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1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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By the end of this webinar you will be able to:



what's the plans

- Identify the initial steps for verification
- Describe application selection procedures
- Name allowable sources for verification
- Describe required procedures for notifications and follow-up
- Determine if verification is complete
- Develop a plan to improve household responses
- Identify when to review questionable applications

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The Verification Process Manual

Verification Manual Reference Page Numbers





A Guide to a Successful Verification Process



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Verification Process - 7 CFR 245.6a(c)(1)

The confirmation of eligibility of only the current school year's determined and confirmed free and reduced price applications under NSLP and SBP

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Exemptions to the Verification Process

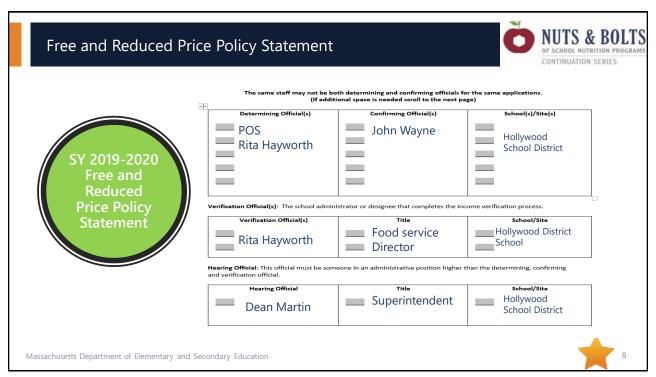


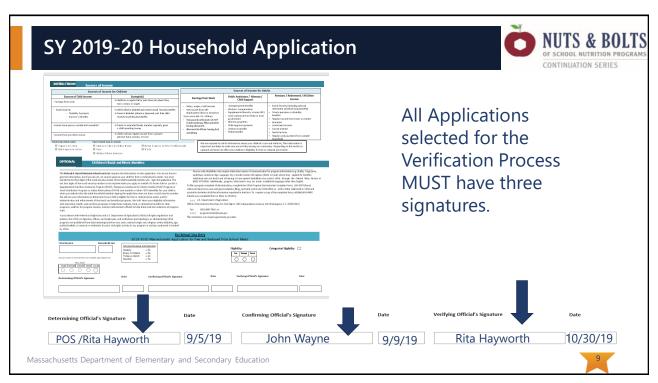
- Denied applications
- Non-pricing programs (households are not charged for meals)
- Children who have been Directly Certified
- Migrant, Runaway, Homeless, or Foster children (unless included on a meal benefit application)
- Children enrolled in Head Start
- RCCI students (except for day students)
- · Schools that participate in Provision 2, except in the base year
- Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Schools

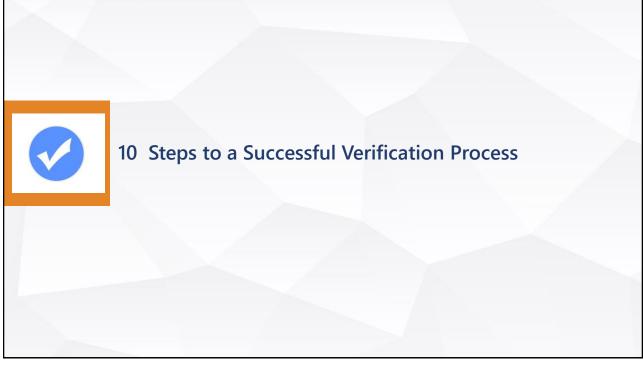
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10 Steps to a Successful Verification Process (including Point of Sale Systems (POS) – A Verification Checklist



- Determining Applications and the Error Prone Selection
- 2. Establishing the Sample Pool
- 3. Establishing the Sample Size
- 4. Edit Checking the Application Selection Process
- 5. Methods of Verification: Direct Verification (DV)
- Methods of Verification: Paper Verification
- Determining the Sources of Verification
- 8. Responses to Household Notifications
- 9. Conducting Follow-up Procedures
- 10. Recordkeeping Compliance

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STEP 1a: Determining Applications and the Error Pg. 2 Prone Process



- **1.** The Determining Official (or the POS) **calculates** the eligibility of the meal benefit applications received as of October 1by using the current year Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEG)
- **2.** Then **compares** the computed household income to the Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEG). If the difference between the household income and the IEG is within the interval income amount designated below; the application is considered **ERROR PRONE**

\$1200 annually	\$24 weekly
\$100 monthly	\$44 bi-weekly (every two weeks)
\$50 semi-monthly (twice a month)	



STEP 1b: Determining Applications and the Error Prone Process



3. The **Determining Official** checks the *Error Prone box on the bottom of the application* and the **Confirming Official** repeats the computation process to confirm the Determining Official's calculations.

