



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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DATE: May 25, 2012
MEMO CODE: SP 29-2012
SUBJECT: Direct Certification Performance Awards - FY 2012 Guidance
TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions
State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

A provision of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 provides for performance awards to States that best ensure that children who are members of households receiving benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are directly certified for free school meals. This provision was implemented by FNS Memorandum SP 33-2011 - *Child Nutrition Reauthorization 2010: Direct Certification Performance Awards and Use of Funds*, dated April 28, 2011, and can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP33-2011.pdf>.

Attached are Questions and Answers (Q&As) on the awards process for fiscal year (FY) 2012. FNS will be awarding up to 15 States in September 2012 and intends to make the awards based on school year (SY) 2011-2012 direct certification data. There is a possibility, however, that the data will not be available in time to make the awards by the end of September 2012. If the new data is not available in time, we will use prior year data, as published in the report entitled, *Direct Certification in the National School Lunch Program: State Implementation Progress School Year 2010-2011: Report to Congress - October 2011*, which can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/menu/Published/CNP/cnp.htm>. At any rate, FNS plans to award a total of \$4 million (\$2 million in **Outstanding Performance Awards** and \$2 million in **Substantial Improvement Awards**), based on the most recent data available.

Please note that State agencies must submit a "Letter of Intent to Compete" for the Substantial Improvement Awards, but not for the Outstanding Performance Awards. See the attached Q&As, the attached Sample Template, and the attached Reference Chart for further guidance. This "Letter of Intent to Compete" is due to FNS no later than **June 30, 2012**.

State agencies should direct their questions to the appropriate FNS Regional Office. Regional Offices may direct questions to Patricia von Reyn at patricia.vonreyn@fns.usda.gov.

Original Signed

Cynthia Long
Director
Child Nutrition Division

Attachments