Purpose

Contracting Entities (CEs) are required to provide public notification of the availability of free milk prior to or during the first week of school. CEs may customize the template provided by TDA.

Directions

* Provide the appropriate information for each description in brackets.
* Add CE or site specific information as needed.
* Attach a copy of the current income eligibility guidelines.
* Distribute widely through available media outlets.
* Retain a copy of the release onsite.

Frequency

Yearly, prior to or during the first week of school.

Required Format

Use this sample or a similar document. Attach the current income eligibility guidelines, application form, or sample letters as appropriate.

Records Retention

Releases kept onsite and made available on request. Public and charter schools are required to keep documentation related to school nutrition programs for 5 years. Private schools, other nonprofit organizations, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) are required to keep documentation for 3 years

# Sample Media Release: Application for Free Milk (Special Milk Program)

*{insert contracting entity (CE) name}* announced its policy today for providing free milkfor children served under the Special Milk Program (SMP) under the attached current income eligibility guidelines*.* Each school/child care institution or the central office has a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by anyone on request.

Starting on*{insert date, name of CE/site}* will begin distributing letters to the households of the children in the district *{or service area}* about eligibility benefits and any actions households need to take to apply for these benefits. Applications also are available at *{insert address for contracting entity office or locations distributing applications}*.

Criteria for Free Milk

The following criteria will be used to determine a child’s eligibility for free milk benefits:

Income

1. Household income that is at or below the income eligibility levels

Categorical (Automatic) Eligibility

1. Household receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

Program Participant

1. Child’s status as a foster child, homeless, runaway, migrant, or displaced by a declared disaster
2. Child’s enrollment in Head Start or Even Start

Income Eligibility

For those households that qualify for free milk based on income, an adult in the household must complete an application for free milk and return it to *{insert name, title, and contact information}*. Those individuals filling out the application will need to provide the following information:

1. Names of all household members
2. Amount, frequency, and source of current income for each household member
3. Last 4 digits of the Social Security number of the adult household member who signs the application or, if the adult does not have a social security number, check the box for *“No Social Security number”*
4. Signature of an adult household member attesting that the information provided is correct

Categorical or Program Eligibility

*{insert name of CE}* is working with local agencies to identify all children who are categorically and program eligible.*{insert name of CE}* will notify the households of these children that they do not need to complete an application. Any household that does not receive a letter and feels it should have should contact *{insert name, title, and contact information}*.

Any household that wishes to decline benefits should contact *{insert name, title, and contact information}*.

Applications may be submitted anytime during the school year. The information provided by households on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility. Applications may also be verified by the school officials at any time during the school year.

Determining Eligibility

Under the provisions of the free milk policy,*{insert title and name of reviewing official}* will review applications and determine eligibility. Households or guardians dissatisfied with the Reviewing Official’s eligibility determination may wish to discuss the decision with the Reviewing Official on an informal basis. Households wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to *{insert name of hearing official, title, and contact information}*.

Unexpected Circumstances

If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household’s income falls at or below the attached current income eligibility guidelines.