STFP 4	Contact Information and Adult Signature	Mail Completed Form To: INSER	RT YOUR SCHOOL/DISTRICT MAILING ADDRESS	5 HERE	1 1
1.11	that all information on this application is true and that all income is r		iven in connection with the receipt of Federal funds, and that s	chool officials may verify (check) the informatio <mark>n</mark> . I am awa	are that if I purposely give fa
children may lose n	neal benefits, and I may be prosecuted under applicable State and Fe	deral laws."			
Street Address (i	favailable) Apt #	City	State Zip	Daytime Phone and Email (optional)	
Printed name of	adult signing the form	Signature of adult		Today's date	Error prone

4. The applications are now considered approved and the applications are set aside to prepare for the random sampling of applications. Random selection gives each application equal chance of being selected without discrimination.

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STEP 2: Establishing the Sample Pool - Manual





 The total number of free/reduced price applications determined and confirmed (approved) as of October 1 of the current school year

 In Massachusetts, confirmation of applications are completed after determination and prior to verification

> Example: Sample Pool of 125 applications

 Projection of applications may be determined based on prior years, but the final pool must be from actual number of applications on file

Memo code: SP 42-2017 Beginning Verification before Oct.1: Guidance to Local Educational Agencies



STEP 2: Establishing the Sample Pool - POS



SFA's with POS system's completing the Sample Pool must ensure that:

- The sample pool is derived only from the current school year applications
- 2. The meal benefit applications that are **approved** (confirmed and determined) are within the correct timeline selection parameter no earlier than July and no later than October 1 of the current school year

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STEP 3a: Establishing the Sample Size





A **Standard** sample size of 3% of the sample pool must be used by the LEA unless the LEA qualifies to use an alternate sample size.

Districts may qualify for one of the alternate sample sizes. LEA's may contact their DESE consultant for technical assistance.

Example:

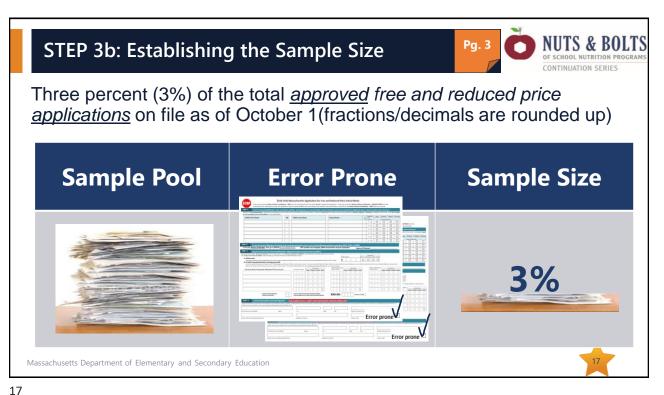
- Sample Pool: 125 application
- Sample Size: 3% applications of 125 applications =
 3.75 (rounded up) = 4 applications to be verified

The Sample Size must be selected from Error Prone applications first!

• No Error Prone: a random selection from the approved application pool



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STEP 3c: Establishing the Sample Size

