



Principal's Best Practices
Maximize the Collection of Family Income Inquiry Forms and Increase School Funding

The first and most important step a school can take to maximize their Title-1 funding is to collect the Family Income Inquiry Forms as close to the beginning of the school year as possible. Online forms are processed within 24 hours of submission by the parent, and the school never has to handle a paper form. You can use these best practices to establish a strategy to motivate households to submit their form online.

GENERAL form BEST PRACTICES	
<p>Review ATS RMEL on the first day of school:</p> <p>1. Focus your efforts on those who need to qualify (Meal Code 5 students).</p> <p>2. Many students may have already established eligibility before the first day of school. This is done through a direct certification match or an online form submitted over the summer. These students will be listed on the RMEL as meal code A, 1, 2 or 3 on the first day of school. Family Income Inquiry Forms are not required for these students.</p>	
<p>Focus on the New Students:</p> <p>Most new students or those in Pre-K and Kindergarten do not have eligibility at the start of the school year. They will be displayed as meal code 5 until a form is processed.</p>	
<p>Family Confidentiality</p> <p>Schools should practice storing the forms in a concealed envelope or locked area, and not leave them unattended as they prepare to submit to SchoolFood. Give the families the assurance that their personal information is protected and will remain confidential throughout the processing of their form.</p>	
<p>Household Members with Different Eligibility</p> <p>Eligibility can be extended to siblings or other students residing in the same household if one household member receives benefits from an assistance program with Direct Certification.</p> <p>April - May - Schools should verify siblings as living together in the Student Enrollment Management System (SEMS). SchoolFood will use this data in September to match household members automatically.</p> <p>All school year- Schools should notify the SchoolFood help desk when students living in the same household have different eligibility, we will match them manually through ATS.</p>	
<p>It Takes Team Work:</p> <p>Have multiple staff engaged in the process. Designate one person to oversee the process, but have your Parent Coordinator, PTA, School Aides, Teachers and Principal inform families that it's quicker and easier to complete your form online.</p>	
<p>Highlight the monetary incentives that families will receive if they qualify for free or reduced price meals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •College fee waivers for students •Tutoring programs •PSAT, SAT and ACT fee waiver for students 	
ONLINE form SUBMISSIONS	PAPER form SUBMISSIONS
<p>Notify Families Early:</p> <p>Send the myschoolapps.com flyer home with the student's report card at the end of the year requesting that they complete their form online in July.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Use the ATS generated myschoolapps.com letter to inform parents of the importance to complete an form online over the summer. 	<p>Notify Families Early:</p> <p>Distribute forms and meal code 5 letters on the first day of school through each classroom teacher.</p>



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ONLINE form SUBMISSIONS	PAPER form SUBMISSIONS
<p><u>Provide a Designated Computer for Families</u> Find a specific location like the library, computer lab or an office where families can discretely submit an form online at a convenient time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Post the myschoolapps.com flyer near computers which are designated for parents to use. •Make the internet browser open to myschoolapps.com as the home page. 	<p><u>Incomplete forms Not Yet Submitted to SchoolFood for Processing:</u> School's designee should review forms before submitting them to SchoolFood for processing. They should make reasonable efforts to contact the household in order to obtain or clarify required information. If updating the form with obtained information, the school official should document the details of the parent contact. They should date and initial all updates on the front of the form.</p>
<p>Use electronic and online media when it's available: Add myschoolapps.com to the following online media if you use them at your school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Official School Website - News and Announcements •School Facebook Page •School Twitter Account •School Email newsletter •PTA Website •PTA Facebook Page • Use Robo-Calling such as with Global Connect 	<p><u>Incomplete forms Submitted for Processing:</u> Families who submit an incomplete form that is processed by SchoolFood should not be instructed to complete a second form. Schools can collect the information from the families and call the SchoolFood Eligibility help desk at (718) 707-4400 to update the missing information over the phone.</p> <p>Schools should use the following ATS reports to identify what is incomplete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •ATS RMEL •ATS generated letters
<p><u>Be Informed:</u> School staff who are responsible for handling forms should be familiar with the online form. This will allow them to help families if they have questions or come to the school to complete one.</p>	<p><u>RMEL Incomplete Reasons:</u> Schools should print the ATS RMEL report with the incomplete reasons which will only print meal code 4 students and will identify the incomplete reasons. Schools should use this information when they follow-up with households to obtain the missing information.</p>
<p><u>Have an Online form Event:</u> School holds a night or nights when families can fill out online forms at the school.</p>	<p><u>Inform Families of the Goal:</u> Schools should inform families of their goals, i.e., increase the funding available to the school, expedited form processing. The forum can be newsletters, PTA meetings, teacher's conference, etc.</p>
<p><u>Summer Communications:</u> Continue to communicate with families during the summer requesting that they submit an online form in July.</p>	