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The National School Lunch Program Direct Certification Improvement Study: Main Report

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The National School Lunch Program Direct Certification Improvement Study: Main Report

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We are very grateful to State Child Nutrition staff in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Guam, as well as district-level Child Nutrition staff across the country, for participating in the National Survey of Direct Certification Practices. We are also grateful to the state agencies that participated in the in-depth case studies described in this report: the Department of Human Resources and State Department of Education in Alabama; the Department of Economic Security and Department of Education in Arizona; the Department of Social Services and State Department of Education in Connecticut; the Department of Education and Family Social Services Administration in Indiana; the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services in Nebraska; the Department of Agriculture, the Education Agency, and the Health and Human Services Commission in Texas; and the Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services in West Virginia. Child nutrition staff members in 15 school districts within these States also provided valuable information on how direct certification processes worked at the district level.

Many Mathematica colleagues provided invaluable research assistance and advice. Sarah Forrestal and Larry Vittoriano managed the survey data collection effort. Ryan McInerney contributed to qualitative data collection. Lara Hulsey provided quality assurance. Kathryn Gonzalez performed data analysis. John Kennedy and William Garrett carefully edited the report. Dawn Patterson provided production support.

CONTENTS

TABLES

FIGURES

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ADE	Arizona Department of Education
ALSDE	Alabama State Department of Education
ART	Administrative Reviews and Training
AZDES	Arizona Department of Economic Security
CEP	Community Eligibility Provision
CHIP	Children's Health Insurance Program
CN	Child nutrition
CNP	Child Nutrition Program
CRE	Coordinated Review Effort
CSDE	Connecticut State Department of Education
CT	Connecticut
CTDSS	Connecticut Department of Social Services
DC	Direct certification
DCVMS	Direct Certification and Verification Matching System (Nebraska)
DHHR	West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources
DHHS	Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
DHR	Alabama Department of Human Resources
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
FDPIR	Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service
FSSA	Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
FTP	File transfer protocol
HHFKA	Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
HHSC	Texas Health and Human Services Commission
ID	Identification
IDOE	Indiana Department of Education
i now	Information Now (Alabama)
IT	information technology
LEA	local education agency
MARO	Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MPRO	Mountain Plains Regional Office
MWRO	Midwest Regional Office
NDE	Nebraska Department of Education
NERO	Northeast Regional Office
NSLA	National School Lunch Act
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
NSSRS	Nebraska Student and Staff Record System
PEIMS	Public Education Information Management System (Texas)

POS	point-of-sale system
RCCI	residential child care institution
SAIS	Arizona Student Accountability Information System
SBP	School Breakfast Program
SERO	Southeast Regional Office
SFA	school food authority
SIS	Local student information system
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SSID	statewide student identifier
SSIS	statewide student information system
SSN	Social Security number
STN	Student Test Number (Indiana)
SY	school year
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TDA	Texas Department of Agriculture
TEA	Texas Education Agency
VPN	Virtual Private Network
VSR	Verification Summary Report
WAN	Wide area network
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
WRO	Western Regional Office
WVDE	West Virginia Department of Education
WVEIS	West Virginia Education Information System

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) promotes the health and well-being of the Nation's children and is one of the largest food and nutrition assistance programs in the United States. It provides nutritionally balanced lunches to more than 30 million children each school day, with free or reduced-price meals provided to income-eligible children.[1] Eligible children may be certified for school meal benefits either by application or directly by identifying students in households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or other programs that confer categorical eligibility. Increasing the participation of eligible students through direct certification is likely to have a positive impact on the overall health of children across the country. Increased direct certification also reduces burden on families and district staff in preparing and processing applications for school meal benefits.

The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive picture of the direct certification methods employed across the country in school year (SY) 2012-2013, including the processes and resources used to develop the systems, the characteristics and availability of relevant data, and the technical aspects of matching algorithms. The report also catalogs perceived barriers to effective direct certification and strategies that States and districts planned to implement to address those barriers. This information will help FNS, State child nutrition directors, and school districts recognize promising trends, understand new approaches, and identify steps needed for continuous improvement of their direct certification efforts.

A. Direct Certification in the NSLP

Under direct certification, States and districts can use information provided by SNAP-, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families- (TANF), and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations- (FDPIR) agencies to establish that a student is a member of a household participating in one of these programs and is thus automatically eligible to receive free meals. These children can therefore be certified to receive free meal benefits without the household having to submit an application. Certain foster care, migrant, runaway, and homeless children may also qualify in this way and become certified for free meals without submitting an application, based on documentation submitted to the district by an appropriate State or local agency. The eligibility of directly certified students is not subject to the verification process.

Direct certification was first authorized in 1989, as a method of increasing certification of categorically eligible households, reducing burden on households and district staff, and improving program integrity. Under the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, P.L. 108-265D, Section 104, all districts participating in NSLP are required to directly certify children in SNAP households in SY 2008–2009 and subsequent years.[2] In addition, FNS issued a guideline in August 2009 requiring that direct certification apply to all children in a given household, beginning in SY 2009–2010.

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[1] FNS NSLP Factsheet, September 2013: http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/NSLPFactSheet.pdf.

[2] Although LEAs are also permitted to certify children in TANF households directly, homeless children, migrant children, and those served by programs under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, direct certification is not mandatory for those groups.

States use one of two different methods to directly certify students:

1. **Central matching.** Under this method, a State agency is responsible for a system that matches a list of children attending schools participating in the NSLP with a list of children participating in SNAP or other programs. Districts may play important roles in central matching systems, including initiating the matching process and reconciling lists of matched or potentially matched students.
2. **Local matching.** Under this method, a State agency distributes SNAP and other relevant data to districts and districts then match these data with their student enrollment lists.

B. Objectives and Research Approach

1. Study Objectives

The core aims of the study are to describe current direct certification processes and procedures employed by States and districts and document data-matching techniques and tools used to increase matching rates for States and districts. To that end, we address two overarching objectives in this report:

- **Update national information on current practice used by States and districts to conduct direct certification.**
  - We document the processes and resources used to develop direct certification systems and describe the types of changes States have made to their direct certification systems, including those made using grants awarded by FNS.
  - We describe how direct certification is currently implemented nationwide. We discuss the variety of procedures and matching algorithms used in different States and some of the variation in procedures within States. We describe the information systems, databases, and data elements States and LEAs use to conduct direct certification.
- **Examine the current plans for improving direct certification process in the future.**
  - We describe the primary barriers States and districts face in conducting direct certification successfully.
  - We describe the changes States and districts have planned to address barriers for their future operations.

2. Research Approach

To address the study objectives, we integrated information from two primary data collection sources: (1) a national survey of direct certification practices, and (2) in-depth case studies.

National survey of direct certification practices. We conducted a survey of all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and districts in local matching States. The survey tailored questions based on a State's data-matching method (central or local) and the level of respondent (State or district). In a State that used local matching, districts were administered one of two versions of the survey: (1) a long version that collected comprehensive information on the direct certification process, or (2) a shortened version that included a core set of key questions that were also asked of

the other district and State-level respondents, thus forming the basis of all versions of the survey. The survey questions focused on the methods of direct certification, data-matching criteria, frequency of matching, characteristics of systems and databases used, treatment of nonpublic districts, and other relevant direct certification practices. The survey also collected information on which direct certification practices were funded with FNS grants, planned improvements, and the potential use of Medicaid data for direct certification.

We administered the survey in fall 2012 and it was in the field for approximately 17 weeks. All 52 State-level respondents completed the survey, for a 100 percent response rate. The response rate for districts was 68 percent.

In-depth case studies. Seven States and selected districts were used to collect more detailed information on direct certification practices in place during SY 2012-2013. The States participating in this study were selected to ensure there was a mix of high-performing, improving, and low-performing States that would help us address the study objectives. The States selected-—Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Indiana, Nebraska, Texas, and West Virginia—represent each of the seven FNS geographic regions and included one State that employed local matching. In addition, the States selected offered diversity across other factors, including the number of school districts and student enrollment.

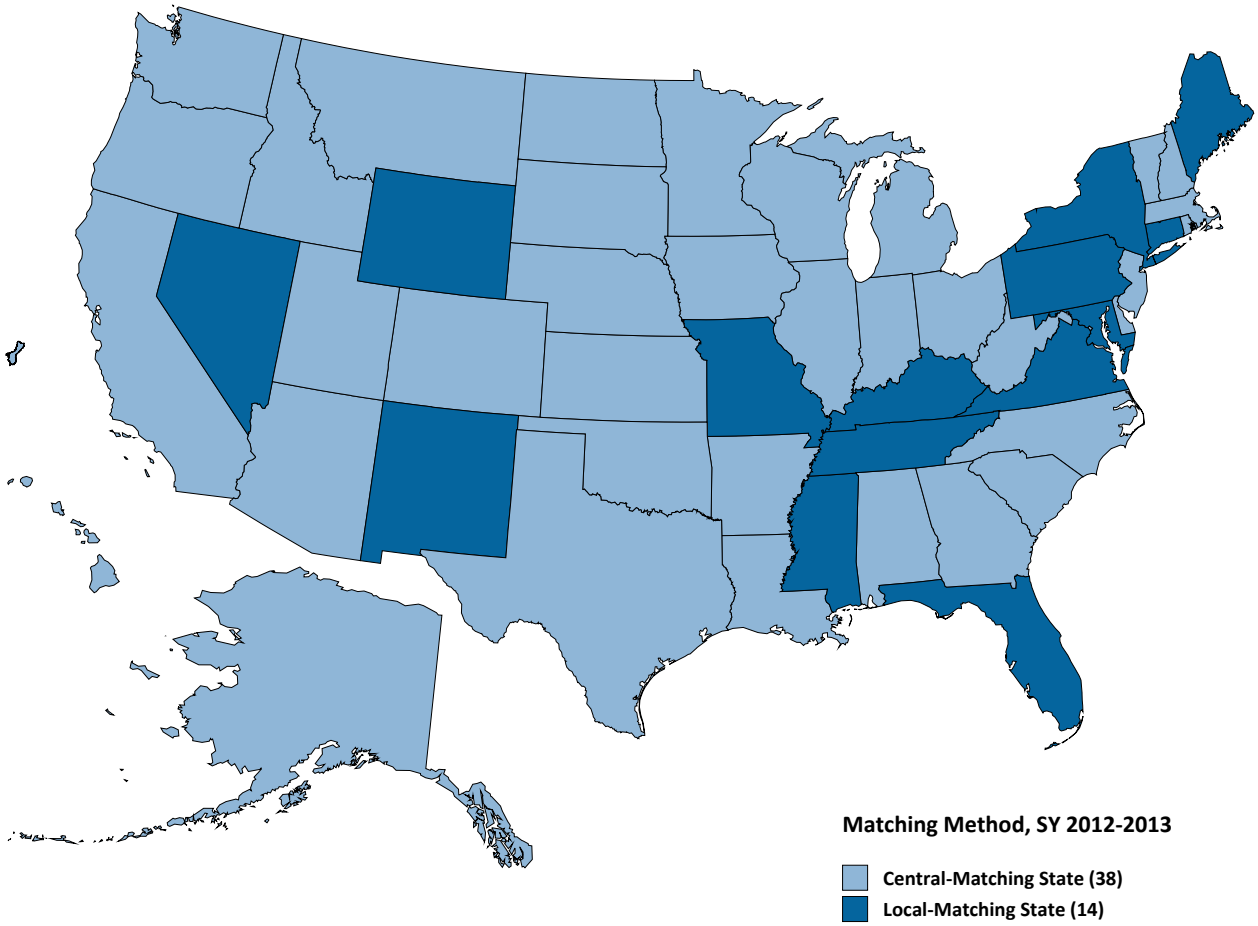
In each participating State we conducted site visits to interview staff involved in direct certification at State offices. All site visits began with discussions with the State Child Nutrition agency director. We interviewed key technical and policy staff from SNAP and any other relevant programs, such as TANF and foster care, about their roles in the direct certification process. At the district sites, we interviewed the district director and technical staff knowledgeable about the systems and data used in direct certification. At both levels, we interviewed the staff members with primary responsibility for developing, programming, and implementing the data-matching process at the site. Across the seven States, we conducted 34 interviews with a total of 95 respondents. The qualitative interview data we obtained offer greater detail than the survey data in how direct certification is carried out in different States and districts.

C. Key Findings

1. Planning and Implementation

Central matching is the predominant means of implementing direct certification. Figure ES.1 presents the matching method used in each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Guam. In SY 2012-2013, 38 States use central matching systems, and at least 4 of the local matching States—Connecticut, Florida, Missouri, and New York—plan to switch to central matching. Interviews with central matching States indicated that some of the appealing characteristics of central matching systems were efficiency, the opportunity to use more sophisticated matching algorithms than districts may be able to develop, the uniform quality of matching across the State, and reduced confidentiality risk.

Figure ES.1. Direct Certification Matching Methods Used by States, the District of Columbia, and Guam, SY 2012-2013



Note: Maryland employs a hybrid matching system, where 25 large districts perform data matching for themselves and the State conducts matching centrally for the remaining districts.

Local matching may continue to have appeal for some States. A large majority of local matching States were able to include SSNs in the program data files they provide to districts for direct certification matching. Access to a single, high quality unique identifier may have contributed to districts' ability to conduct accurate matching without sophisticated matching algorithms. Moreover, local matching States often cited resource barriers that may have made central matching systems unappealing or infeasible, such as insufficient State staff and computer resources to support computer matching.

Districts play key roles in direct certification processes for both central- and local-matching. The roles of districts vary substantially across States. District responsibilities often include uploading enrollment data, reconciling match lists with local data systems, and processing lists of potential matches. In central-matching States, the division of responsibility, particularly in identifying definite matches centrally and reconciling potential matches locally, may have allowed States to take advantage of both the efficiency offered by centrally developed matching algorithms and the local knowledge and additional student information that districts often have. In some cases, States took steps to minimize burden on districts and increase efficiency, such as using probabilistic matching scores to identify possible matches that were most likely to be legitimate.