Sample Pool

Error Prone

Sample Size

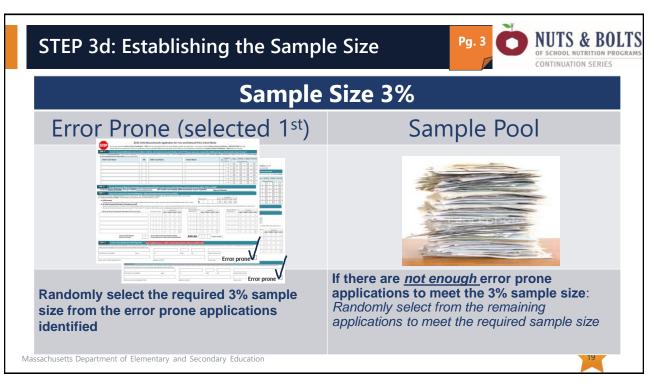
3% applications of 125 applications

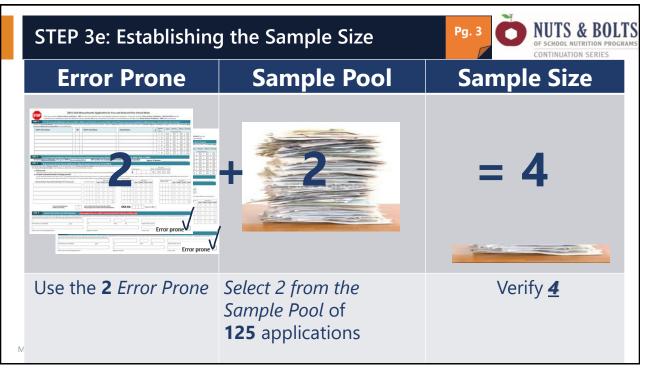
Sample Pool of 125 applications

ONLY 2 Error Prone

Applications to be verified = 4

Τ,





STEP 3e: Establishing the Sample Size - POS



SFA's with POS system's completing the Sample Size must ensure that:

- 1. The correct approved sample size is selected
- 2. The correct number of applications are selected (rounding up to the next whole number); and
- 3. Applications are only from error prone following the income intervals as indicated below:

\$1200 annually	\$24 weekly
\$100 monthly	\$44 bi-weekly (every two weeks)
\$50 semi-monthly (twice a month)	

The chart is found on the Verification Checklist



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STEP 4: Edit Checking the Application Selection Process



- Approve applications and determine the Error Prone applications during processing
- 2. Establish the sample pool from the approved applications as of October 1
- 3. Establish the *sample size* from *Error Prone* applications first to meet the 3% sample size application requirement (rounded up)
- 4. If there is an *excess* of the Error Prone applications:

Randomly select from the error prone applications identified

- 5. If there are **not enough applications** or there are **no** Error Prone applications to meet the 3% sample size:
 - Randomly select from the remaining applications to meet the required sample size
- 6. The application selection process is complete and the Verification Process begins!



Step 5: Methods of Verification Direct Verification 1st

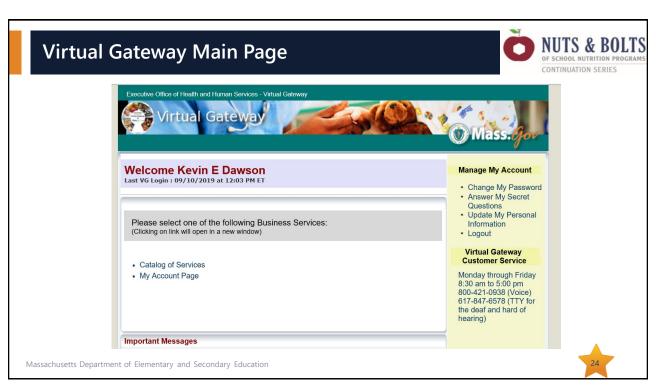


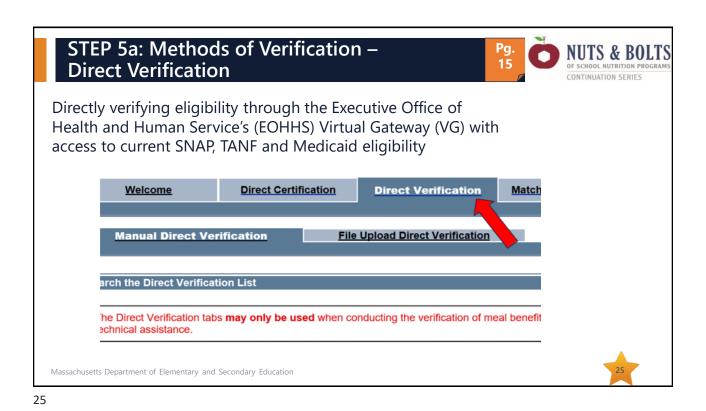
- ★ Direct Verification Steps:
 - ★ Direct verification enables districts to conduct online verification using current SNAP, TANF/TAFDC and Medicaid income
 - ★ Options to upload Direct Verification list:
 - 1) File Upload (5000 records maximum)
 - * Note: Prepare file for upload using template and save in .csv format
 - 2) Manual Upload (10 records maximum)
- ★ Districts should continue to follow all existing policies and procedures surrounding Direct Verification

