

FRAM Eligibility Standards and Guidelines

Last Modified on 12/14/2025 8:45 pm CST

Your school sends school meal applications home at the beginning of each school year before granting free or reduced price benefits. Due to the year-long duration of eligibility, households are not required to report changes in income, household size, or their participation in a program that impacts their child's eligibility status. However, people may choose to report changes or apply for school meals for the first time any time during the school year by submitting an application directly to your school or district.

The information in this article is meant to help you establish eligibility determinations as well as provide you with the details necessary for understanding what happens to a child's eligibility status when you import an eligibility file using the [Eligibility Import Wizard](#).

Carryover of Previous Year's Eligibility

Carryover refers to a child's eligibility from the previous school year being carried over into the current or new school year. A child's eligibility from the previous school year (before July 1) carries over for up to 30 operating days into the new school year or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first. The 30 operating days begins on the first operating day of school. Operating days are the days on which reimbursable meals or milk are provided by a school or another program sponsor. Carryover applies to eligibility established through a household application or through direct certification. Meals served during the carryover period are claimed at the appropriate rate, depending on the individual child's eligibility status from the previous school year. Carryover allows children to continue receiving school meal benefits while families complete and submit their application for the school to process.

When children from schools participating in a Special Provision (i.e., Provision 1, 2, or 3 or CEP) move to a non-provision school, at the State agency's discretion, you may carry over children's eligibility for free reimbursable meals for up to 30 operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made.

Best Practice

When uploading an eligibility file, do not change the end date. The end date is defined in the [FRAM Preferences](#) tool in the **Default Expiration Date** field. Typically, this date is set to 30 days into the next school year. If you change the end date to something prior to 30 days into the next school year, eligibilities may not import correctly. It is the district's responsibility to ensure the upload file only includes current eligibilities and does NOT include eligibilities from a previous year. For example, do NOT import eligibilities that have a 9/30 end date into the 2018-2019 school year if the eligibilities apply to the 2017-2018 school year.

Determining Eligibility During the School Year

(Eligibility Import Wizard)

Families may apply for school meals or report a change that increases their benefits at any time during the school year. When your district uses the [Eligibility Import Wizard](#) to update these eligibilities, Campus uses the following logic to determine whether a child should be assigned a new eligibility.

If the imported Certification is...	Then Campus...
a higher rank than the child's existing certification	updates the child's eligibility record to the higher certification.
a lower rank than the child's existing certification	<p>does NOT update the child's eligibility record.</p> <p>A subsequent direct certification contact indicating that a child is <i>no longer receiving benefits</i> from an Assistance Program or other Categorically Eligible program does not change the child's eligibility status for the current school year. The child remains eligible for free school meals through the end of the school year and for up to 30 operating days into the subsequent school year, due to the year-long eligibility requirement.</p>

If the **Non-Direct Eligibility Overwrite** checkbox is marked in [FRAM Preferences](#), new non-direct eligibilities imported from the Eligibility Import Wizard will overwrite existing non-direct eligibilities regardless of current eligibilities and dates.

This logic only applies when you are importing eligibility files during the school year. If it is a NEW school year, Campus updates all eligibility statuses regardless of the old status or dates. New eligibilities are effective as of the start date in the upload file.

Rank	Certified Type	Source	Eligibility
1	SNAP	Direct	Free
2	TANF or FDPIR	Direct	Free
3	Runaway, Foster, Medicaid, Homeless, Migrant	Direct	Free
4	Runaway, Foster, Medicaid, Homeless, Migrant, Head Start, Even Start	Non-Direct	Free
5	Income, RCCI, Override, SES	Non-Direct	Free

Rank	Certified Type	Source	Eligibility
6	Runaway, Foster, Medicaid, Homeless, Migrant, Head Start, Even Start	Non-Direct	Reduced
7	Income, RCCI, Override, SES	Non-Direct	Reduced
8	Declined, Denied, Did not Apply	Non-Direct	Reduced
9	Paid	N/A	Non-reimbursable
10	Adult	N/A	Non-reimbursable

Logic Used During the School Year (Eligibility Import Wizard)

When importing eligibility files, it is important to consider the dates included in the file.