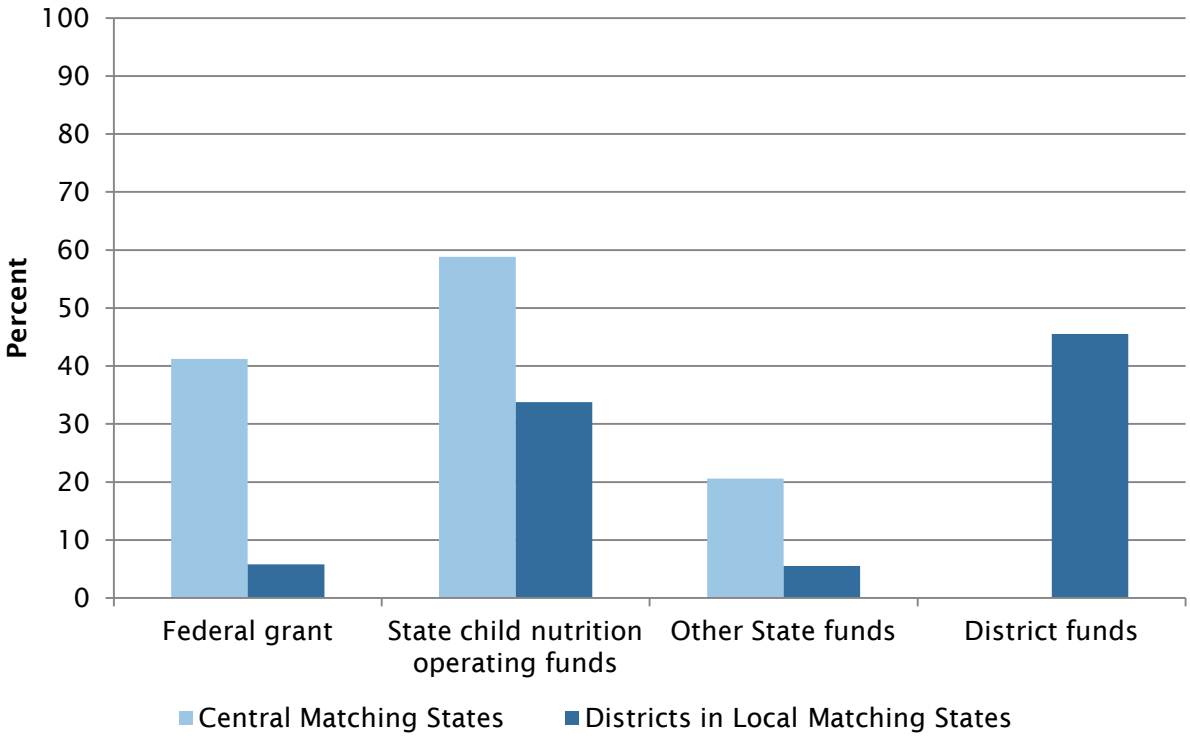
Many central matching States interviewed as part of the case study, however, noted that districts did not always take advantage of all the direct certification features available to them or use the system as intended. This was confirmed in case study interviews with district officials, who were often unaware of or not using certain system features.

Clear communication and training is critical to successful direct certification. States noted the importance of communication and training for understanding the logistics of direct certification and for emphasizing the increasing importance of effective direct certification. States used a variety of training and communication tools, including webinars, conferences, web videos, email, phone help centers, and in-person training.

Some State systems include sophisticated monitoring tools, though many do not. All case study States maintained the ability to monitor at least basic direct certification activities. However, States often do not monitor the frequency or accuracy of districts' use of direct certification systems. One case study State did look at discrepancies between the number of students matched in the central system and the number of direct certifications reported by the districts as an indicator of whether districts properly used direct certification systems.

States and districts used available resources in innovative ways to improve the efficiency of direct certification. State IT staff and outside contractors were commonly cited as having contributed to system development. Figure ES.2 shows the sources of direct certification development resources. Federal grants represent important development resources that are available to States. These grants were used to upgrade computer matching systems, provide training, and transition to central matching.

Figure ES.2. Direct Certification System Development Resources

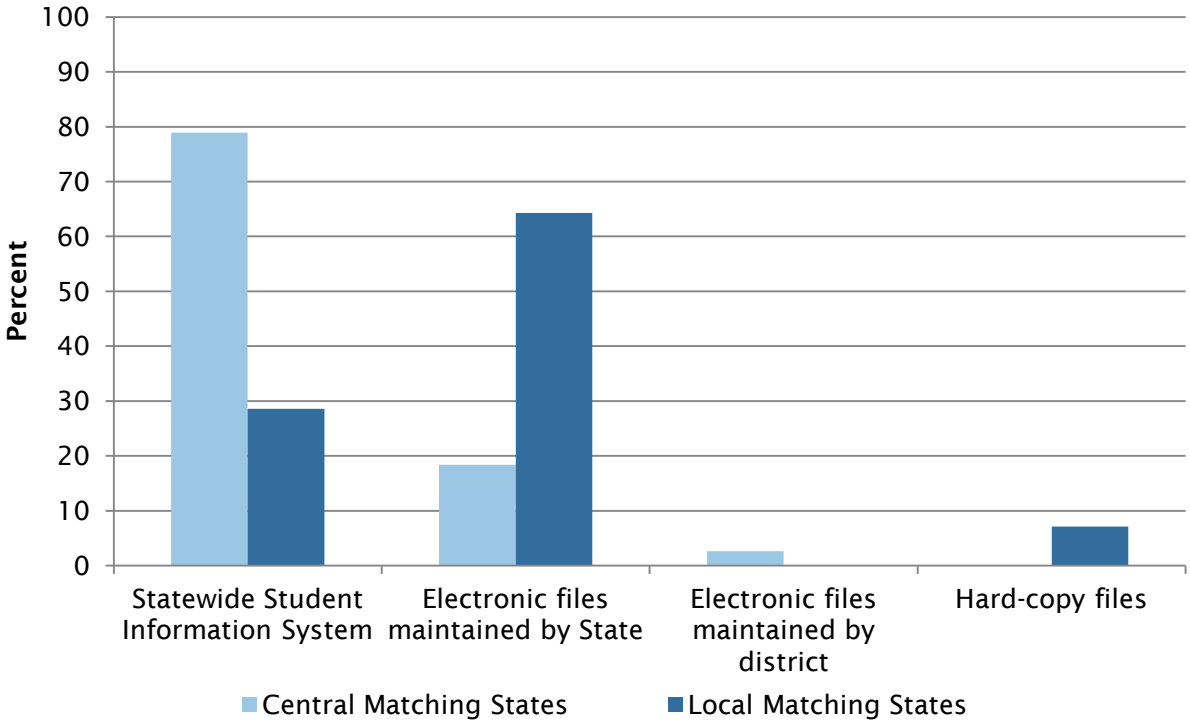


Successful direct certification systems rely on constructive collaboration among multiple State agencies. Direct certification typically involves the State education agency, the State agency administering programs that confer categorical eligibility, and school districts. Productive interagency relationships are important components of effective direct certification systems. In addition, formal data sharing agreements among participating agencies are nearly universal although some States noted that they can be challenging to execute.

2. Matching Procedures

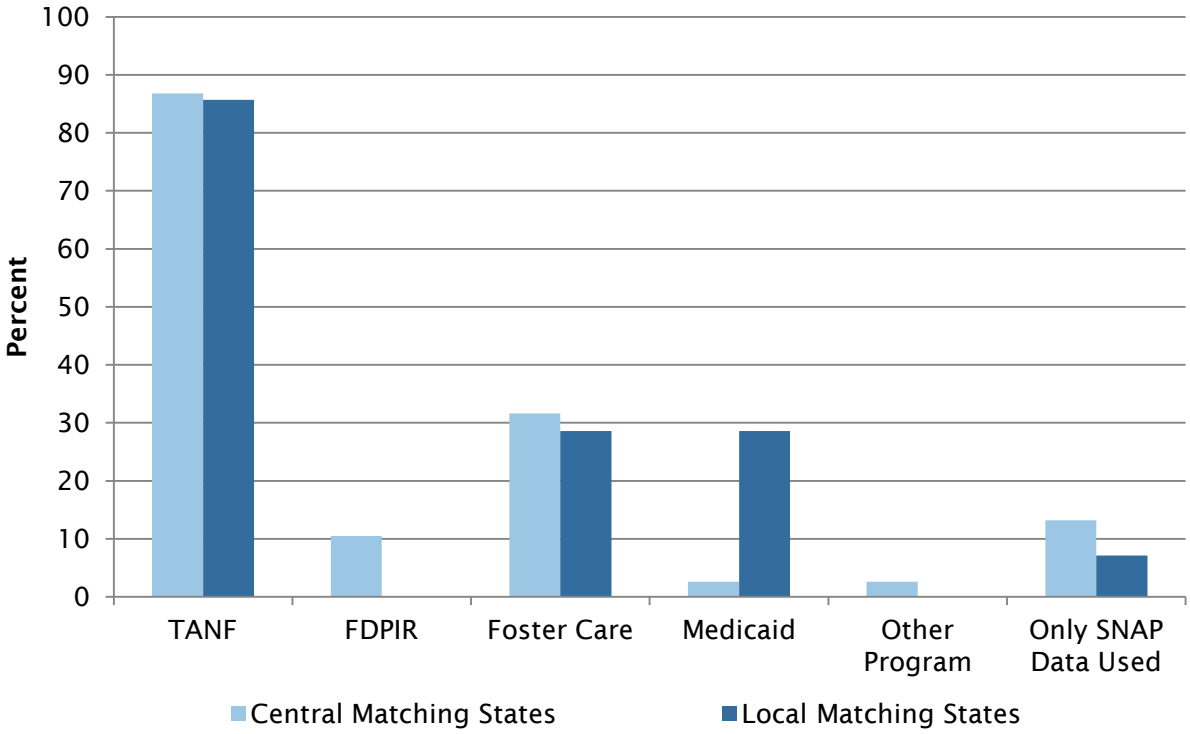
Effective direct certification requires accurate, up-to-date student information. Enrollment data needs vary based on whether States use central or local matching systems. States using central matching typically used the statewide student information system (SSIS) as the source of enrollment data; whereas local matching States used other sources (See Figure ES.3). The frequency with which enrollment data are updated ranges considerably—from daily to once annually. In some States in which the SSIS are not updated immediately at the beginning of the school year, special procedures have been developed to allow districts to directly certify newly enrolled students.

Figure ES.3. Source of Enrollment Data Used in Direct Certification, by Matching Method



Direct certification may be more effective when States use data from programs that confer categorical eligibility other than SNAP. States must establish procedures to directly certify children from SNAP households. However, most States also use TANF records, and many use foster care data (see Figure ES.4). Additional participation data sources may increase the reach of direct certification. For example, one State interviewed in the case study reported that 7 percent of directly certified students were matched through foster care. Because program data are often provided through automated processes, very little or no staff maintenance time may be required of program data partners.

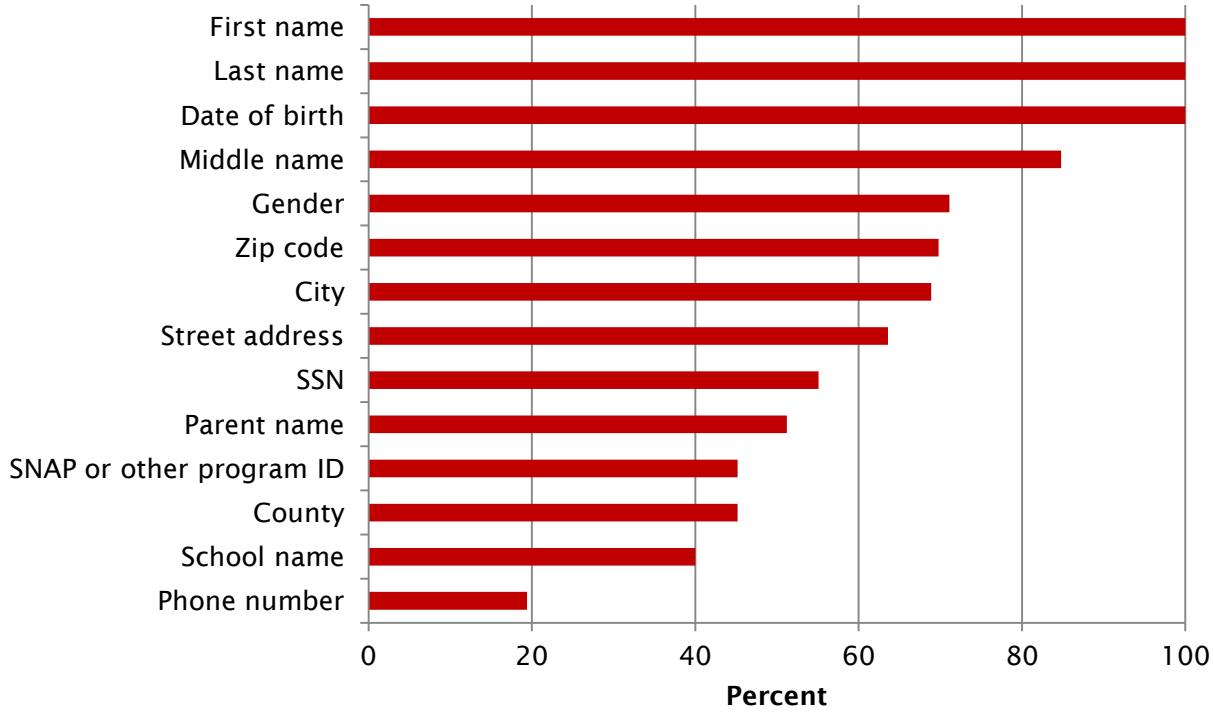
Figure ES.4. Program Data Used in Direct Certification, by Matching Method



Frequently updated program and enrollment data improve direct certification only if they are accompanied by frequent data matching. All States must conduct direct certification matching at least three times per year. A large majority of central matching States (68.5 percent) conducted matching at least monthly, whereas matching was conducted less frequently in local matching States—only 32 percent of districts in local matching States conducted matching at least monthly. Notably, States conducting daily matching cite the match frequency as a key strength of their direct certification systems.

Most matching systems require three or more identifiers to match and allow inexact matches on some elements. In directly certifying students, States and districts apply algorithms matching children with data in two or more data sets. First name, last name, and date of birth are used almost universally as matching identifiers. Figure ES.5 shows a list of the common SNAP data elements that are available for matching across all States. In local matching States, SSN is a common identifier and likely contributes to districts' ability to conduct accurate matching without sophisticated matching algorithms. Central matching States typically had a process in which potential matches are investigated further; this investigation was often done by districts.

Figure ES.5. SNAP Data Elements Available for Matching, All States



Probabilistic matching can be used to identify definite direct certification matches as well as potential matches. Direct certification systems that employ probabilistic matching algorithms calculate a score that indicates how likely a match is to be legitimate. The procedures may award higher scores for pairs in which more data elements match. They may also award points for data elements that are near matches, such as names that are spelled different but sound alike. The two States interviewed in the case study that used probabilistic matching felt that this feature was an important part of their system's direct certification performance. Probabilistic matching was used by only 29 percent of central matching States and 9 percent of districts in local matching States. The use of probabilistic matching may increase the number of directly certified students while minimizing burden by prioritizing those potential matches that are most likely to be legitimate.

Most matching systems had procedures in place to extend eligibility to additional children in households. The most common strategy for extending eligibility is revising notification letters informing families of their children's eligibility to indicate that all children in the household are eligible for meal benefits. Districts are typically given the primary responsibility for extending eligibility, even in central matching States.

Nonpublic and charter schools present special challenges for the direct certification process. Central matching States often found that incorporating private schools into the central direct certification system was a challenge because the schools' enrollment data were not included in the SSIS. Individual lookup and features that allow for batch upload of enrollment lists were some strategies for mitigating many of the challenges posed by nonpublic schools.

In SY 2012-2013, few States appeared well positioned to incorporate Medicaid data into direct certification. Only 3 percent of central matching States and 17 percent of local matching States reported that all children eligible for Medicaid would also be eligible for free school meals. Some States also expressed doubts that incorporation of Medicaid data would provide substantial increases in direct certification.