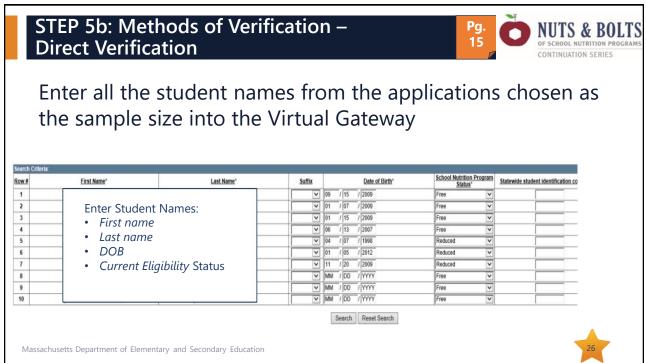
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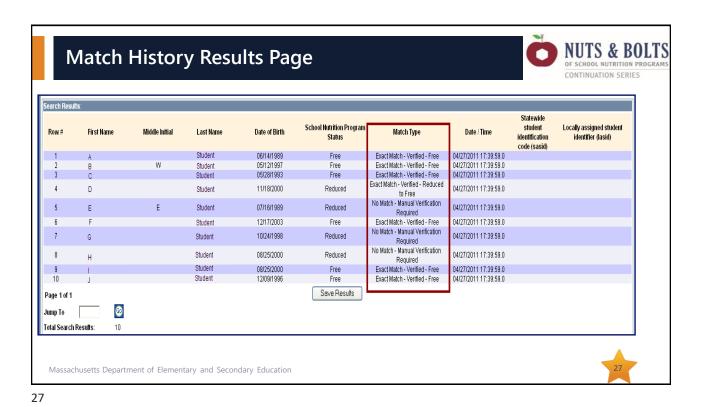


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STEP 5c: Methods of Verification -NUTS & BOLTS **Direct Verification** CONTINUATION SERIES **Match Type Increases** in benefit level such as Reduced to Free are implemented as Exact Match - Verified - Free immediately or no later than 3 operating days Exact Match - Verified - Free to Reduced Exact Match - Verified - Free to Paid **Decreases** in benefit level such as Free to Reduced, Free to Paid or No Match - Manual Verification Required Reduced to Paid are completed after Exact Match - Verified - Reduced to Free 10 calendar days. The new benefit level occurs on day 11. During the Exact Match - Verified - Reduced to Paid 10 day period the original benefit Exact Match - Verified - Reduced level remains in place. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

STEP 5d: Methods of Verification – Direct Verification





- Verification for the Directly Verified applications is now complete
- Households must be notified that the application was verified and the results

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STEP 5e: Methods of Verification – Direct Verification





Direct Verification Letters to Households

Scho	ol: Date:
Dear	
	hecked the information you sent us to prove that [name(s) of child(ren)] are eligible for free or reduced price meals and have ed that:
	Your child(ren)'s eligibility has not changed.
	Starting [date], your child(ren)'s eligibility for meals will be changed from reduced price to free because your income is within the free meal eligibility limits. Your child(ren) will receive meals at no cost.
0	

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STEP 6a: Methods of Verification: Paper Verification



Paper Method – Verifying eligibility by sending a dated letter requesting income validation from the household

We MUST Check Your Application			
You must send the price meals.	information we need, or contact [name] by [date], or your child(ren) will stop getting free or reduced		
School:	Date:		
Dear	:		
	ur Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application. Federal rules require that we do this to make sure n get free or reduced price meals. You must send us information to prove that [name(s) of gible.		
only eligible childre child(ren)](is/are] el If possible, send con 1. If you were rece any time since i • MA SNAP o • Letter from	n get free or reduced price meals. You must send us information to prove that [name(s) of		

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STEP 6b: Methods of Verification: Paper Verification





