

**From:** [Toya Porter](#)  
**To:** [Toya Porter](#)  
**Subject:** USDA: Verification Response Rate Challenge for School Meal Programs  
**Date:** Thursday, May 04, 2017 1:40:37 PM

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**You are Invited to Compete in our *Challenge!***  
**USDA School Meal Programs:**  
**Verification Response Rate Challenge**  
**Thursday, May 4 – June 15, 2017**

**Title:** USDA School Meal Programs: Verification Response Rate Challenge.

**Purpose of the Challenge:** The USDA Food and Nutrition Service is excited to announce its Verification Response Rate Challenge for school meals. We are asking school food authority (SFA) and State agency staff to share success stories and innovative ideas on increasing household response rates in the annual verification process for school meals.

**Target Audience:** SFA and State agency staff familiar with the school meal verification process. State agencies should distribute this announcement to SFAs promptly to ensure all SFA staff have the opportunity to participate.

**Please click on the link below to see the challenge:**

<http://www.challenge.gov/challenge/USDA-School-Meal-Programs-Verification-Response-Rate-Challenge>

*\*\*NOTE: The challenge platform is a new way for FNS to engage with States and SFAs that brings a little fun and some friendly competition into our normal work products. Specific details about the challenge and sample solutions are available on the website. This challenge is open to anyone who would like to submit a solution and/or to anyone who would like to comment on a solution submitted by someone else. Everyone is also encouraged to vote for their favorite entry! We are really looking forward to a fun, interactive challenge competition with lots of great ideas to address verification nonresponse.*

**Description:** Every year, SFAs process about 5 million free and reduced-price meal applications. Of those, thousands of applications are chosen for eligibility verification, and notices are sent to the households asking them to confirm their eligibility (e.g. provide income documentation). In school year 2015-2016, 40 percent of households that were contacted for verification did not respond to verification requests. The households that did not respond became ineligible for meal benefits, even if they met the income requirements.

**Creative Solutions:** Many SFAs across the country have created solutions that have improved household response rates. We would like to hear from you! Your creative solutions may help other school districts increase their verification response rates, reducing the risk that eligible children lose access to program benefits.

**The Challenge:** The “Verification Response Rate Challenge” is a public forum for SFA and

State agency staff to exchange ideas on how to increase household response in the annual verification process. Here are three ways you can help:

Share your verification success stories or ideas on Challenge.Gov

<http://www.challenge.gov/challenge/USDA-School-Meal-Programs-Verification-Response-Rate-Challenge> by June 15, 2017.

1. Build on others' submissions with constructive feedback and suggestions by June 15, 2017.
2. Vote for your favorite solution between June 16-22, 2017.

***The goal is to encourage dialog, refine ideas, and implement strategies that work.***

We greatly appreciate your participation.

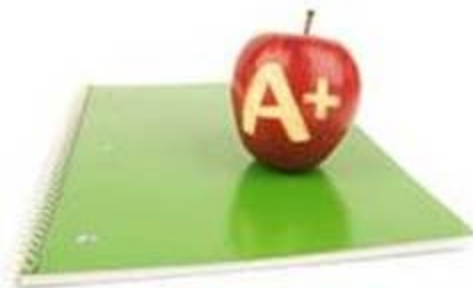
Thank you and please contact the SWRO with any questions,

Donia

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**USDA School Meals  
Help Kids Make the Grade!**

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