are required, they will be scheduled before the end of August.

Regional training sessions will be scheduled in late September and early October to provide hands on experience with the DC software to SNP users. The sessions will be scheduled in at least one location in each of the eight superintendent’s regions and one centralized location for private school users. More information on the regional training sessions will be provided in August.

### Additional Direct Certification Communications

Another SNP State Director’s Memorandum, addressed jointly to school nutrition directors, LEA contacts for Educational Information Systems (EIM), and Student Information Systems (SIS) will be published July 8, 2019 to provide specific additional instructions and information on producing the required LEA enrollment file for uploading to the new DC software and the file format that will be used to export the DC match data for use in the LEA eligibility software and SIS. A Superintendent’s Memorandum on the new direct certification process requirements, data extracts, and export files will also be published in the next few weeks. The goals of these additional communications are to facilitate collaboration among the LEA SNP, EIM, and SIS contacts to produce the LEA enrollment data extract file in preparation for testing and implementing the DC software and for the monthly direct certification data requirements to become part of the annual LEA data reporting calendar.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Sara Bennett, SNP Systems Analyst Specialist, at [sara.bennett@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:sara.bennett@doe.virginia.gov), Lynne Fellin, Technical Assistance Specialist, at [lynne.fellin@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:lynne.fellin@doe.virginia.gov), or the regional school nutrition program specialist assigned to your school division or private school.

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