- Households must respond to the first request for information within a specified period of time conveyed by the LEA
- Verification documentation for each application verified must be available (i.e. Verification Tracker)
- The LEA must provide a telephone number that is available at no cost to the household



STEP 6c: Methods of Verification: Paper Verification



- The LEA must complete the verification process for all households that have been notified
- If all students withdraw from a selected household another application must be verified. Applications may be replaced when the LEA believes the household would be unable to satisfactorily respond to the verification 7 CFR 246.6a(e)(2)

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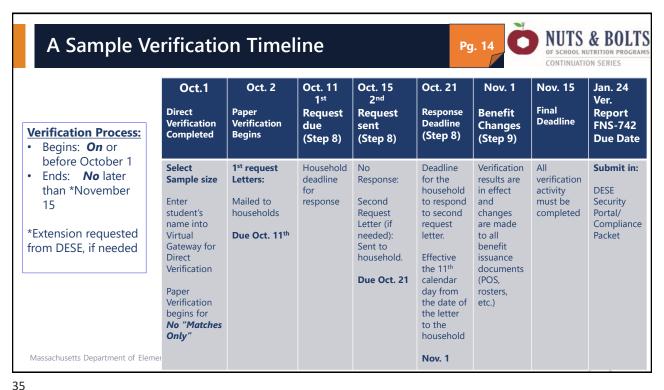
STEP 7: Determining Sources of Verification





- The LEA must identify the sources of income indicated by the household on the meal benefit application.
- Written evidence for income eligible households and categorically eligible households must include the following:
- · Name of person (s) receiving the income
- · Amount, frequency, and the date the income was received
- Collateral contacts (employers, social service agencies, religious or civic organizations)
- Agency records (court decree for foster students)
- · Homeless Liaison list

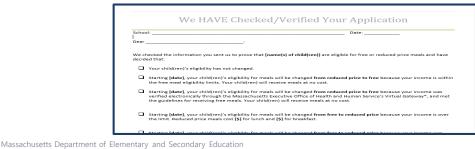




STEP 8a: Household Notification: Yes: Response to the 1st Household Contact Pg. 18 OF SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS CONTINUATION SERIES

Adequate information is received and the evaluation of information results in one of the following:

- Reduction of benefits: 10 calendar days written advanced notice (benefits will change on day 11)
- Increase of benefits: Immediate increase in benefits and implemented no later than 3 operational days
- No change in benefit





STEP 8b: Household Notification: No: Response to the 1st Household Contact





The LEA must make at least one follow-up with the household in writing (including e-mails) or a telephone call with documentation of the attempted contact if:

- Does not respond to the first request
- Submits insufficient or obsolete written evidence
- Does not designate collateral contacts
- The collateral contact is not able to provide requested information

Failure to provide adequate written evidence may result in termination of benefits

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STEP 9a: Conducting Follow-up Procedures Households That Are Denied Benefits



- May appeal the denial or reduction in benefits within the 10 calendar day advance notice period
- May continue receiving the approved benefits and the district can continue to claim that benefit
- May reapply for benefits at any time during the same school year, but must always submit income documentation or categorical proof that is indicated on the application

These are not considered new applications

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STEP 9b: Improving the Verification Process



- LEA's should Directly Verify students selected for verification
- Provide clear instructions on the Verification Notice requesting income information
- Provide the name of an LEA official who can answer questions and provide technical assistance
- · Provide a bilingual point of contact if households fail to respond
- <u>Verification Toolkit</u>: https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/verification-toolkit

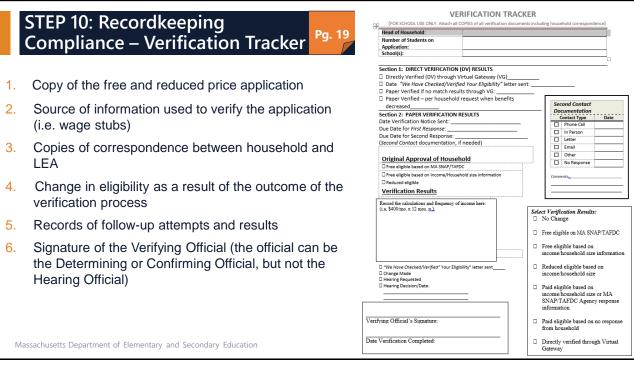
More 6

= less termination of benefits and better nutrition

Memo Code: SP43-2016 (v.2) Ensuring Access to Free and Reduced Price School Meals for Low-Income Students-Revised

