

## SAMPLE LETTER FOR MAILING TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Date

Food Service Director  
School District  
Address  
Address

Re: Direct Certification for School Meals

Dear Food Service Director,

I write to offer you my assistance in determining the eligibility of your school district's low-income students for free meals.

By using a process called Direct Certification, the county welfare department and school district may work together to qualify students whose families receive Food Stamps or CalWORKs benefits for free school meals automatically, without requiring the family to fill out, or the school district to process, the annual meal application.

Direct certification may benefit for you, your schools, and your students in a number of ways by:

- Reducing paperwork by as much as 30%,
- Reducing verification time (students directly certified do not have to be verified),
- Increasing the number of children eligible for free meals and, thereby, increasing the draw down for Title 1 funds, and most importantly,
- Increasing participation in the school nutrition programs.

The state Departments of Education and Social Services are undergoing a cooperative initiative to help every school district in the state use this alternative eligibility process and reap its many benefits. The sharing of student data between our agency and your office is authorized under a provision of the National School Lunch Act (NSLA), and is protected by confidentiality laws.

Hundreds of California school districts already implement Direct Certification. **To start the process at your school district, simply contact [Insert Name] at [Insert Phone Number]. [Insert Name] will be available to work with you to identify the best way to match your school enrollment data with our caseload information.**

We look forward to working with you to address the nutritional needs of children in our county.

Sincerely,