



Using the Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility when Operating a Special Provision Option



Health and Nutrition Services
Arizona Department of Education

Contents

Purpose of the Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility	Page 4
Collecting and Processing Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility	Page 7

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Introduction

WHAT IS A QUICK GUIDE?

Quick Guides are an abbreviated resource developed by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) Division. Quick guides are intended to complement ADE's Step-by-Step Instruction: How-to Guides. Quick guides do not count towards Professional Standards training hours.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

This resource is intended for School Food Authorities (SFAs) operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). This resource may also be used by Title I-A school leaders, Federal Program Directors, and Equitable Service Private School Leaders in need of individual student income-based eligibility information for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) when school meal free and reduced-price income eligibility information is not available.

PURPOSE OF THIS QUICK GUIDE

The purpose of this quick guide is to review the parts of the Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility, also known as, an Alternative Income Form. This form can be completed by families and used by the Local Educational Agency (LEA) to collect individual student income data otherwise obtained with a free and reduced-price meal application when operating a Special Provision Option (SPO), or when eligibility cannot be obtained through SNAP, direct certification, or the household meal application.



Purpose of the Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility

The Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility is distributed by ADE Title I-A Division and can be utilized as an alternative means to collect income eligibility information from the student's household. This form can increase Title I-A program eligibility when eligibility cannot be obtained through SNAP, direct certification, or the household meal application. The Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility is available for LEAs that operate an SPO (Provision 2, Provision 3, or the Community Eligibility Provision - CEP), and nonprofit private schools participating in equitable services that do not have food programs may use the form for Title I-A income eligibility. Use of this form is not a Title I-A requirement for LEAs operating an SPO.

Organizations should retain completed forms for five years.


Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility

PURPOSE

Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility are not used to certify students for free or reduced-priced meals.

Instead, these forms are used to collect individual student income data that can be used for programs and funding sources that previously relied on meal application data such as Title 1-A, Accountability, etc.

While operating an SPO, SFAs are prohibited from collecting household free/reduced-price meal applications, however, the district may choose to provide households with the Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility to obtain individual student data. It is important that the district does NOT associate this form with the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)/ School Breakfast Program (SBP), or students' eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.

 Academic Achievement

Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility

The Arizona Department of Education provides the following Fiscal Year 2025 Income Guidelines for determining income eligibility for a variety of federal funding programs. This form should be utilized as an alternative means to collect income eligibility information from the student's household and organizations should retain completed forms for a period of five years.

Definition of Income: all items such as wages and salaries before any deductions, and other income, such as self-employment, welfare, social security, retirement benefits unemployment compensation, worker's compensation, aid for dependent children, alimony, child support, pensions, insurance, or annuity payments, etc.

Exclusion: the value of meals, milk, or EBT benefits to children shall NOT be considered income in the household.

Is your household at or below the current income guidelines based on the attached Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act Income Eligibility Guidelines schedule?

Yes, Income Eligibility 1 (Indicator 1 in AzEDS):

Yes, Income Eligibility 2 (Indicator 2 in AzEDS):

No:

If your household qualifies, please complete the following information for each student:

<u>Student's Name</u>	<u>Name of School</u>	<u>Grade</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

I hereby certify that all the above information is true and correct:

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Arizona Department of Education Tuesday, July 2, 2024

Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility

INCOME ELIGIBILITY INDICATORS

The form lists an income guidelines schedule for households to determine if their income falls within Income Eligibility 1, or Eligibility 2 based on their household size.

If the household's income falls within one of the two eligibility income indicators, the information for each student within the household should be listed on the form. This information will be reflected in the Arizona Education Data Standards (AzEDS) system for all children in the qualifying household once processed and documented in the LEAs Student Information System.