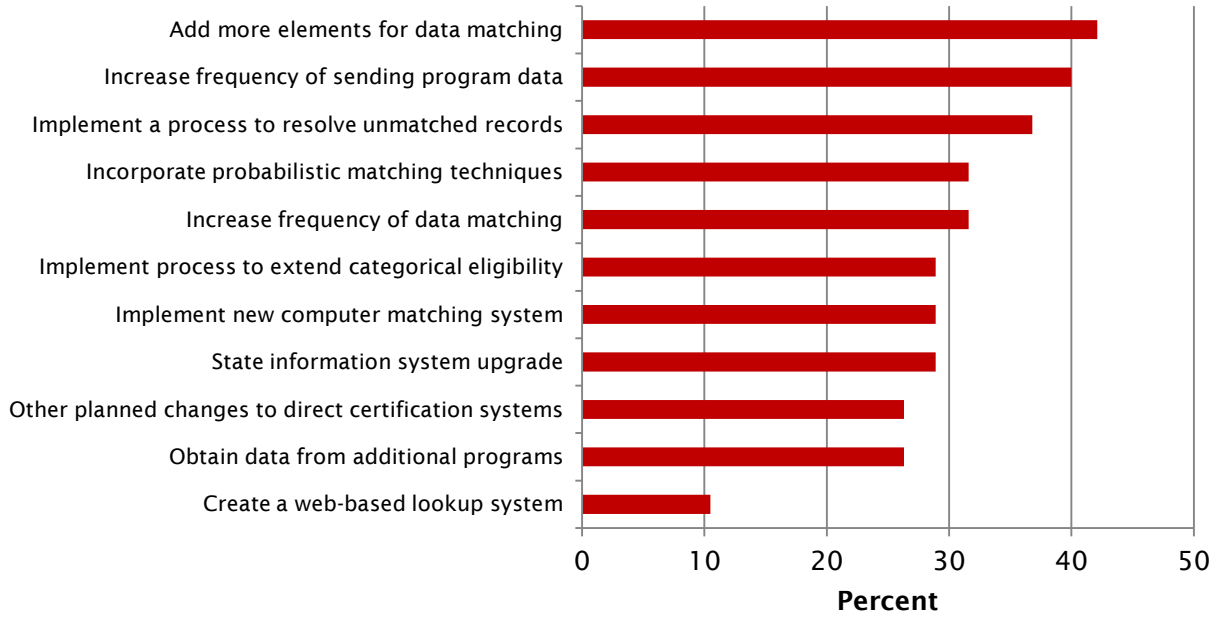
3. Barriers and Planned Improvements

States and districts face common challenges pertaining to student enrollment records, program participation data, and financial and technological resources. For central matching States, the most commonly cited barrier was that enrollment data were not updated in time for the initial match. In addition, districts in central matching States were not always aware of and did not always appropriately use all features of direct certification systems, due to time and resource constraints, low levels of technical skill, or insufficient training. Barriers commonly cited by States using local matching were a lack of sufficient staff to complete direct certification computer matching, insufficient computer resources, and that the enrollment data did not contain sufficient information to support matching. The resource barriers cited by local matching States may suggest that central matching systems may be infeasible in many of these States.

Direct certification is a continually evolving process. States and districts improve their direct certification processes over time by introducing new technology, refining matching procedures, and adjusting the procedures that district and State staff use to complete the process. Underlying these changes is a broad shift toward greater centralization, as more local matching States transition to central matching.

States' plans to improve their direct certification systems were nearly universal. States are planning a wide range of large and small changes to their systems, including adding more data elements, increasing the frequency of matching, and adding processes to resolve unmatched records. Figure ES.6 provides the most common planned improvements among central matching States.

Figure ES.6. Planned Changes to Direct Certification Systems Among Central Matching States



I. INTRODUCTION

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP), which has as its main goal the promotion of the health and well-being of the Nation's children, is one of the largest food and nutrition assistance programs in the United States. It provides nutritionally balanced lunches to more than 30 million children each school day, with free or reduced-price meals provided to income-eligible children.[1] Eligible children may be certified for school meal benefits either by application or directly by identifying students in households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or other programs that confer categorical eligibility. Increasing the participation of eligible students through direct certification is likely to have a positive impact on the overall health of children across the country. Increased direct certification also reduces burden on families and district staff in preparing and processing applications for school meal benefits.

The federal government made direct certification mandatory for States and local education agencies (LEAs) in the Child Nutrition and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004. Most States use computer data-matching techniques to certify students directly, but have varied levels of success.[2] However, States have made many changes to their direct certification systems, often funded through Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) grants, and performance has improved over time. The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive picture of the direct certification methods employed across the country in school year (SY) 2012-2013. This information will help FNS, State child nutrition directors, and LEAs recognize promising trends, understand new approaches, and identify steps needed for continuous improvement of their direct certification efforts.

In this chapter we provide background information on the NSLP and direct certification. We also describe the key study objectives and research questions, and provide an overview of the methodology we used to address them. Finally, we describe the organization of subsequent chapters of the report.

A. Description of Direct Certification

1. National School Lunch Program

The NSLP plays a critical role in the Nation's strategy to ensure all its citizens have access to adequate food. Created more than 60 years ago, the program is present in more than 100,000 public and nonprofit private schools throughout the country.[3] The program is federally funded but

[1] FNS NSLP Factsheet, September 2013: http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/NSLPFactSheet.pdf.

[2] See the annual series of "Direct Certification in the National School Lunch Program: State Implementation Progress, Report to Congress," available on FNS' website: http://www.fns.usda.gov/ops/child-nutrition-programs.

[3] FNS NSLP Factsheet, September 2013: http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/NSLPFactSheet.pdf.

administered through States and local school food authorities (SFAs),[4] which usually are individual school districts or small groups of districts. The federal government establishes overall program rules, as expressed in the relevant congressional legislation and regulations. The States convey these requirements to their SFAs, serve as conduits for funding, and monitor local schools and districts for compliance with established regulations. The individual SFAs have responsibility for establishing student eligibility for free and reduced-price meals and for providing all children who choose to participate with nutritious meals.

Eligibility for free or reduced-price meals. Children are eligible to receive NSLP meals free if they live in households with incomes at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty level or if they are categorically eligible on the basis of receiving public assistance benefits from the SNAP, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or, in some States, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or foster care.[5] Those with household incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible to receive reduced-price lunches, which are substantially subsidized by the program, with a maximum price of 40 cents. In SY 2012–2013, this subsidy amounted to $2.86 for free lunches and $2.46 for reduced-price lunches (FNS 2013). School districts establish the price for meals served to children from households with incomes greater than 185 percent of poverty. These are referred to as paid or full-price students, but their meals are also subsidized, although to a much lower degree than the meals for lower-income children (most SFAs receive a reimbursement of 27 cents per full-price lunch).

Certification for free or reduced-price meals. In schools not using special provision programs for reimbursements (described below), students must be certified for free or reduced-price meal benefits for SFAs to receive the higher level of reimbursement for the meals served to those students. After the district determines a student's eligibility, the student remains eligible for the rest of the school year. Students may become certified for free or reduced-price meals in one of two ways: through application or by direct certification.

Certification based on submitted applications. Most students who receive free or reduced-price meals are certified each school year on the basis of information reported by their households on an application submitted to the school district. Households must report either (1) detailed information on household size and income; or (2) a case number indicating participation in a public assistance program conferring categorical eligibility (SNAP, FDPIR, TANF, or foster care).

[4] The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) uses two different terms to refer to the local entities that enter into agreements with State agencies to operate the school meal programs. The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-265) amended NSLA by using the term local education agency (LEA), defined for public schools in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), when referring to the application, certification, and verification functions of the school meal programs. Sections of NSLA that deal with other aspects of the programs, such as meal pattern requirements and meal-counting and claiming reimbursements, use the term school food authority (SFA), which current NSLP regulations define as the governing body that has the legal authority to operate the NSLP/SBP in one or more schools. The commonly used term for the entities described as LEAs in ESEA is school districts. However, although this definition applies only to public entities, State agencies also enter into agreements with private nonprofit schools to operate NSLP; many of these agreements cover only a single school. Because the vast majority of schools in the NSLP/SBP are parts of entities that are commonly known as school districts, we use that term throughout this report to refer to both public and private nonprofit local entities that enter into agreements with State agencies to operate the NSLP and SBP.

[5] TANF receipt confers categorical eligibility only in States in which the income eligibility criteria for TANF are the same as or more restrictive than those in effect on June 1, 1995.

Households are not required to submit documentation of the income they report on the application. The district assesses the information on the application to determine whether the household meets the eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price meal benefits and, on the basis of this assessment, either certifies the students listed on the application or denies certification. The district then notifies the household of its decision. Each fall, LEAs must select a sample of the applications approved for free or reduced-price meal benefits and verify the accuracy of their certification decisions, detect erroneous payments, and deter misreporting. Students' certification status may be revised as a result of the verification process.

2. Direct Certification in the NSLP

Under direct certification, States and districts can use information provided by SNAP, TANF, and FDPIR agencies to establish that a student is a member of a household participating in one of these programs and is thus automatically eligible to receive free meals. These children can therefore be certified to receive free meal benefits without the household having to submit an application. Certain foster care, migrant, runaway, and homeless children may also qualify in this way and become certified for free meals without submitting an application, based on documentation submitted to the district by an appropriate State or local agency. The eligibility of directly certified students is not subject to the verification process.

Direct certification was first authorized in 1989, as a method of increasing certification of categorically eligible households, reducing burden on households and SFA staff, and improving program integrity. Under the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, P.L. 108-265D, Section 104, all LEAs participating in NSLP are required to certify directly children in SNAP households in SY 2008–2009 and subsequent years.[6] In addition, FNS issued a guideline in August 2009 requiring that direct certification apply to all children in a given household, beginning in SY 2009–2010.

Most States conduct direct certification by matching school enrollment data with data from SNAP and other programs that confer categorical eligibility. States use one of two different methods—central or local matching:

1. **Central matching.** Under this method, a State agency is responsible for a system that matches a list of children attending schools participating in the NSLP with a list of children in participating in SNAP or other programs. District may play important roles in central matching systems, including initiating the matching process and reconciling lists of matched or potentially matched students.

2. **Local matching.** Under this method, a State agency distributes SNAP and other relevant data to LEAs and LEAs match these data with their student enrollment lists.

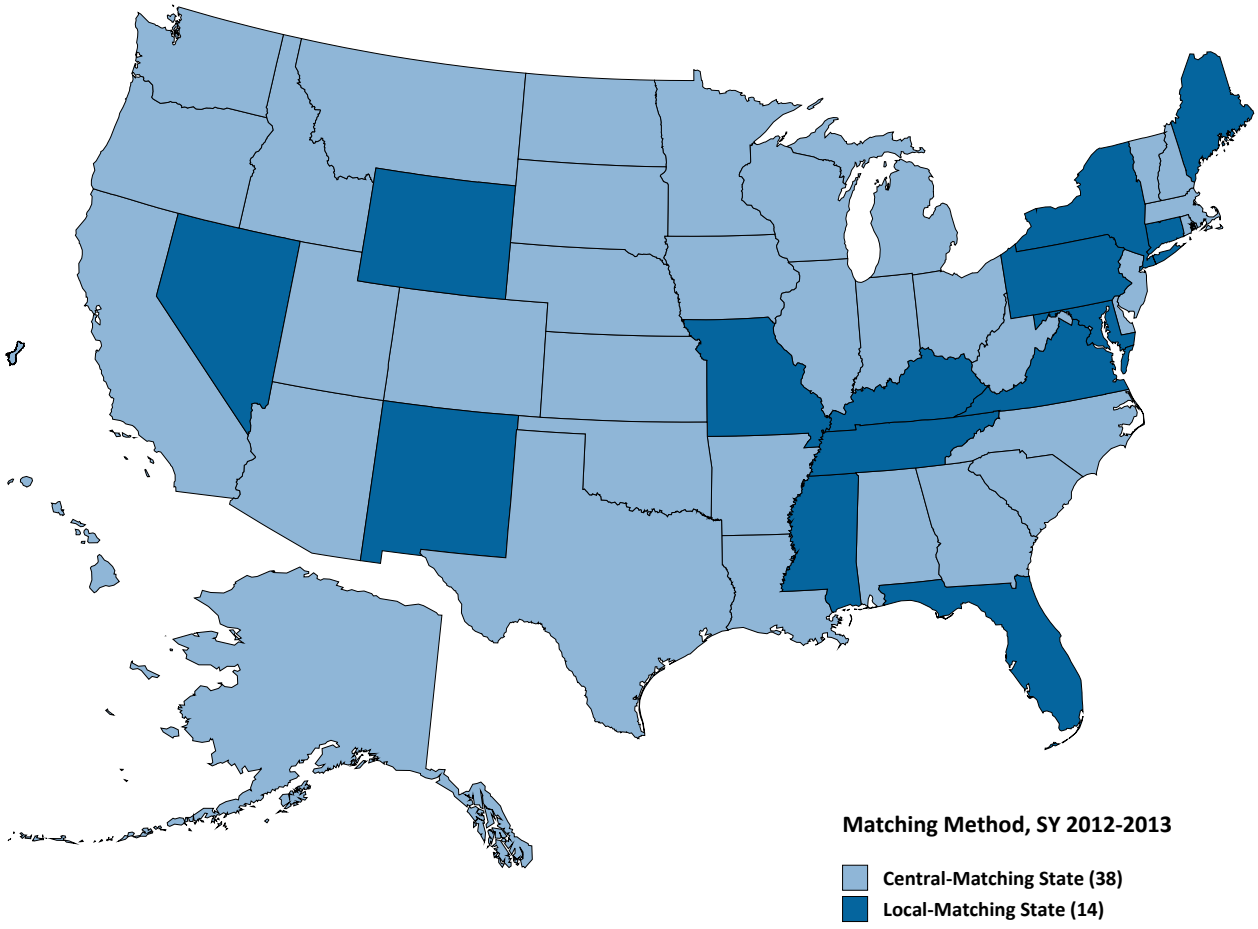
States may also directly certify students participating in TANF or FDPIR using the letter method. Under this method, the State TANF or FDPIR agency sends letters to all households with school-aged children participating in those programs; households submit the letters to their

[6] Although LEAs are also permitted to certify children in TANF households directly, homeless children, migrant children, and those served by programs under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, direct certification is not mandatory for those groups.

children's schools instead of completing NSLP applications. Prior to SY 2010-2011, States could use this method to directly certify students participating in SNAP as well. However, following the passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA), the letter method is no longer an approved means of directly certifying students for that program.

Figure I.1 presents the matching method used in each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Guam, in SY 2012-2013.

Figure I.1. Direct Certification Matching Methods Used by States, the District of Columbia, and Guam, SY 2012-2013



Note: Maryland employs a hybrid matching system, where 25 large districts perform data matching for themselves and the State conducts matching centrally for the remaining districts.

3. Special Provisions for School Meal Reimbursement

Schools may elect to receive reimbursements through special provision programs, including Provisions 2 and 3 and the Community Eligibility Provision.

Provision 2 and Provision 3. NSLP allows schools the option of using special application and meal-counting provisions—Provision 2 or Provision 3—under which all students receive free meals without applying or being directly certified in a current school year. Under Provision 2, schools operate a base year in which they serve all meals at no charge but use standard program procedures

to establish individual students' free or reduced-price meal eligibility and count meals by eligibility category. They then may continue to serve all meals at no charge and take only a daily aggregate count of meals served for up to three additional years, during which they claim reimbursement based on the percentage of free, reduced-price, and paid meals served during the base year. Provision 3 schools serve all meals free for up to four years; reimbursement is based on the total dollar reimbursement the school received during the base year, which is the most recent year in which applications were taken and meals were counted and claimed by category.

