

# Policy Clarifications – Medicaid – All PMA 17778-309

**Submitted:** 11/15

**Agency:** CAOs

**Subject:** Medical Assistance (MA) Recipients and Free or Reduced-Price School Meals

**Question:** Does a child who is an MA recipient automatically qualify for free or reduced-price school meals?

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**Response By:** Division of Health Services

**Date:** 11/23/15

No. Students qualify for free or reduced-price meals in one of two ways:

1. Students may be directly certified for free meals as a result of receiving or being part of a household that receives Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or MA (with a qualifying income). DHS works with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to facilitate providing schools with a list of students that may qualify as directly certified. The school then notifies the family that the applicable students are eligible for free meals. In order for a student receiving MA or in a household receiving MA to be directly certified for free meals, the household income must be at or below 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Unlike SNAP and TANF, receiving or being part of a household that receives MA is not the sole determining factor for a student to be directly certified for free meals. An example of an MA recipient who may not qualify for free or reduced-price meals is a PH 95 child.
2. Students that are not directly certified for free meals must apply through COMPASS or through the school using the Household Application for Free and Reduced-Price Meals. A child must meet income eligibility guidelines in order to be eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Children from families with income at or below 130 percent of the FPL are eligible for free meals. Children from families with income between 130 percent and 185 percent FPL are eligible for reduced-price meals.

Please refer to MAEH 309.94, National School Lunch and Breakfast Program.