This logic only applies when you are importing eligibility files during the school year.

If it is a NEW school year, Campus updates all eligibility statuses regardless of the old status or dates. New eligibilities are effective as of the start date in the upload file.

Date Logic

Campus always creates a new record for the dates not covered by the previous record.

As part of this process, Campus will add an End Date to the current eligibility if

- the eligibility has not changed, campus will add an End Date to the current eligibility if the new imported End Date is after the existing End Date.
- the eligibility of the new record is better than the previous record, campus will add an End Date to the current eligibility if the imported End Date is the same or after the existing End Date.
- the eligibility has not changed, and the start date of the new record is before the start date of the current record, a new record for the time not covered by the previous recorded will be added.

Direct Certification Import Logic

- A new Direct Source Type eligibility will overwrite an existing Non-Direct Source Type

eligibility for the same school year if the Start Date is the same or before the existing Non-Direct Source Type eligibility. This includes Non-Direct Source Types of Homeless, Migrant and Runaway. Only those marked as Direct Source will not be overwritten. On the [Eligibility Import Report](#), the student appears in the **Updated Records** section with the Statuses of *New* or *Removed* when **Include Detail** is selected.

- A new Direct Source Type eligibility will add a new consecutive eligibility to an existing non-Direct Source Type eligibility if the new direct certification start date is after the existing non-direct certification start date. On the [Eligibility Import Report](#), the student appears in the **Updated Records** section with statuses of **New** or **Ended** when Include Detail is selected.

3rd Party Eligibility File Import Logic

- If the **Non-Direct Eligibility Overwrite** checkbox is marked in [FRAM Preferences](#), new non-direct eligibilities imported from the Eligibility Import Wizard will overwrite existing non-direct eligibilities regardless of current eligibilities and dates.
- A new Direct Source Type or Non-Direct Source Type eligibility with the same or earlier Start Date will overwrite an existing Non-Direct Type eligibility, including non-Direct Homeless, Runaway and Migrant. On the [Eligibility Import Report](#), the student appears in the **Updated Records** section with the Statuses of *New* or *Removed* when **Include Detail** is selected.
- If the Start Date for a new Direct Source Type or Non-Direct Source Type eligibility on file is after the existing Non-Direct Source eligibility, the import ends the existing Non-Direct Source eligibility the day before the new eligibility Start Date making the dates consecutive. On the [Eligibility Import Report](#), the student appears in the **Updated Records** section with statuses of **New** or **Ended** when Include Detail is selected.
- If the import contains matching Non-Direct Source Type eligibility and matching dates on file, then no change is made to the record. On the [Eligibility Import Report](#), the student appears in **Existing Eligibility Records** section when Include Detail is selected.

Extending Direct Certification to Other Students in a Household

Only SNAP, TANF and FDIPIR Direct Types may be extended to other students in a household. If the [FRAM Preference](#) option is set, users may also extend the Medicaid Direct Certified Type.

When extending Direct Certification to other students in a household, the tool considers the following:

- Primary household members with enrollments in the School Year selected AND
- Primary household members who also have household membership within the span of their enrollment Start and End Dates within the School Year.
- If there is another household that has the same address as a household which has students on the file, they will also receive Direct Certification Eligibility.
- If a direct certified file contains household members with more than one Direct Type of SNAP, TANF, FDIPIR or Medicaid (when [FRAM Preference](#) is set), then the tool extends the Direct Certification to other student members in the household using the following ranking logic:
 1. SNAP

2. FDPIR
3. TANF
4. Medicaid (When [FRAM Preference](#) is set.)

Example

Mary is on the direct certification file. Mary is part of a household where John has a current enrollment but has a future Household Member Start Date within the school year when he is scheduled to move into the household (custody situation, adoption or foster care possibly). John will be extended the direct certification eligibility in this circumstance because he has a current enrollment in the school year and will be part of the household within his enrollment Start and End Dates.

If there is any concern about extending eligibility to a household member with a future member start date who may not end up joining the household, it is recommended the district review the additional direct certified eligible students updated on the Eligibility Import Report.