Community Eligibility Provision. Schools in select States may choose to be reimbursed for school meals under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). All students in schools participating in CEP are served meals at no charge. CEP schools are reimbursed based on the number of meals served to all students and the percentage of students in their CEP group identified as having been approved for free meals with a method that does not require verification during a base year. A CEP group can be a single school, a group of schools within an LEA, or all schools within an LEA. A large majority of identified students are those who were directly certified for free meal benefits. Therefore, CEP participation introduces very strong incentives for effective direct certification because reimbursement rates are tied directly to direct certification rates. Other students may be identified because they are homeless, migrants, runaways or participants in Head Start or Even Start. CEP schools are required to identify students based on SNAP participation, but identifying students from the remaining programs is optional.[7]

B. Study Objectives

The purpose of this study is to describe current methods of direct certification used by State and local agencies, and challenges facing States and LEAs in attaining high matching rates. In this report we identify potential improvements in data-matching techniques in order to help FNS, States and LEAs, and State Child Nutrition Directors understand current trends and provide technical assistance for continuous improvement.

The core aims of the study are to describe current direct certification processes and procedures employed by States and LEAs and document data-matching techniques and tools used to increase matching rates for States and LEAs. To that end, we address two overarching objectives in this report:

1. **Update national information on current practice used by States and LEAs to conduct direct certification.**
    - We document the processes and resources used to develop direct certification systems and describe the types of changes States have made to their direct certification systems, including those made using grants awarded by FNS.
    - We describe how direct certification is currently implemented nationwide. We discuss the variety of procedures and matching algorithms used in different States and some of the variation in procedures within States. We describe the information systems, databases, and data elements States and LEAs use to conduct direct certification.

[7] See Memo SP 12-2012, issued by FNS on February 9, 2012 to regional and state directors for more details.

2. **Examine the current plans for improving direct certification process in the future and the capability to adopt any potential changes that may be required in the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization.**

   - We describe the primary barriers States and LEAs face in conducting direct certification successfully.
   - We describe the changes States and LEAs have planned to address barriers for their future operations.

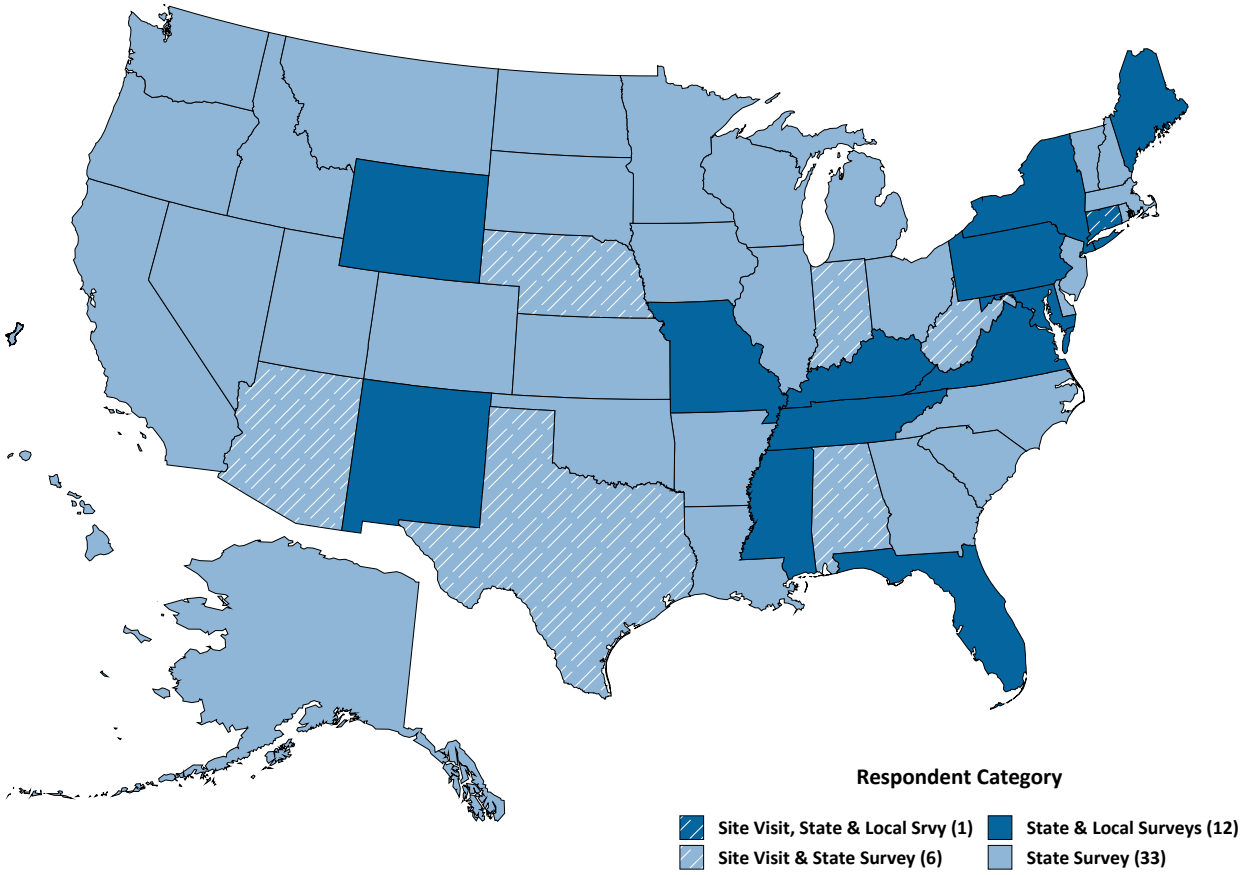
C. Research Approach

To address the study objectives, we integrated information from several data sources. The two primary data collection tasks performed in this study were:

1. ***National survey of direct certification practices*** of all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and LEAs in local matching States. The survey design tailored questions based on a State's data-matching method (Central- or local-level) and the level of respondent (State or LEA). In a State that used local matching, a representative sample of LEAs was asked to complete the survey, with remaining LEAs in district-level States being administered a shortened version.
2. ***In-depth case studies*** in seven States and selected LEAs. In each participating State, we conducted site visits to interview program and technical staff involved in direct certification at the State and LEA levels. We gathered specific technical information about State and LEA data-matching system characteristics; investigated the feasibility of using Medicaid data for direct certification; and explored the issues, challenges, and potential solutions to barriers that might impede States' efforts to certify directly all eligible SNAP participants.

Figure I.2 presents data collection activities for both the survey and the in-depth case studies.

Figure I.2. Survey and Site Visit Respondents



1. National Survey of NSLP Direct Certification Practices

The national survey of direct certification practices was administered to all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and all districts in States where districts have primary responsibility for conducting local matching systems. Districts were administered one of two versions of the survey: (1) a long version that collected comprehensive information on the direct certification process or (2) a short version that collected a targeted subset of the information collected in the long version. Because only districts in local matching States were to receive the survey, the first step in administering the survey was to identify States which used local-level direct certification matching in SY 2012-2013. The information available to Mathematica and FNS staff at the time indicated that 13 States used local-level matching systems.[8] Once local matching States were identified, the study team

[8] The information available to the study team during the survey administration phase indicated that Nevada used a central-matching process. Therefore, districts in Nevada were not sampled for inclusion in the district component of the survey. However, in the course of data collection, we learned that Nevada used a local-matching system in SY 2012-2013. Results pertaining to districts in local matching States generalize to all local matching States except Nevada.

employed a sampling procedure to randomly select 2,500 districts to receive the long version of the survey. We asked the remaining 1,791 districts to complete the short version.[9]

We administered the Survey of Direct Certification Practices in fall 2012 to State child nutrition directors in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Guam, as well as 4,291 district school foodservice directors in the 13 States identified as using local matching. The survey was in the field for approximately 17 weeks. All 52 State-level respondents completed the survey, for a 100 percent response rate. The response rate for districts was 68.3 percent.[10] Table I.1 contains the survey status and response rates for survey respondents.

Table I.1. Final Survey Status of State- and District-Level Respondents

Final Response Status	Number	Percentage of Sample States/Districts
State-Level Respondents (N = 52)		
Complete	52	100.0
District-Level Respondents (N = 4,291)		
Complete	2,907	67.8
Partial response, sufficient for complete	19	0.4
Partial response, insufficient for complete	437	10.2
Refusal	9	0.2
Nonresponse	889	20.7
Ineligible	30	0.7

Note: Districts could be ineligible because they were RCCIs or no longer participated in the NSLP.

NSLP = National School Lunch Program; RCCIs = residential child care institutions.

The survey included primarily closed-ended questions. There were a limited number of open-ended questions that allowed respondents to provide answers that did not fit into the categories of the closed-ended questions. The content of the survey for State-level respondents varied depending on the level at which direct certification was conducted. Modules related to specific data-matching processes were asked of State staff in central matching States and of district staff in local matching States. The content of the survey version for sampled LEAs focused primarily on LEA procedures and processes for direct certification while omitting questions that could be answered at the State level. The short version of the LEA-level survey included a core set of key questions that were also asked of the other LEA and State- or territory-level respondents, thus forming the basis of all versions of the survey.

We used the survey data to produce tables presenting how direct certification was implemented or performed across all States and LEAs in SY 2012-2013. The analysis summarizes the methods of direct certification, data-matching criteria, frequency of matching, characteristics of systems and databases used, online or batch processing, treatment of nonpublic LEAs, and other relevant direct

[9] To conduct this allocation, we stratified districts based on State, reported enrollment size, and public/private status. We then randomly identified districts within each stratum to receive the long version of the survey.

[10] This number includes both complete and partial responses that were sufficiently complete to be used in the analysis.

certification practices. Additionally, we used information from the national survey to examine which direct certification practices were funded with FNS grants, to identify planned improvements, and to examine the capacity to respond to the potential authorization of the use of Medicaid data for direct certification. Finally, we used the survey data to produce profiles of each State's direct certification system, presented in Appendix A.

2. In-Depth Case Studies

To collect more detailed information on direct certification practices in place during SY 2012-2013, the study team completed in-depth case studies of seven States. In each State, Mathematica conducted site visits to interview program and technical staff involved in direct certification efforts at the State and district levels. The study team gathered technical information about data-matching system characteristics and explored the issues, challenges, and potential solutions to barriers that impede efforts to directly certify all eligible SNAP participants.

Mathematica and FNS worked together to select States to participate in the in-depth case studies. The main objective was to identify a mix of high-performing, improving, and low-performing States that would help us address key objectives of the study. In making these categorizations, we focused on the main direct certification performance measure from the FNS reports to Congress on direct certification, which is the percentage of school-age SNAP-participant children directly certified for free school meals. The selection process was further guided by the following needs: first, to select one state from each of the seven FNS regions to ensure geographic variation across the country; and second, to select at least one state that employs local matching.[11] Finally, to the extent possible, we also sought diversity among the selected States in the number of school districts and student enrollment. This selection process yielded a broad geographical range of States. Most were high performing States and all but one used a central-matching system. States ranged in size from Nebraska, with fewer than 250,000 students enrolled, to Texas, with more than 5 million students enrolled (Table I.2).

The study team conducted site visits in each case-study State, including visits to State offices as well as two or three LEAs participating in direct certification. In selecting LEAs for the case studies, we worked with the State point-of-contact to select a mix of districts in size and direct certification performance. Across the seven States, we conducted 34 interviews with a total of 95 respondents. Table I.3 provides a summary of activities the study team conducting during site visits.

All site visits began with discussions with the State Child Nutrition agency director. We interviewed key technical and policy staff from SNAP and any other relevant programs, such as TANF and foster care, about their roles in the direct certification process. At the LEA sites, we interviewed the SFA director and technical staff knowledgeable about the systems and data used in direct certification. At both levels, we interviewed the staff members with primary responsibility for developing, programming, and implementing the data-matching process at the site.

[11] We excluded from consideration any State that was participating in the Direct Certification Medicaid Study—Alaska, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, New York, and Pennsylvania—in order to avoid creating additional burden to the reporting requirements associated with that study.

Table I.2. States Selected for In-Depth Case Study

State	Region	Primary Matching Method	Performance Designation	Number of Districts[a]	Student Enrollment[a]
Alabama	SERO	Central	High performing and improving	189	764,619
Arizona	WRO	Central	Low performing and improving	458	1,043,244
Connecticut	NERO	Local	High performing	185	531,412
Indiana	MWRO	Central	Stalled	499	1,137,121
Nebraska	MPRO	Central	High performing and improving	378	235,273
Texas	SWRO	Central	High performing	1,259	5,222,412
West Virginia	MARO	Central	High performing and improving	73	287,163

[a] Number of districts and student enrollment in each State drawn from final Verification Summary Report (VSR) for SY 2011–2012.

MARO = Mid-Atlantic Regional Office; MPRO = Mountain Plains Regional Office; MWRO = Midwest Regional Office; NERO = Northeast Regional Office; SERO = Southeast Regional Office; WRO = Western Regional Office.

Table I.3. Summary of On-Site Data Collection Activities, by State

State	Dates of Site Visit	State Agencies	Local School Districts	Number of Interviews (respondents)
Alabama	March 2013	Department of Education Department of Human Resources	Large urban district Small rural district	5 (21)
Arizona	January 2013	Department of Education Department of Economic Security	Large urban district Charter school system	5 (14)
Connecticut	February 2013[a]	Department of Education Department of Social Services	Small suburban district Medium suburban district Public vocational school system	6 (13)
Indiana	February 2013	Department of Education Family and Social Services Administration	Small suburban district Medium urban district	5 (10)
Nebraska	January 2013	Department of Education Department of Health and Human Services	Large urban district Small rural district	4 (10)
Texas	March 2013	Department of Agriculture Department of Education Health and Human Services Commission	Large suburban district Small rural district	4 (11)
West Virginia	December 2012[b]	Department of Education Health and Human Resources	Small district 1 Small district 2	5 (16)

[a] Mathematica completed a phone interview with staff from Connecticut's Department of Social Services in March 2013.

[b] Mathematica completed a phone interview with the contractor that developed their direct certification system in December 2012. Although several case study States used contractors for some elements of the development their direct certification systems, their roles were not as central the West Virginia contractor.

During site visit interviews, we gathered information about State and LEA data-matching system characteristics; investigated the potential use of Medicaid data for direct certification; and explored the issues, challenges, and potential solutions to barriers that might impede States' efforts to certify directly all eligible SNAP participants. The qualitative interview data we obtained offer greater detail than the survey data in how direct certification is carried out in different States and LEAs. Case study data findings appear in analytical tables throughout this report as well as in State direct certification profiles for the seven case study States, presented in Appendix B.

D. Organization of the Report

The remainder of this report describes the study results. Chapter II contains information on how direct certification systems across the country were planned and implemented, including the extent of central versus local matching, State agency and district roles, resources required to develop direct certification systems, and performance monitoring capabilities. In Chapter III we describe the matching procedures in place during SY 2012-2013, including the characteristics of enrollment and program participation data, the timing and frequency of matching, data matching algorithms and procedures, and direct certification system characteristics. In Chapter IV we describe the primary challenges to successful direct certification matching as well as the improvements States and districts have planned for the future. We close in Chapter V by offering direct certification lessons learned, synthesizing the conclusions drawn from our analysis of survey and case study data.

