

## C. INITIAL VERIFICATION

Each LEA must annually verify eligibility of children from a sample of household applications approved for free and reduced price meal benefits for that school year unless the State agency assumes responsibility for verification on behalf of its LEAs.

The LEA may begin verification activity once the application approval process for the current school year is underway and there are approved applications on file. To do so, the LEA may project the number of approved applications (sample pool) that it anticipates will be on file on October 1. The projected number is based on prior years' experience. However, the final sample pool is the actual number of approved applications on file as of October 1. **The sample size must be based on the October 1 sample pool.** Any estimates must be compared with the actual number of applications on file on October 1 and the sample pool and sample size adjusted accordingly. If October 1 falls on a weekend, use the next operating day to establish the sample pool.

### ESTABLISHING THE SAMPLE POOL

The sample pool uses the total number of approved applications on file as of October 1 of the current school year. LEAs may choose not to count applications for students in split-session kindergarten programs participating in the SMP when determining the verification sample pool.

The sample pool depends on the number of applications (paper or electronic) and is not based on the number of children eligible for free and reduced priced meals.

### ESTABLISHING THE SAMPLE SIZE

Once the sample pool is determined, the LEA calculates the sample size—the number of applications that must be verified. When calculating the sample size, all fractions or decimals are rounded upward to the nearest whole number. At least one application must always be verified.

With the exception of verification for cause, LEAs must not verify more than or less than the standard sample size or the alternate sample size (when used) and must not verify all (100% of) applications. Verification conducted “for cause” is done in addition to the required verification sample size.

### VERIFICATION COMPLETION DEADLINES

The LEA must complete the verification activities specified in this section no later than November 15 of each school year. However, the LEA may request an extension of the November 15 deadline, in writing, from their State agency. The State agency may approve, in writing, an extension up to December 15 of the current school year due to natural disaster, civil disorder, strike, or other circumstances that prevent the LEA from the timely completion of verification activities. A request for an extension beyond December 15 must be submitted by the State agency to FNSRO for approval.