

DATE: April 1, 2011

MEMO CODE: SP 26-2011, CACFP 15-2011, SFSP 10-2011

SUBJECT: Eligibility of Children Evacuated from Japan and Bahrain

TO: Child Nutrition Programs

We recognize that many families are being evacuated from Japan due to the recent disasters. Some families are moving to safer areas, including the United States. These students are eligible for meal benefits if they enroll in a participating school or institution. This memorandum provides guidance on providing free or reduced price benefits to these students and, if applicable, their host families.

Determining Eligibility for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program

The local educational agency (LEA) official responsible for determining free/reduced price meal eligibility should contact the LEA's homeless liaison to determine if these children are considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.). If these children have been determined homeless by the liaison, they are categorically eligible for free meals under the NSLP/SBP and are eligible for the school year and for the first 30 operating days in the next school year.

Households may also submit applications. And, on a case by case basis, school officials may submit an application on behalf of a child (see Part 3, Section J of the Eligibility Manual for School Meals, January 2008 edition, for additional information on this procedure).

Additionally, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) has contacted the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) regarding the evacuation of military families and is collecting the eligibility status of the students they know have been evacuated. If an LEA knows that a newly enrolled student has been evacuated from Japan due to the disasters or Bahrain due to political unrest, and the student is not identified as homeless, the LEA may accept the eligibility determination made by DoDEA for these households (see Part 3, Section O of the Eligibility Manual for School Meals, January 2008 edition for additional information on this procedure). LEAs may contact Karen Smith at DoDEA directly at 703-588-3532 to obtain the eligibility status of these students.

Determining Eligibility for the Child and Adult Care Program and Summer Food Service Program (CACFP/SFSP)

Sponsors and institutions in the CACFP or SFSP that require eligibility information can accept certification of the child's or adult's homeless status from the agency that assisted with the evacuation or is providing shelter. If the child is not residing in an emergency shelter, the institution should have an adult living with the child complete an income eligibility form

indicating that the child is homeless. No further information is required to certify that child's eligibility.

Determining Eligibility for Host Families

We would also like to provide our policy on certifying children designated as homeless when they reside with another household and how it impacts the host family. A child or family may temporarily reside with another household and still be considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. In these cases the household size and income of the host family is not taken into consideration in determining the free meal eligibility for the child(ren) designated as homeless by the LEA's liaison.

Additionally, when a host family applies for free and reduced price meals for their own children, the host family may include the homeless family as household members if the host family provides financial support to the homeless family, such as shelter, utilities, clothing or food. In such cases, the host family must also include any income received by the homeless family. The LEA, or the appropriate child care or summer institution, determines eligibility for the host family in the traditional manner.

However, free meal eligibility for the homeless child is based on the documentation provided by the homeless liaison or other source, even when the child is included on the host family's free and reduced price meal application. Part 5, Section E of the Eligibility Manual provides information about certifying homeless children. Local agencies should inform their State agency of other questions regarding the status of the evacuees.

We will address other issues concerning evacuated children and families as they arise.