As described above, we also include two appendices that describe direct certification systems in place in SY 2012-2013. Appendix A uses the National Survey of Direct Certification Practices to present summary information for all 50 States and the District of Columbia. Appendix B provides more detail on the direct certification systems in the seven in-depth case study States, including diagrams illustrating the process in each State.

II. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION

In SY 2012–2013, direct certification systems varied greatly across the country. Some States operated centralized systems with States primarily responsible for developing and maintaining the systems. In other States, State agencies made program data available to districts so that direct certification matching could be done locally. Within each type of matching system, specific agency and district roles varied. Direct certification required collaboration across State-level departments and between State agencies and districts in all cases, but the nature of these interactions varied.

In this chapter, we describe the range of direct certification matching systems in place in SY 2012–2013. We discuss common administrative roles and responsibilities at the State and district levels in different types of direct certification systems, the approaches States and districts used to provide effective communication and training, the different means States used to monitor direct certification activities, the types of resources States used to develop their direct certification systems, the types of interagency relationships States used to make direct certification happen.

A. Use of Central and Local Matching Systems

One of the main characteristics defining direct certification systems is whether primary responsibility for developing and maintaining a direct certification matching system rests with the State (central matching), or with districts (local matching). The distinctions between the two include the following:

- **Central matching system.** A State agency (usually the child nutrition [CN] agency) is responsible for a system that uses a common identifier or identifiers to match a list of children attending schools participating in the NSLP with a list of children participating in SNAP and other programs that confer categorical eligibility. This system can be set up in a variety of ways:
  - A State agency matches State enrollment information with a State list of children participating in SNAP and other programs that confer categorical eligibility. A list of students directly certified on the basis of this match is forwarded to districts, which then notify the households.
  - The State agency conducts an initial match. A list of matched students is sent to districts, which then verify the matches, obtain further information on students who are potential matches, or conduct other types of secondary matching.
  - Districts upload enrollment information into a State-maintained computer or web-based system that conducts a match against a list of children in participating in SNAP and other programs that confer categorical eligibility. Students are directly certified on the basis of this match.
- **Local matching system.** Districts have primary responsibility for matching a list of children enrolled in their schools with a list of children participating in SNAP and other programs that confer categorical eligibility. Some States using local matching provide districts with a list limited to children in living in the district's geographic area; others provide a full statewide list. Districts can use manual methods or their own computer systems to conduct matching.

In SY 2012–2013, most States operated central direct certification systems. Overall, 38 States had central matching systems. Twenty-eight of those had pure central matching systems, in which all matching activities occurred at the State level. The other 10 operated hybrid systems with a combination of central and local matching. Fourteen States used pure local matching systems.[12] Of these, at least 4 said they plan to transition to a central matching system in the future.

Use of Central and Local Matching Systems

Most common practices

- Thirty-eight States used central (or hybrid) matching systems; 4 of the 14 States using pure local matching planned to transition to central systems.

Key findings

- Efficiency, reduced district burden, availability of sophisticated matching algorithms, and reduced confidentiality risk were all cited as advantages of central systems.

Six of the seven States visited as part of the in-depth case study used central matching systems, citing efficiency and reduced district burden as advantages. Officials in West Virginia noted that their system, which incorporates automatic daily direct certification and probabilistic match scoring of potential matches, is more accurate and efficient than districts would be able to develop on their own. Officials in Nebraska emphasized that central matching saves districts time and resources. They also cited reduced data security risk as an advantage, because it allows them to avoid having to distribute to every district statewide files containing personally identifiable information.

One interviewed State, Connecticut, used a local matching system. Officials there cited, as the primary reason, a lack of resources to support central matching. Connecticut was recently awarded an FNS direct certification grant to fund development of a central matching system. In other studies of direct certification systems, States using local matching have cited local knowledge of students as a strength of local matching.[13]

B. Role of Districts in Direct Certification

Regardless of whether direct certification matching is conducted centrally or locally, it requires significant interaction between State agencies and local school districts. In States using local matching, the primary role of districts is to match State-provided program participation data against local school enrollment data. District procedures, which vary considerably both across and within States, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter III.

In central matching States, State agencies have primary responsibility for developing and implementing direct certification matching. However, districts play important and varied roles in the process. In-depth case study interviews revealed several important roles for districts in central matching States: (1) reconciling State-generated direct certification lists with local point-of-sale

[12] This report covers the direct certification systems in the 50 States plus the District of Columbia and Guam.

[13] Moore, Quinn, Kevin Conway, and Brandon Kyler. "Direct Certification in the National school Lunch Program: State Implementation Process School Year 2011-2012." Report to Congress. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Research and Analysis. Alexandria, VA: October 2012.

(POS) systems,[14] (2) investigating lists of partially matched or unmatched children, and (3) extending categorical eligibility to other children in households receiving SNAP, TANF or FDPIR benefits. Though these roles were common in central matching States, exceptions and variations existed for all of them among the six central matching States studied, as described in Table II.1.

Table II.1. Intended Roles of Districts in Central Matching Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

State	Types of Additional Matching at District Level	Other Roles of Districts
Alabama	Districts match local enrollment data to State matched list. Districts may also conduct primary matching with State program data and may attempt to match partially matched students.	Districts are responsible for extending categorical eligibility to other members of the household.
Arizona	Districts initiate matches in the State system, either by uploading updated student information to the State system or by triggering a matching between State enrollment and program data already in the State system. They then download or print the results and upload or manually enter them into their local POS[a] systems.	Districts receive lists of unmatched children in the State program data. They may attempt to match them in their local records. At least one district sends lunch benefit applications to students appearing on the unmatched list.
Indiana	Districts load the State matched list into their local POS systems at least three times a year and as often as monthly. Districts must initiate the matching process, though beginning in SY 2013–2014, monthly matches will occur automatically.	Districts may use the "no county match" list and the "unmatched sibling match" list to identify partial or unmatched students or to extend categorical eligibility to other members of a matched student's household.
Nebraska	Districts are responsible for resolving lists of potential matched students provided by the State system. Districts may also upload updated enrollment data into the matching system and may use the system for single-student lookups.	Districts are responsible for extending categorical eligibility to other members of the household.
Texas	Districts use the matched lists the State prepares to identify directly certified students in their local POS systems. Specific matching procedures vary across districts.	Districts are responsible for extending categorical eligibility to other members of the household.
West Virginia	Districts are responsible for attempting to match partially matched and unmatched students.	District staff are responsible for updating the data in the statewide student information system.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

Note: Connecticut uses a local matching system.

[a] Federal regulations refer to "point-of-service" systems. However, the term "point-of-sale" is used much more commonly among State and district staff. The terms are largely interchangeable and refer to the system in which education staff make eligibility determinations about full-price, reduced-price, or free school meals. We use the term "point-of-sale" in this report.

[14] Federal regulations refer to "point-of-service" systems. However, the term "point-of-sale" is used much more commonly among State and district staff. The terms are largely interchangeable and refer to the system in which education staff make eligibility determinations about full-price, reduced-price, or free school meals. We use the term "point-of-sale" in this report.

Many interviewed central matching States noted that districts do not always take advantage of the district features built into their systems. This is consistent with interviews with district staff, which often revealed that districts were not using, or were unaware of, certain available direct certification functions. Table II.2 provides more information about procedures of interviewed district in central matching States.

Role of Districts in Direct Certification

Most common practices

- District roles vary substantially across States. In case study States, primary roles include uploading enrollment data, reconciling match lists with local data systems, and other key activities to increase match rates.

Key findings

- Districts' capability and effort to incorporate match results into their local systems can be a barrier to effective direct certification.
- Districts may be asked to resolve partially matched or unmatched students using information not available at the State level.
- Districts may not always take advantage of the direct certification functions available to them.

Initiate direct certification process. In some central matching States, districts are required to initiate the matching process, even though the match itself is conducted within a State maintained system. Arizona, for example, relied on districts to log into the State system and initiate each matching process by uploading updated student information. Indiana and Nebraska offered a similar option to districts wishing to conduct an initial match for a school year before the State data system was updated to include newly enrolled students. However, officials in both States noted that districts often do not make use of this feature. Subsequent matches in these two States did not require district action.

Reconciling State-generated direct certification lists with local nutrition systems. One of the most important district functions in most central matching case study States was to reconcile the matched list generated at the State level with local student information and POS systems. In all interviewed central matching States except one, this step was necessary in order for matched students to receive the free meal benefits to which they are entitled. The exception was West Virginia, which uses a statewide POS system in which free-meal status through direct certification is transmitted automatically, with no additional step from the district. Officials in West Virginia see this feature as an important strength of their direct certification system. This view is supported by officials in other States who consider the need for district reconciliation to be a barrier to effective direct certification. For example, officials in Nebraska noted that it is challenging for districts to reconcile the match lists regularly and that when reviewing direct certification counts, they frequently see fewer students directly certified than were matched.

Officials in several States cited the importance of a unique statewide student identifier (SSID) in allowing districts to incorporate State match results into their local systems easily and accurately. Including an SSID on the matched student file allows districts to merge the file into their local system. However, officials in Indiana noted that the diversity in the age, capabilities and user interfaces of local systems used in their State can present a challenge in developing a reconciliation process that works for all districts even though SSIDs are included with the matched results. Arizona provides the option for districts to upload files containing only SSIDs for matching. This was the preferred option for one of the districts which the study team visited.

The logistics of this reconciliation process varied from State to State. For example, in both Texas and Alabama, State agencies sent each district match results pertaining specifically to the district. However, Alabama also allowed districts to access the statewide matched list. Thus districts could attempt to identify students who had moved or had been assigned to the incorrect district list.

Table II.2. District Procedures in Central Matching Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

State	District	District Direct Certification Procedures
Alabama	Large urban district	The district disregards the State's matched list and instead compares its local enrollment data with the State program data combined list. It conducts the matching in its local POS system based on exact matches of first name, last name, date of birth, and Social Security Number. Child nutrition staff also work to match partial matches by examining other variables.
	Small rural district	The district matches the State's matched list against its local enrollment data using its local POS system. They match students using exact matches of Social Security Number only.
Arizona	Large urban district	This district used an automated batch process to upload student information and download matched results from the State system and import them into their local POS system.
	Charter school system	The charter school system procedures varied from school to school. Some schools triggered matches only three times a year; others matched more frequently. Some schools downloaded matched results and uploaded them into their local POS systems; others printed the results and hand-entered them.
Indiana	Medium urban district	District downloads direct certification match file from the State, restructures the file to make it compatible with their POS, and then pulls the file into their POS to complete the process. District POS flags students potentially eligible to extend categorical eligibility based on living in households receiving SNAP or TANF; they do not use the State-generated list identifying potential siblings.
	Small suburban district	The district uses a manual process to incorporate information from State-generated match lists into the local POS. The district uses both the State-generated list identifying potential siblings and their POS to identify students eligible to extend categorical eligibility based on living in households receiving SNAP or TANF.
Nebraska	Large urban district	The district regularly processes lists of definite and potential matches. Its POS flags students potentially eligible to extend categorical eligibility based on living in households receiving SNAP or TANF.
	Small rural district	The district processes lists of definite and potential matches at the beginning of the school year, but rarely has changes later. District staff identify students eligible to extend categorical eligibility based on living in households receiving SNAP or TANF based on knowledge of student living situations.
Texas	Large suburban district	District matches the State-provided list with its local student data in its POS system based on exact matches of Social Security Number, date of birth, and first and last name for direct certification. The free- and reduced-price clerk manually audits the list after the initial match is performed.
	Small rural district	The district matches the State-provided list with local student data in its POS system using date of birth or Social Security Number.
West Virginia	Small rural district 1	District staff process lists of unmatched and partially matched students and extend categorical eligibility to other students living in households receiving SNAP or TANF.
	Small rural district 2	District staff process lists of unmatched and partially matched students and extend categorical eligibility to other students living in households receiving SNAP or TANF.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

Note: Connecticut uses a local matching system.

POS = Point-of-sale; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Investigating lists of partially matched or unmatched children. A second common district role in interviewed central matching States was investigating students who did not match, or who only partially matched, the State's program participation data. Partial matches or erroneous non-matches can occur because of misspellings, inverted dates, and other data errors. Unmatched and partially matched students by definition could not be reconciled using available State data; therefore, investigating these cases further was generally a district function. In most interviewed central matching States, State agencies made lists of unmatched or partially matched students available to districts and encouraged districts to compare them with their local enrollment files to identify additional matches. Most States gave districts discretion in selecting which data elements to use when identifying matches, although the process for investigating lists of partially matched and unmatched students varied greatly. Texas was the only interviewed central matching State that did not make lists of unmatched or partially matched children available to districts.

Both West Virginia and Nebraska provide districts with probabilistic match scores that indicate the likelihood of a correct match. These scores are intended to help districts focus their investigations on the students most likely to match, though in both States some interviewed districts were not taking advantage of all the probabilistic matching features. In Nebraska, districts can refine the probabilistic match score by including additional student information available locally but not included in the State match. In Indiana, districts are not provided with probabilistic match scores; however, they are provided with two lists in addition to the standard matched list. The first list contains children who matched on all parameters except county; this list is intended to help districts identify students who moved or whose address information is incorrect. The second list contains children from the SNAP or TANF program files who did not match the State's school enrollment data but who have the same SNAP or TANF case number as a student who did match; this file is intended to help districts identify unmatched students in households receiving SNAP or TANF benefits. For both lists, district staff use any available data elements and their own judgment when identifying additional matches.

Extending categorical eligibility to other children in the household. A third district function in interviewed central matching States was extending categorical eligibility to all children in households receiving SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR benefits. In August 2010, FNS implemented a policy to extend eligibility for free meals to all children in households receiving assistance from SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR. All case study States complied with this policy by asking districts to extend categorical eligibility to all students in households that contained students identified, through either direct certification or an application, as categorically eligible based on SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR. In West Virginia, the State POS includes a sibling match function. However, neither district the study team visited used this function, rather they identified students for extended categorical eligibility through applications for benefits. Other States, including Alabama and Texas, required that districts attempt to identify students for extended categorical eligibility. In Texas, the process for identifying such students varied by district and could be done either in districts' local student enrollment systems or in POS systems. In Alabama, districts used their POS systems to identify other children in the household, matching on data elements like phone number, guardian name, or address.

C. Communication and Training

Because the role of districts in direct certification is so important, effective district communication and training is critical to successful direct certification. Several States noted the importance of communication and training, not only for instructing districts on proper use of the direct certification system and addressing district technical skill limitations, but also for explaining

the increasing importance of direct certification and motivating districts to make their best effort to directly certify students.

States used a variety of methods to communicate with and provide instructions and training to local school districts (Table II.3). Some techniques were common across most or all central matching case study States; others were particular to one or two States. In several States, districts also relied on private vendors for training on technical and policy topics.

Communication and Training

Most common practices

- States use a variety of communication tools, including webinars, conferences, web videos, email, phone help centers, and in-person training.

Key findings

- Training is important both for understanding the logistics of direct certification and for emphasizing the importance of effective direct certification.
- States emphasized the importance of clear communication and readily available technical assistance.
- Hands-on training was cited as a particularly effective training mode.