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Verification for Cause 7 CFR 245.6a(c)(7)





- Verification of any questionable applications in addition to the sample size
- This process cannot delay the approval of applications
- Follow the same procedures as explained in the verification process (Verification Manual pgs. 11-20)
- Notice of Adverse Action is sent when any household fails to submit requested verification information by the date specified by the LEA or submits information that does not support the reported income information
- Verification for cause to verify households of all school district employees

Memo Code: SP 13-2012 Verification for Cause in the School Meals Program

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When Does the SFA Verify For Cause?





- Meal Benefit Applications have SNAP numbers, but the household is not listed on the Direct Certification Uploads
- 2. Meal benefit applications that are re-submitted with a change in income or household size resulting in a lower benefit
- 3. The income reported is the same as the income listed on the Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEG)
- 4. The household voluntarily submits pay stubs that conflict with the documented income on the meal benefit application



DTA Award	Letter Sample	NUTS & BOLTS OF SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS CONTINUATION SERIES
	DTA - DPC - P0 B0X 4406 Taunton, MA 02780-0420	
	Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance	
	Agency ID	
	Date: 04/20/2019	
	Dear	
	Your SNAP household has been found eligible for a one-time \$21 fuel assistance cash payment through the Heat and Eat (H-EAT) Program. This may make your monthly SNAP amount go up. You will receive a separate notice if your SNAP benefits change.	
	The \$21 payment will be on your EBT card. If you receive cash assistance by direct deposit, it will be put in your bank account. You will get it within three days of this notice.	
	The reverse side of this notice has important information about H–EAT. Please read it carefully!	
	If you have questions or have trouble reading or understanding this notice, please call the DTA at 1–877–382–2363.	
	H-Eat Payment Agency IC	
Massachusetts Department of El	ementary and Secondary Education	45

Tips for a Successful Verification Process

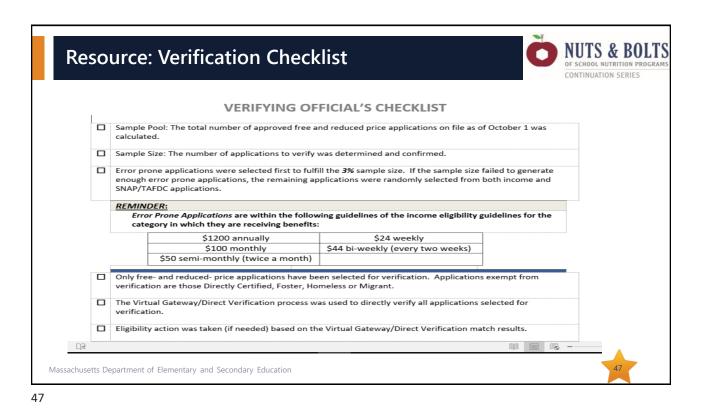


- No more or no less than 3% of the total applications are to be verified
- 100% verification is not permissible
- Verification cannot be requested at the time of the application
- At least one application must always be verified
- Deadline for completion of all verification activity is November 15
 (Oct. 1 Nov. 15)
- Verification Summary Report must be submitted to DESE via Security Portal no later than annual deadline in early January

Remember! DOCUMENT.. DOCUMENT .. DOCUMENT

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NUTS & BOLTS Upcoming Verification Webinar CONTINUATION SERIES A webinar focusing on completing the Verification Collection Report (FNS-742R) will be conducted on January 9th, 2020. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service School Food Authority (SFA) Verification Collection Report State agencies must report the information on this form ANNUALLY for each SFA with schools operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or the School Breakfast Program (SBP). All SFAs, including SFAs with all schools exempt from verification requirements, must complete applicable sections. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it contains a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB number for this collection is 0584-0026. The time required to complete this information collection is 45 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed and complete and review the information collection. Type of SFA: SFA ID#: State Agency Name: School Year: Public Nonprofit/Private From: 20 SFA Name: SFA City: SFA Zip code: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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THANK YOU

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