Income Eligibility Guidelines: July 1, 2024- June 30, 2025

<u>Income Eligibility 1</u>						<u>Income Eligibility 2</u>					
HOW OFTEN INCOME WAS RECEIVED						HOW OFTEN INCOME WAS RECEIVED					
Family Size:	Yearly	Monthly	2 x Month (Bi-Monthly)	Bi-Weekly (Every Two Weeks)	Weekly	Family Size:	Yearly	Monthly	2 x Month (Bi-Monthly)	Bi-Weekly (Every Two Weeks)	Weekly
1	\$19,578	\$1,632	\$816	\$753	\$377	1	\$27,861	\$2,322	\$1,161	\$1,072	\$536
2	\$26,572	\$2,215	\$1,108	\$1,022	\$511	2	\$37,814	\$3,152	\$1,576	\$1,455	\$728
3	\$33,566	\$2,798	\$1,399	\$1,291	\$646	3	\$47,767	\$3,981	\$1,991	\$1,838	\$919
4	\$40,560	\$3,380	\$1,690	\$1,560	\$780	4	\$57,720	\$4,810	\$2,405	\$2,220	\$1,110
5	\$47,554	\$3,963	\$1,982	\$1,829	\$915	5	\$67,673	\$5,640	\$2,820	\$2,603	\$1,302
6	\$54,548	\$4,546	\$2,273	\$2,098	\$1,049	6	\$77,626	\$6,469	\$3,235	\$2,966	\$1,493
7	\$61,542	\$5,129	\$2,565	\$2,367	\$1,184	7	\$87,579	\$7,299	\$3,650	\$3,369	\$1,685
8	\$68,536	\$5,712	\$2,856	\$2,636	\$1,318	8	\$97,532	\$8,128	\$4,064	\$3,752	\$1,876
Each Additional Member Add:	+\$6,994	+\$583	+\$292	+\$269	+\$135	Each Additional Member Add:	+\$9,953	+\$830	+\$415	+\$383	+\$192

Income is defined as: All items such as wages and salaries before any deductions, and other income, such as self-employment, welfare, social security, retirement benefits unemployment compensation, worker's compensation, aid for dependent children, alimony, child support, pensions, insurance, or annuity payments, etc.



Collecting and Processing Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility

Child Nutrition Program employees may be responsible for collecting and processing Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility for their school district. If this is the case, Child Nutrition Program funding or the nonprofit school food service account may not be used to fund activities associated with processing the Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility. The district must pay for the cost of processing forms, or reimburse the nonprofit school food service account for this cost should food service be collecting and processing these forms. This includes reimbursement for any labor hours that Child Nutrition Program employee(s) may spend processing these Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility.

Collecting Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility

A best practice for LEAs using these forms is to ensure that forms are available to every student. The following should be kept in mind when distributing these forms:

- Be sure to include an explanation of the form and why it is important to be completed.
- Do not mention school meals when discussing the Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility, as the two are not permitted to be associated.
- Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility may be electronic, paper-based, or a combination of the two.

It is recommended that districts opting to use the Alternative Form for Income-based Eligibility include it as part of the yearly registration process or as part of the back-to-school night. Conducting outreach to families regarding the form is key. Consider:

- Linking the form on your district, school, and school nutrition website.
- Posting a link to the form on social media along with why it is important.
- Conducting outreach on back-to-school nights, school events, and PTA meetings.
- Providing information in multiple languages reflective of the students and families in your community.

Processing Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility

Historically, household meal application data has been used to assess the number of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals. This eligibility information is also used for school accountability and for funding from federal programs.

When operating a SPO, the distribution of household meal applications is prohibited. Therefore, there are two established options for schools to be able to determine income information without using the school meal applications:

- Alternate Income Forms; **OR**,
- Identified Student Percentage (ISP) x 1.6

When determining funding, Title 1 opts for the higher percentage. This is up to Title 1's discretion and is subject to change. Please verify with your specialist which number Title 1 will be using for your SFA's funding. Title I-A recommends all forms be documented in the LEA's student information system.

It is important to note that food service may be responsible for collecting and processing Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility. **This activity is NOT an allowable expense from the non-profit school food service account.** The district must pay for the cost of processing forms, or reimburse the non-profit school food service account for this cost should food service be collecting and processing these forms. This includes reimbursement for any labor hours that Child Nutrition Program employee(s) may spend processing these Alternative Forms for Income-based Eligibility.

Thank you!

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:

*U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or*

2.fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. email:

program.intake@usda.gov

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