Common means by which State agencies communicated with and provided training to districts included email, webinars, and in-person workshops. Several States make their agency staff available for technical assistance, and Nebraska maintains a telephone help center trained in providing direct certification technical assistance (among other functions). A typical communication occurred when States completed periodic, often monthly, matches. Several States, including Alabama and Texas, sent emails to all districts alerting them that the matched files were ready for download. This email also contained any information on policy changes, training topics, or procedural instructions State administrators wished to disseminate.

Most case study States provided training to districts at least annually, though the mechanisms and settings varied. Alabama conducted its annual training via webinar; Texas held an annual workshop. Connecticut conducts several training sessions in the summer on the application and verification process to help their districts focus on difference between direct certification and categorical eligibility, and how to fill out the verification summary report (VSR). Similarly, Arizona conducts training for districts on the VSR to emphasize the importance of completing direct certification prior to direct verification in order to eliminate those students who do not need to be verified. West Virginia held a biannual in-person conference in addition to annual training. Nebraska maintains a variety of training materials on its website, including videos, and holds annual training conferences for district information technology (IT) and nutrition staff. Other training practices were specific to one or two case study States. Texas and West Virginia maintained regional support centers to provide training and assistance to districts. These centers gave districts points of contact for assistance in addition to the main State-level administrators. In Alabama, Indiana, and Texas, private POS vendors districts contracted with supplied technical training as needed. They also kept district staff informed of changes in Federal or State policy on direct certification.

Table II.3. Communication and Training with Districts in Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

State	Means of Communication and Training	Frequency of Communication and Training	Summary of Communication and Training Activities
Alabama	Email, webinar, phone	The State communicates via email monthly and provides training annually and as requested.	The State conducts annual training webinars and posts training materials online. The State emails districts when the matched file is ready.
Arizona	Email, webinar, phone	The State communicates via email monthly and provides training annually and as requested.	State Department of Education staff provide training on the web portal and direct certification procedures for districts.
Connecticut	Email, conference, phone	Annual conferences, data updates three times a year	The Department of Education provides training every summer on free and reduced-price meal applications and administrative review training each school year to districts under review. The department also provides technical assistance continuously. State staff contact districts three times a year to let them know that the program data file is ready.
Indiana	Written system documentation, field staff interaction, phone technical support	As needed	State staff inform districts of changes to the system and provide comprehensive documentation.
Nebraska	Training conferences, online training videos and documentation, in-person training, regional support centers, nutrition services help desk, email	Separate annual conferences for nutrition service and IT staff. The State notifies districts by email of the number of newly matched students in the system.	The State conducts two annual training conferences and posts training materials online. State emphasizes in-person training.
Texas	Workshops, email, phone, regional support centers, private vendors	Texas holds annual training workshops and sends a monthly email to districts.	In addition to annual State training workshops, districts can receive training from regional Education Service Centers. Point-of-sale vendors also train district staff and inform them of system changes.
West Virginia	Conference calls, webinars, conferences, videos	Regular training for districts occurs twice annually in addition to conferences every other year. The State offers training webinars for private schools.	The State produces training videos district child nutrition staff. Eight Regional Education Support Agencies provide assistance to districts as needed.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

D. Monitoring Direct Certification Activities

Though most direct certification functions in central matching States occur at the State level, students receive benefits only if districts complete the process by certifying matched students in their local POS systems. Because student benefit receipt and State performance measures depend on district activities, State agencies have an interest in monitoring local operations. Similarly, local matching States can monitor the extent to which districts are implementing direct certification.

All case study States maintained the ability to monitor at least basic district direct certification activities, though the frequency and detail with which they did so varied (Table II.4). Alabama did not regularly monitor district operations, though staff had the ability to see how frequently districts downloaded the monthly matched files. State staff in Arizona did regularly monitor district activities, ensuring that districts uploaded their enrollment data to the State database at least the minimum-required three times per school year. Connecticut mostly monitors district operations through the administrative review process.

Monitoring Direct Certification Activities

Most common practices

- Although some State systems include sophisticated monitoring tools, many do not.

Key findings

- States often do not monitor the frequency or accuracy of districts' use of direct certification systems.
- Discrepancies between the number of students matched in the central system and the number districts report as directly certified can be a key indicator of whether districts are using direct certification systems properly.
- States often do not track direct certification performance statewide.

Table II.4. Monitoring of District Direct Certification Activities in Central Matching States, SY 2012–2013

State	Summary of Monitoring Activities
Alabama	Though it has the ability to, the State does not regularly monitor which districts have conducted direct certification matching in a given month.
Arizona	The State conducts informal reviews of district activities throughout the school year. The State online system lets State staff know how often districts upload their enrollment data, which should occur at least three times a year.
Connecticut	The State reviews data from verification summary reports to assess district use of direct certification.
Indiana	The State has the capability to monitor the frequency of district matching but does not regularly do so. In SY 2012–2013, Indiana began comparing the number of students matched without an application by district as reported on the FNS-742 form against the number of students matched in each district. Substantial discrepancies between these numbers possibly indicate districts not properly importing matched student information into their local point-of-sale systems.
Nebraska	The State checks the number of students directly certified in each district against the number matched by the central system. They frequently find discrepancies in these numbers, which indicates that districts are not processing matched lists or lists of potential matches.
Texas	Texas monitors district use of direct certification as a part of administrative review efforts and track the number of students matched by age and program.
West Virginia	West Virginia receives performance metrics from a private system vendor. They track the percentage of students who end up on the unmatched list. The State does not have specific benchmark targets that districts have to meet.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

Indiana, Nebraska, and West Virginia monitored district activities more closely, evaluating the accuracy of their matching operations. West Virginia received, from the State's private system vendor, performance metrics indicating the percentage of students that appeared on each district's unmatched list. Both Indiana and Nebraska compared the number of students matched in the central system with the number districts reported as directly certified on VSRs.

In addition to monitoring district activities, States may also monitor direct certification system performance statewide. For example, States may calculate the percentage of eligible children who are directly certified. However, nationally it is not common for States to calculate direct certification performance: only 22 percent of central matching States do so (Table II.5). Among States interviewed as a part of the case study, several have procedures for tracking levels of direct certification. For example, Texas tracks the number of students matched by age and program status. However, these States do not typically calculate performance measures analogous to those used in the FNS annual reports to Congress on direct certification.[15]

Table II.5. Tracking Performance of Direct Certification System, SY 2012–2013 (percentages)

	Central Matching States
Calculates Direct Certification Matching Rate	22.2
Among States That Calculate Matching Rates	
State-calculated matching rate is typically higher than the Report to Congress performance measure	100.0
Program data used in matching rate include only school-aged children	66.7
Matching rate implied by counts of directly certified students and SNAP participant children	85.5
Sample Size	36

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

E. Direct Certification System Development Resources

States and districts drew on a variety of resources—financial, technological, and staffing—in developing and maintaining their direct certification systems. In this section, we describe the primary funding sources States and districts used to develop their systems and the staff responsible for maintaining them.

[15] In SY 2012-2013 and earlier years, the performance measures used in the reports to Congress relied on data not available to States. They were therefore not able to replicate the measures. Beginning in SY 2013-2014, FNS will report measures States develop.

Direct Certification Development Resources

Most common practices

- States and districts draw from a diverse range of funding and staff resources to develop and maintain their direct certification systems.

Key findings

- State IT staff and outside contractors were commonly cited as having contributed to system development.
- Federal grants represent an important development resource; grants were used to upgrade computer matching systems, provide training, and transition to central matching.

In developing their direct certification systems, most States and districts consulted outside entities such as other State agencies, contractors, and IT staff in order to identify successful practices and learn from the experiences of other States. All central matching States and the large majority of local matching States consulted with at least one outside entity when designing their direct certification systems (Table II.6). States most commonly consulted IT staff and other State agencies. Almost 95 percent of central matching States and more than 85 percent of local matching States consulted with IT staff. Almost 90 percent of central matching States and almost 80 percent of local matching States consulted with other State agencies. More than half of central matching States consulted outside contractors; most local matching States did not. Forty-three percent of local matching States consulted school districts in developing their systems, but less than 30 percent of central matching States did so.

Table II.6. Entities Consulted in Developing Direct Certification Matching Systems, SY 2012–2013 (percentages)

	Central Matching States	Local Matching States	Districts in Local Matching States
Entities Consulted on Technical Requirements of Direct Certification Matching			
Other State agencies	88.9	78.6	—
State CN agency	—	—	46.2
Outside contractors	52.8	35.7	11.0
IT staff	94.4	85.7	26.9
Regional office	36.1	42.9	3.7
Other districts	27.8	42.9	10.1
None of these entities	0.0	7.1	39.0
Sample Size	36	14	1,575

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

CN = child nutrition; IT = information technology.

Most local matching districts also consulted with outside entities when developing their direct certification systems, though they were less likely to do so than central or local matching States (Table II.6). Almost half of districts consulted with the State child nutrition agency while about a quarter consulted with IT staff. Districts less commonly consulted with contractors, other districts, or FNS regional offices. More than a third of districts did not report consulting with outside entities.

Central matching States and local matching districts used a variety of different financial and staffing resources to develop and maintain their direct certification matching systems. Most central matching States used State Child Nutrition operating funds as a resource in developing their systems; only about a third of local matching districts did so (Table II.7). Forty-one percent of central matching States reported using Federal grant funds to develop their direct certification

system, compared with less than 6 percent of local matching districts. About a fifth of central matching States reported using State funds other than child nutrition operating funds, compared with less than 6 percent of local matching districts. Districts most commonly used district funds to develop their direct certification system.

The staff involved in developing direct certification systems varied across central matching States and local matching districts. Most States and almost half of districts reported that State child nutrition IT staff developed their direct certification systems (Table II.7). More than half of central matching States reported that other State IT staff helped develop the systems, compared with less than 15 percent of local matching districts. A quarter of central matching States used outside contractors to develop their systems, as did almost a third of local matching districts. Central matching States and local matching districts less commonly used other State or district staff to develop their direct certification systems.

Central matching States and local matching districts used different types of staff to maintain direct certification software. Central matching States almost exclusively used State staff to maintain their systems (Table II.7). Half of central matching States used staff from the State education agency; about a fifth used child nutrition agency staff; 28 percent used State staff from other agencies. Local matching districts used either district staff (84 percent) or outside contractors (16 percent).

Table II.7. Resources for Developing Direct Certification Matching Systems, as of SY 2012–2013 (percentages)

	Central Matching States	Districts in Local Matching States
Funding Source for Developing Direct Certification System		
Federal grant	41.2	5.8
Other grant	0.0	0.3
State child nutrition operating funds	58.8	33.8
Other State funds	20.6	5.5
District funds	0.0	45.5
Entities Responsible for Developing Direct Certification Software and Systems		
State child nutrition IT staff	55.6	47.1
Other State IT staff	55.6	14.5
Other State staff	13.9	6.9
District IT staff	8.3	11.1
Other district staff	0.0	3.6
Outside contractor	25.0	31.5
Agency Maintaining Direct Certification Software		
State child nutrition staff	19.4	0.0
State education agency staff	50.0	0.0
Other State staff	27.8	0.0
District staff	0.0	84.1
Outside contractor	2.8	15.9
Districts Implemented Technology Upgrades	27.8	15.5
Sample Size	36	1,606

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

IT = information technology.

Most central matching States and local matching districts did not have to implement technology upgrades in order to conduct direct certification. Such upgrades were more common in central matching States than in local matching districts, 28 percent compared with 16 percent (Table II.7).

Case study States reflect the diversity in resource sources seen in the survey responses. The seven States in the in-depth case studies used funding from a variety of sources to develop different aspects of their direct certification systems. Three of the case study States received Federal grants to improve their systems (Table II.8). West Virginia used grant funding to purchase computer servers and to provide user training on the State's matching system. In Nebraska, grant funding supported the shift to a web-based probabilistic matching system. Connecticut used planning and implementation grants to prepare for its transition to a central matching system in SY 2013–2014.

Table II.8. Funding and Development Resources Employed in Case Study States, as of SY 2012–2013

State	Summary of Funding Resources	Summary of Development Resources
Alabama	Alabama received an ART II grant in SY 2010–2011.	The State developed the iNOW statewide student information system for launch in SY 2011–2012. The State's direct certification system switched to monthly matching in that year, using iNOW as the State-level direct certification platform. No additional infrastructure changes were necessary.
Connecticut	Connecticut received an FNS planning grant in 2011 and an implementation grant in 2012. They used the planning grant to assess the state of direct certification across districts. The implementation grant will support the transition to a central matching system by fall 2015.	The local matching system in place in SY 2012–2013 relied on each district conducting matching using local systems. Systems ranged from Excel spreadsheets to databases.
Indiana	Indiana's direct certification system relies strictly on State general funds.	Development of the State matching algorithm was supported almost entirely by State child nutrition staff.
Nebraska	Received a direct certification grant from FNS in 2009 that was used to develop their web-based probabilistic matching system.	Nutrition Services staff developed the direct certification database and the initial probabilistic matching algorithm. The system switched to a Microsoft matching algorithm to improve efficiency and accuracy. An external contractor developed the web interface. Throughout the process, input was solicited from districts and system data providers. Consulted with other States in the early stages of development.
Texas	Texas relies exclusively on State funds for direct certification operations.	Private contractors provide IT support to TEA direct certification system. TDA uses in-house staff to run the largely automated system.
West Virginia	West Virginia received a grant in 2012 to purchase three servers and fund two user-training conferences. The State pooled county technology funding to fund development of the updated central point-of-sale system.	The West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS) grew out of a regional database mandated by the legislature in 1991. Private contractors initially developed WVEIS, but the State purchased the license for the code in 2001 and how uses in-house developers to customize and maintain the system.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

ART = Administrative Reviews and Training; TDA = Texas Department of Agriculture; TEA = Texas Education Agency.

Other States relied on State funding to develop and maintain their direct certification systems. Alabama's system benefited from a larger upgrade when the State's new statewide student information system, iNOW, rolled out in SY 2011–2012. No specific direct certification funding was required during this upgrade, but it allowed the State to transition to monthly matching using the new common statewide platform. In Connecticut, through the end of SY 2012–2013, districts were responsible for developing their own matching systems. West Virginia funded the development of its statewide POS system by pooling county technology resources.

Nebraska and Texas both relied on private contractors to develop or administer portions of their direct certification systems. In Texas, contractors provided technical support to the Education Agency's systems, including for direct certification. In Nebraska, contractors developed the web interface for the State's direct certification system.

Nationally, 18 central matching States reported receiving Federal direct certification grants for developing matching systems.[16] Grant recipients used funds for many different purposes in improving their direct certification systems, ranging from expanding the data sources and data elements used in matching, to increasing the frequency of matching, to upgrading the information system used to support the matching process.

States receiving grants most commonly planned or implemented an increase in matching frequency. More than three quarters of States reporting grant receipt planned or implemented this change (Table II.9). Two-thirds had already implemented it at the time of the survey.

Most grant recipients also used funding to implement new computer matching systems or add additional data elements to matching algorithms. Almost three quarters planned to implement these changes or had already done so (more than half) (Table II.9).

More than 60 percent of grant recipients planned either to create a web-based lookup system or to introduce probabilistic matching. (This figure includes the more than half of States that had already used grant funds to create web-based lookup systems and the half that had already used grant funds to introduce probabilistic matching [Table II.9]).

More than half of States used grant funding to upgrade their State information systems or obtain program data from additional sources. More than half had already used grant funding to upgrade their State information system. Almost 45 percent had already obtained program data from additional sources (Table II.9).

