



# COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Commissioner of Education

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Deputy Commissioner

**CN05-F-012**

TO: Superintendents and Food Service Directors  
FROM: Dan C. McMillan, Director - Nutrition and Transportation Unit  
DATE: October 20, 2004  
SUBJECT: Guidance for Eligibility of Runaway Children in Child Nutrition Programs

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This memo further defines and clarifies the unique eligibility provisions that should be applied to identified runaway children and the Child Nutrition Programs.

Section 107 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 amended section 9(b) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to make runaway children categorically eligible for free meal benefits under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs and is effective July 1, 2004. In addition to establishing free meal eligibility, the Act also establishes a requirement for documenting a child's status as runaway. Runaway children are those served through grant programs established under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

#### *Documentation of free meal eligibility for runaway children*

To expedite the delivery of nutritional benefits, school officials should work directly with their district's Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) program coordinator, to identify runaway children and to document their eligibility for free school meals. School food service officials must accept documentation that the children are runaway children from the RHY program coordinator in the district. This may be the same individual responsible as the district's McKinney-Vento Homeless liaison, as these two programs have coordination requirements.

Documentation of runaway status to substantiate free meal eligibility is a list with each child's name, effective date(s), and the signature of the RHY program coordinator. This documentation is in lieu of free and reduced price meal applications. Any subsequent application submitted on behalf of the child should be disregarded.

#### *Continuing Certification*

Public Law 108-265 also amended the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish that, once a child is certified as eligible to receive free or reduced price meals, eligibility remains effective for the remainder of the school year.

If you have any questions regarding implementation of the Act with the Child Nutrition Programs, please contact our office at 303.866.6661 or 888.245.6092 outside of the Denver Metro area.