[16] This total differs from the number of grant recipients in FNS records [http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/fy-2010-2012-direct-certification-grant-summaries], which lists 28 States as recipients. Part of the discrepancy arose because the survey for the current report excluded local matching States from the grant receipt questions. Five States in FNS' list of grant recipients are local matching States and so do not appear in Table II.11 of the current report. The discrepancy for the remaining five States could be due to inaccurate survey responses.

Table II.9. Use of Federal Direct Certification Grants for Developing Matching Systems, as of SY 2012–2013 (percentages)

	Central Matching States
Awarded FNS Direct Certification Grant	48.6
Changes Associated with Grant, Implemented or Planned	
State information system upgrade	55.6
Obtain program data from additional sources	55.6
Implement new computer matching system	72.2
Increase matching frequency	77.8
Add more elements for matching	72.2
Add probabilistic matching	61.1
Create web-based lookup system	61.1
Other system changes	33.3
Implemented Changes Associated with Grant	
State information system upgrade	55.6
Obtain program data from additional sources	44.4
Implement new computer matching system	61.1
Increase matching frequency	66.7
Add more elements for matching	61.1
Add probabilistic matching	50.0
Create web-based lookup system	55.6
Other system changes	27.8
Planned Changes Associated with Grant	
State information system upgrade	11.1
Obtain program data from additional sources	22.2
Implement new computer matching system	27.8
Increase matching frequency	22.2
Add more elements for matching	33.3
Add probabilistic matching	16.7
Create web-based lookup system	11.1
Other system changes	16.7
Sample Size	37

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

F. Relationships with Other Agencies

Successful direct certification systems rely on constructive collaboration among multiple State agencies. In all States, more than one agency is required for direct certification. The agencies usually involved are the State education agency and those administering State SNAP and TANF programs. In some States, the agencies administering foster care, FDPIR, or Medicaid are also involved. Agency roles and the relationships between agencies varied for central matching compared with local matching States. In-depth case study data illuminate the agency roles and relationships necessary for the direct certification process in both types of systems.

State agency roles were fairly consistent across central matching case study States. SNAP and TANF agencies typically provided the program participation data to the State education agency, which usually matched the program data against school enrollment data either maintained at the State level or obtained from local school districts. The education agency made the resulting matched lists available to local districts, which used them to identify, in their local enrollment data, students eligible for direct certification. Respondents in Alabama and West Virginia indicated that their direct certification systems' success benefitted from positive, collaborative relationships between the SNAP and TANF agencies and the education agencies.

Relationships with Other Agencies

Most common practices

- Direct certification typically involves the State education agency, the State agency administering programs that confer categorical eligibility, and districts.

Key findings

- Productive interagency relationships are important components of effective direct certification systems.
- Formal data sharing agreements among participating agencies are nearly universal but can be challenging to execute in some cases.

Texas offered an exception to the two-agency model, incorporating three agencies into its direct certification system. The Texas Education Agency received program data from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and performed the match against its education enrollment data. It then forwarded the matched list to the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), which oversees the NSLP in Texas. TDA divided the list by school district and forwarded each district its matched list. Respondents in Texas reported that staff in the three agencies worked together effectively, citing it as a key reason for their strong direct certification performance.

Because the primary certification activities occur at the local level, State agencies have limited roles in local matching States. State agencies do perform essential functions in these systems, however. This study included only one local-level matching State, Connecticut, among the in-depth case studies. The primary State agency function in Connecticut's direct certification system in SY 2012–2013 was supplying the SNAP and TANF program data that districts use in their matching processes. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) provided to the Connecticut Department of Social Services (CTDSS) town codes corresponding to school districts. CTDSS staff used these codes to divide their SNAP and TANF program files geographically. They then posted the files on a secure web portal where districts could download them. CSDE notified the districts when the files were ready. Each district performed the direct certification matching according to locally determined algorithms and procedures. At the time of the case study, Connecticut planned to transition to a central matching system in SY 2013–2014. Table II.10 includes details on State agency roles in all seven case study States.

States use formal memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to manage the interagency operations involved in conducting direct certification. In SY 2012–2013, all central matching States and all but one local matching State had MOUs in place (Table II.11). All States interviewed as a part of the case study had MOUs with relevant agencies. Some States cited challenges in developing MOUs. For example, in Nebraska executing an MOU with the agency administering SNAP, TANF, and foster care took more than a year. In West Virginia, reaching an agreement to use foster care data in direct certification was difficult because of the perceived sensitivity of those data.

Table II.10. Interagency Operations in Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

State	State/Participating Agency	Summary of Agency Roles and Interaction
Alabama	Department of Human Resources (DHR)	DHR provides ALSDE monthly enrollment files for SNAP, TANF, and foster care. They move the enrollment files to a shared network location on the mainframe that houses both agencies' data and alert ALSDE staff that the files are available.
	State Department of Education (ALSDE)	ALSDE generates the statewide matched list each month and provides it to district child nutrition directors. ALSDE's data system automatically compares the DHR program enrollment files with the school enrollment data from the statewide student information system (iNOW) to create the matched list.
Arizona	Department of Economic Security (AZDES)	AZDES provides updated SNAP and TANF files to ADE every day through an automated system.
	Department of Education (ADE)	ADE matches the SNAP and TANF program data with statewide school enrollment data. Districts pull the matched list three times a year. ADE also provides training on the web portal and direct certification procedures for districts.
Connecticut	Department of Social Services (CTDSS)	CTDSS provides SNAP and TANF program data to all districts in the State three times a year. CTDSS staff filter the list by town code in order to send each district only its associated students.
	State Department of Education (CSDE)	CSDE provides CTDSS with lists of towns that correspond to each district. CSDE notifies districts when the files are ready to download and conducts administrative reviews of district matching performance.
Indiana	Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA)	FSSA provides monthly data files containing SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid information.
	Department of Education (IDOE)	IDOE houses the State's central direct certification system. IDOE conducts the matching process and makes the matched files available for districts to download.
Nebraska	Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)	DHHS set up an automated process that provides the Department of Education with daily files of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, and foster care participants.
	Department of Education (NDE)	NDE receives SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, and foster care data from DHHS and matches it daily with State school enrollment data. NDE sends lists of matched and partially matched students to districts daily. NDE also provides training and system documentation to district staff.
Texas	Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)	HHSC provides monthly SNAP and TANF data to TEA for direct certification matching.
	Texas Education Agency (TEA)	Each month, TEA matches monthly SNAP and TANF program data with annual statewide enrollment data. Once they create the matched list, they replace students' Social Security Numbers with student ID numbers and give the list to TDA.
	Department of Agriculture (TDA)	TDA splits the statewide matched list into district lists and sends each district a list of its directly certified students.
West Virginia	Department of Health and Human Services (DHHR)	DHHR provides the SNAP, TANF, and foster care data used for direct certification in West Virginia. SNAP and TANF data are integrated into the State's automatic direct certification system. DHHR transfers updated files to the Department of Education monthly via a file transfer protocol. Foster care data are updated monthly but are used in direct certification matching only once a year.
	Department of Education (WVDE)	WVDE conducts the direct certification matching for the State. WVDE receives updated SNAP and TANF files each month and matches them daily against updated school enrollment data. The system provides districts with lists of matched students as well as unmatched records that include matching scores. WVDE staff also provide regular direct certification training for district staff.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

ID = Identification; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Table II.11. State Use of Formal Data-Sharing Agreements, SY 2012–2013 (percentages)

	Central Matching States	Local Matching States
State Has Formal Data-Sharing Agreements with Agencies Participating in Direct Certification	100.0	92.9
Sample Size	37	14

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

III. DIRECT CERTIFICATION MATCHING PROCEDURES

Direct certification serves a straightforward purpose: to identify students eligible for school meal benefits without requiring an application. The methods States and districts use to achieve this goal, however, vary widely and can be quite complex. The primary data sets States use in direct certification vary in their sources and characteristics. Different States use different systems and interfaces to transfer and manipulate data. Each State maintains its own matching rules, including the frequency of matching as well as the specific data elements and algorithms used to identify matches. Some States calculate likelihood scores as part of probabilistic matching systems and define matches as scores that exceed a specified threshold. In addition to variation in core matching procedures, States and districts employ different techniques in extending categorical eligibility within households and have different methods of incorporating private and charter schools into direct certification systems.

In this chapter we discuss the range and variation of procedures States and districts use in direct certification. We begin with a discussion of school enrollment data followed by descriptions of the types of program data States used in the matching process. We then describe common matching procedures in place during SY 2012–2013, identifying patterns in central versus local matching systems. We discuss the prevalence of probabilistic matching, the methods for extending eligibility within households, the extent and nature of nonpublic school participation, and the data systems States and districts use to conduct direct certification. We conclude with a discussion of the feasibility of incorporating Medicaid data into direct certification.

A. Enrollment Data Used in Direct Certification

Effective direct certification requires accurate, up-to-date student information. If student enrollment data do not have accurate identifying information, it may not be possible to match the students to information on program participation. If the student enrollment data are not up to date, it might not be possible to directly certify newly enrolled students or transfers. The student enrollment data sources, systems, handling procedures, and content vary across States and sometimes across districts within States. In this section, we discuss how States and districts house and share their enrollment data, characteristics of Statewide Student Information Systems (SSIS), and challenges associated with enrollment data.

1. Enrollment Data Sources and Characteristics

Enrollment data needs vary based on whether States use central or local matching systems. With direct certification based on central matching, States must identify a means of obtaining information on students enrolled statewide, as well as a means to transfer enrollment data to the entity conducting direct certification matching. Nearly 80 percent of central matching States used SSIS for direct certification in SY 2012–2013 (Table III.1). In one-third of central matching States, no transfer of enrollment data was necessary, because the data were housed at the entity conducting matching. In other States, common methods for transferring enrollment data to the entity conducting matching included automated transfers and transfers via internet.

In local matching States, use of SSIS was much less common; only 29 percent of local matching States used SSIS as their enrollment data source. The most common source cited by local matching States is district-maintained electronic files. In half of local matching States, no transfer of enrollment data is necessary, because the data are housed at the entity conducing matching (the district).

Table III.1. Characteristics of Enrollment Data Used in Direct Certification (percentages)

	Central Matching States	Local Matching States
Source of Enrollment Data		
Statewide Student Information System	78.9	28.6
Electronic files maintained by State	2.6	0.0
Electronic files maintained by district	18.4	64.3
Hard-copy files	0.0	7.1
Method for Transferring Enrollment Data		
No transfer necessary; data housed at matching entity	33.3	50.0
Electronic files sent via automated process	36.1	28.6
Electronic files sent via internet	36.1	21.4
Hard-copy lists sent via mail	2.8	0.0
Other transfer methods	19.4	0.0
Sample Size	38	14

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

2. Statewide Student Information Systems

A well-developed SSIS can be an important precursor to successful direct certification systems, particularly for central matching States. Most States had an SSIS in place in SY 2012–2013. Only nine did not operate an SSIS, and of those, four had plans to implement one in the future (Table III.2). Consistent with the importance of SSIS for central matching, nearly 90 percent of central matching States had SSIS. SSIS were somewhat less common in local matching States: 64 percent had them.

Enrollment Data Used in Direct Certification

Common practices

- States using central matching usually use SSIS as their source for enrollment data; local matching States use other sources.

Key findings

- The frequency with which enrollment data are updated ranges considerably, from daily to once annually.
- In some States in which the SSIS are not updated immediately at the beginning of the school year, special procedures have been developed to allow districts to directly certify newly enrolled students.

SSIS provided broad coverage of districts and students within States operating them. SSIS included all public school students in all States that had the systems in place (Table III.2). Most charter school students were also included in SSIS, but most private school students were not.

Many States with SSIS updated enrollment data daily and most updated at least monthly; however, it was not uncommon to update less frequently. For example, 38 percent of central matching States with SSIS updated their data daily, and slightly more than half did so at least monthly (Table III.2). However, slightly less than half updated their data less frequently.

States have processes in place to assure the quality of enrollment data stored in SSIS. Almost all States with SSIS used automated validation rules and edit checks to assure data quality, and about one-third also used random sample audit checks (Table III.2).

Table III.2. Characteristics of Statewide Student Information Systems used in Direct Certification (percentages)

	Central Matching States	Local Matching States
Use of SSIS		
Uses SSIS for direct certification	78.4	14.3
SSIS in place but not used for direct certification	10.8	50.0
SSIS planned	2.7	21.4
No plans for SSIS	8.1	14.3
Among States with SSIS in Place		
SSIS assigns unique ID	100.0	100.0
Percentage of school districts included in SSIS	93.4	89.7
Percentage of students included in SSIS among		
Public school students	100.0	100.0
Charter school students	80.8	58.6
Private school students	19.2	0.7
Frequency SSIS enrollment data are updated		
Daily	38.7	83.3
Weekly	3.2	0.0
Monthly	9.7	0.0
Less than monthly, more than three times annually	16.1	16.7
Three times annually	16.1	0.0
Other frequency	16.1	0.0
Methods for entering data into SSIS		
Manual	35.5	28.6
District upload	87.1	71.4
Automated process	41.9	28.6
Methods for SSIS quality checks		
Automated validation rules and edit checks	93.3	100.0
Random sample audit checks	36.7	40.0
Outside contractor performs quality checks	16.7	0.0
Sample Size	37	14

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

3. Challenges with Enrollment Data

If enrollment data do not reflect the current set of students enrolled in each school, it may not be possible to match all students who are participating in programs that confer categorical eligibility. Infrequent updates to enrollment data may present challenges in directly certifying newly enrolled and transfer students. States interviewed as part of the in-depth case study provided valuable insight into these challenges, as described in Table III.3.

All interviewed States used student enrollment data from SSIS, but the frequency with which SSIS data were updated during the school year varied considerably. Alabama, Indiana, Nebraska, and West Virginia used enrollment data that were updated either daily or in real time during the school year. Arizona, Connecticut, and Texas used statewide enrollment data updated much less frequently, ranging from once to three times a year. States with daily enrollment data updates cited this feature as a strength of their systems. However, when districts initiate direct certification matching in Arizona they may use more current local enrollment data. Similarly, in Connecticut, districts control how current enrollment data are because the State uses local matching. West Virginia noted that a

Table III.3. Source and Quality of Enrollment Data Used in Direct Certification for Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

State	Description of Enrollment Data	Strengths and Challenges of Data
Alabama	All student data are contained in Alabama's Statewide Student Information System, iNOW. Data are maintained at the district level and replicated nightly to the State iNOW system.	Enrollment data are entered at the local level and include data entry that could lead to human error and inconsistent entries compared to program data.
Arizona	Districts update the SSIS with student enrollment data. The State requires districts to do so by the 40th day of the school year.	Data quality checks are performed on the format of the data used in matching. There are also data quality checks while performing the import process, detecting whether an incomplete file was received. However, some districts do not keep their local enrollment data up to date, which hinders accurate matching.
Connecticut	Each district maintains its own student enrollment system. Districts manually upload their enrollment files to the Department of Education's statewide student information system in June, October, and January.	Districts understand and have control of the enrollment data at the local level. However, Some districts' point-of-sale systems do not have real-time updates of data and include manual processes and nightly batch runs.
Indiana	Student enrollment data originate from local district systems. During the summer, districts must manually upload their local enrollment files to the SSIS to initiate the matching process. During the school year, the statewide system is updated in real time.	Student data in charter or parochial schools are not always high quality.
Nebraska	Enrollment data are incorporated into the direct certification process in two ways. Enrollment data from the current school year are available from the end of September. Before that time, districts may upload enrollment data into a separate system. Nonpublic schools may also upload enrollment data into this second system.	Dual enrollment systems allow newly enrolled students to be directly certified early in the year. However, districts do not always use the upload system early in the year.
Texas	Districts upload student enrollment date through the statewide student information system (PEIMS). State enrollment data are an October snapshot that becomes available in March of the following year.	Enrollment data from the current school year do not become available until March. Therefore data in the early school year do not reflect newly enrolled students or transfers, although kindergartners appear in the data due to universal preschool in Texas. The Education Agency removes duplications across districts during quality checks.
West Virginia	State enrollment data are stored in the WVSEIS, a comprehensive statewide system that tracks students in all districts.	Data are updated in real time throughout the school year. The student information, including direct certification status, is not lost when students transfer between districts.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

particular strength of their SSIS is that certification status of students is integrated into the statewide student and POS system. Therefore, the certification status of students who transfer within the State will be updated within one day of their transfer, and the student can quickly begin receiving the meal benefits to which they are entitled.

A challenge related to the frequency of enrollment data updates is capturing information for students who are newly enrolled at the beginning of the year, including students who are new to the school and all kindergartners. In the most extreme example, Texas enrollment data were updated once annually and made available in March after a lengthy quality assurance process. Therefore, direct certification matching conducted before March is based on enrollment data from the previous school year, and matching conducted after March is based on data that may be out of date by the time they are used for matching. The completeness of enrollment data used for matches early in the school year is aided by universal pre-kindergarten in Texas, which allows rising kindergartners to be included in the previous year's enrollment file used in initial matches. Somewhat similar to the SSIS in Texas, the SSIS in Nebraska and Indiana are not populated with current year enrollment data for the first month of the school year. However, both States have systems in place that allow districts to upload more current enrollment information before the SSIS is initially updated.

B. Program Data Used in Direct Certification

States must establish procedures to directly certify children from SNAP households. State child nutrition agencies must enter an agreement to obtain lists of school-aged SNAP participants from the relevant State agency. Central matching States use these lists to conduct direct certification matching; local matching States provide these lists to districts for matching.

Direct certification may be more effective in States that directly certify categorically eligible children other than SNAP participants, such as those from TANF and FDPIR households; foster children; participants in Federally funded Head Start or Even Start programs; and certain homeless, runaway, and migrant children. In SY 2012–2013, nearly 90 percent of States used program data sources in addition to SNAP (Table III.4). TANF was by far the most common additional program data source, followed by foster care and Medicaid.

Program Data Used in Direct Certification

Common practices

- States are required to use or provide SNAP records for direct certification, but most also use TANF records, and many use foster care records.

Key findings

- Program data are often provided through automated processes that require little or no staff maintenance time on the part of program data partners.
- Use of foster care records can contribute to increased numbers of directly certified students; one State reported that 7 percent of directly certified students were matched through foster care.

Direct certification may also be improved with more frequent updates to program data, which increases the chance that students who cycle on to eligible programs are directly certified as well as the chance that eligible students will be directly certified in a timely manner. This rest of this section discusses use of program data in direct certification, including sources of program data and the frequency at which those data are updated.

Table III.4. Program Data Used by States in Direct Certification (percentages)

	All States	Central Matching States	Local Matching States
TANF	86.5	86.8	85.7
FDPIR	7.7	10.5	0.0
Foster Care	30.8	31.6	28.6
Medicaid	9.6	2.6	28.6
Other Program Data Source Used	1.9	2.6	0.0
No Program Data Other than SNAP Used	11.5	13.2	7.1
Sample Size	52	38	14

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; FDPIR = Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

SNAP data. As noted above, all States are required to use SNAP data in direct certification. In most States, SNAP data used for direct certification were updated at least monthly. About one-fourth of States used SNAP data files that were updated at least weekly; all these States used central matching (Table III.5). A little more than 20 percent of States used files that were updated less often than monthly. Less frequent updates were more common for local matching States.

States interviewed as part of the case study noted that the frequency of program data updates depends largely on the technical capacity of the program data partner. Several States described automated program data transfer processes that require very little maintenance time for partner agency staff. For example, Nebraska received daily program data files delivered through a completely automated process from their Department of Health and Human Services. More details on data transfer procedures in interviewed States are in Table III.6.

TANF data. In SY 2012–2013, more than 80 percent of both central and local matching States used TANF data for direct certification matching (Table III.4). In most States, TANF data for direct certification were updated monthly. In almost one-quarter of central matching States (but in no local matching States), TANF data were updated daily. In about 10 percent of central matching States and 42 percent of local matching States, data were updated less frequently than monthly (Table III.5).

All case study States used TANF data in their direct certification matching processes (Table III.6). TANF data are typically housed by the same agency that administers SNAP, so there is little additional effort for the SNAP agency to produce and transfer data files containing both SNAP and TANF participants. However, SNAP participation is much more common than TANF participation, and most TANF participants also receive SNAP.

Foster care data. The most common additional program data source other than TANF was foster care. Almost one-third of States used foster care data for direct certification matching in SY 2012–2013 (Table III.4). In most States that used foster care data, the data were updated at least monthly (Table III.5).

Among case study States, Alabama, Indiana, Nebraska, and West Virginia used foster care data for direct certification and Arizona plans to incorporate foster care data in the near future (Table III.6). Officials in West Virginia noted that the agency that administers the foster care system regards those data as particularly sensitive and that negotiating an MOU for their use was challenging. In Nebraska, however, foster care data were able to be included in the same file SNAP and TANF participation data and under the same MOU. Officials in Nebraska noted the large

Table III.5. Frequency of State Program Data Updates in Direct Certification (percentages)

	All States	Central Matching States	Local Matching States
SNAP Program Data			
Frequency SNAP Data Are Updated			
Daily	17.6	24.3	0.0
Weekly	5.9	8.1	0.0
Monthly	54.9	51.4	64.3
Less than monthly, more than three times annually	7.8	8.1	7.1
Three times annually	13.7	8.1	28.6
TANF Program Data			
TANF Data Used in Direct Certification	86.5	86.8	85.7
Frequency TANF Data Are Updated if Used			
Daily	16.3	22.6	0.0
Weekly	7.0	9.7	0.0
Monthly	58.1	58.1	58.3
Less than monthly, more than three times annually	4.7	3.2	8.3
Three times annually	14.0	6.5	33.3
Foster Care Program Data			
Foster Care Data Used in Direct Certification	30.8	31.6	28.6
Frequency Foster Care Data Are Updated if Used			
Daily	12.5	16.7	0.0
Weekly	12.5	16.7	0.0
Monthly	56.3	50.0	75.0
Less than monthly, more than three times annually	6.3	0.0	25.0
Three times annually	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other frequency	12.5	16.7	0.0
FDPIR Program Data			
FDPIR Data Used in Direct Certification	7.7	10.5	0.0
Frequency FDPIR Data Are Updated if Used			
Weekly	25.0	25.0	- -
Monthly	50.0	50.0	- -
Other frequency	25.0	25.0	- -
Medicaid Program Data			
Medicaid Data Used in Direct Certification	9.6	2.6	28.6
Frequency Medicaid Data Are Updated if Used			
Monthly	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample Size	52	38	14

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; FDPIR = Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

benefit to using these data for direct certification. State documentation shows that about 7 percent of directly certified students were certified based on foster care data; 80 percent were directly certified based on SNAP and 13 percent based on TANF.

Table III.6. Source and Quality of Program Data Used in Direct Certification for Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

State/Program Data Type	Description of Program Data	Strengths and Challenges of Data
Alabama		
SNAP/TANF	The data include all statewide participants in SNAP and TANF between ages 4 and 19.	Data are entered in real time by county office staff. Data systems have field codes preventing some potential errors such as impossible dates. Data reside on same mainframe that the Department of Education uses, which simplifies the transfer process.
Foster Care	The data include all statewide participants of any age.	Data are entered in real time by county office staff. Data systems have field codes preventing some potential errors such as impossible dates. Data reside on same mainframe that the Department of Education uses, which simplifies the transfer process.
Arizona		
SNAP/TANF	The data include school-age participants through age 21 with indicators for SNAP and TANF participation.	The Department of Economic Security performs quality checks before exporting the data. They export the data to the Department of Education every day, though the data are not necessarily updated every day.
Connecticut		
SNAP/TANF	The data include all SNAP and TANF participants between ages 3 and 18.	The data do not contain indicators distinguishing SNAP and TANF participation.
Indiana		
SNAP/TANF	Monthly data include participants between ages 3 and 21.	File includes duplicate records for participants in SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid. These duplicates are handled in the matching process.
Foster Care	Program data updated monthly.	Data provided by a different agency from the one that provides SNAP and TANF data.
Nebraska		
SNAP/TANF	Program data updated daily.	File transfer process is completely automated and requires virtually no staff maintenance time.
Foster Care	Program data updated daily.	Data provided by the same agency that provides SNAP and TANF data as a part of the same file.
Texas		
SNAP/TANF	Program data updated monthly.	The only unique identifier common across all data sets is Social Security Number. State staff would prefer to use a different data element, but there is no suitable alternative.
West Virginia		
SNAP/TANF	The data include all individuals aged 4 to 18 on either program as of the second Saturday in the month. The file includes indicators of SNAP or TANF participation.	The timing of the file update is designed for maximum accuracy. Closed cases are dropped on the second Friday of each month; the file is created the following day. The eligibility system automatically removes duplicate records before transferring the file to the Department of Education.
Foster Care	A data file of statewide foster care children is provided monthly.	Foster care data are not matched through the same system used for SNAP and TANF data. Although the data are available monthly, they are matched only once before the start of the school year.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Other program data sources. Few States used statewide data from other programs during SY 2012–2013. About 10 percent of States participated in the Medicaid demonstration, incorporating data from that program into their direct certification matching process.[17] Demonstration participants included both central and local matching States (Table III.4). Among these, all but one State used data updated monthly (Table III.5). Only four States used FDPIR data for direct certification during SY 2012–2013, all central matching States (Table III.4). No case study States used Medicaid or FDPIR data for direct certification in SY 2012–2013 (Table III.6).

Although use of statewide program data sources other than SNAP, TANF, and foster care is not common, it is possible that districts are using local information on participation in additional programs. For example, officials in West Virginia indicated that in processing lists of students who were not matched centrally, districts may review local information that is not available at the State level, such as homeless liaison and runaway student lists.

C. Direct Certification Matching Frequency

Frequently updated program and enrollment data improve direct certification performance only if they are accompanied by frequent data matching. In SY 2012–2103, the frequency of direct certification matching ranged from three times annually—the minimum mandated by FNS—to daily. More frequent matching might cause more students to receive meal benefits without having to submit an application. It also might improve States' direct certification performance measures. Frequent data matching may be particularly useful for reestablishing eligibility for students whose certification status is not carried over when transferring between districts.

In SY 2012–2013, a large majority of States and districts—87 percent of central matching States and almost three-quarters of districts in local matching States—conducted the initial match prior to the start of the school year (Table III.7). In central matching States, frequent matching was common. Nearly 70 percent of central matching States conducted matches at least monthly, and about 20 percent did so daily. Matching was conducted less frequently in districts in local matching States; only about a third of districts conducted matches at least monthly.

Direct Certification Matching Frequency

Common practices

- A large majority of central matching States conduct matching at least monthly, whereas matching was often conducted less frequently in local matching States.

Key findings

- States conducting daily matching cite match frequency as a key strength of their direct certification systems.

[17] For more information on the Medicaid demonstration, see Section IV.I below.

Table III.7. Timing of Initial Direct Certification Match and Frequency and Process for Subsequent Matches (percentages)

	Central Matching States	Districts in Local Matching States
Initial Match Conducted Before the Start of the School Year	86.8	72.8
Frequency of Subsequent Matches		
Daily	21.1	7.7
Weekly	7.9	0.5
Monthly	39.5	24.0
Less than monthly, more than three times annually	5.3	8.0
Three times annually	13.2	36.1
Two times annually	7.9	17.3
Other frequency	5.3	6.3
Newly Enrolled Students Matched Through Individual Lookup	23.7	37.0
Enrollment Data Used in Subsequent Matches		
All students	57.9	50.4
Newly enrolled students	36.8	17.0
Students not previously certified	50.0	22.0
Enrollment data updated less frequently than matching conducted	5.3	0.0
Sample Size	38	2,926

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

States included in the in-depth case study reflected the full range of match frequency observed nationally; two States used daily matching, two used monthly matching, one matched at the minimum frequency, and for the remaining two States, match frequency was determined by districts (Table III.8). States conducting daily matches (Nebraska and West Virginia) cited frequent matching as a key strength of their systems. During case study interviews, respondents in most States reported that they either planned to match more frequently or would like to. Indiana and Connecticut both had concrete plans to increase the frequency of matching. In SY 2012–2013, the match frequency in Indiana depended on how often districts initiated the matching process. In 2013–2014, Indiana will begin automatic Statewide monthly matching. Connecticut will use weekly matching when its central matching system is introduced in 2015. Staff in Arizona and Alabama expressed interest in matching more frequently but did not have plans to do so. Staff in Alabama cited technological and resources constraints as barriers to more frequent matching.

D. Direct Certification Matching Procedures

In directly certifying students, States and districts apply algorithms matching children with data in two or more data sets. These algorithms apply a set of matching rules to elements common across enrollment and program data sources. Direct certification matching algorithms must strike a balance between the risks of false positives and those of false negatives. If the algorithm includes overly stringent requirements to identify matches, it may fail to directly certify students who are entitled to free school meals. If the algorithm has overly lax match requirements, it may directly certify students who are not entitled to school meal benefits.

In this section, we describe the matching rules and algorithms used in central matching States and in districts in local matching States. We begin by describing the data elements used in matching algorithms and then discuss the types of features common to central and local matching systems.

Table III.8. Frequency of Direct Certification Matching in Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

State	Frequency of Matching	Prospects for More Frequent Matching
Alabama	Monthly	Moving from monthly matching to real-time matching would require significant technological upgrades. It would be a desirable change but is not likely in the near term.
Arizona	At least three times per year	Districts are required to match three times a year but can match as any times as needed. State staff expressed a desire to match more frequently, but there are no concrete plans to do so.
Connecticut	District discretion	Districts are provided with program data three times per year. When the State transitions to a central matching system in 2015, they will increase the frequency to weekly.
Indiana	At least three times per year	Districts are instructed to initiate matching at least three times per year. Beginning in SY 2013–2014, the State will conduct automatic monthly matching.
Nebraska	Daily	Matching occurs at the maximum frequency.
Texas	Monthly	Texas has no plans to increase the frequency of matching.
West Virginia	Daily	Matching occurs daily with continuously updated enrollment data, but program data are updated only monthly. West Virginia plans to increase the frequency at which enrollment data are updated.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

1. Data Elements Used in Matching

States and districts select data elements for use in direct certification matching based on their ability to uniquely identify students and their availability in both enrollment and program data. One of the most compelling matching data elements is student Social Security Number (SSN), which uniquely identifies individuals and therefore can be used to match students with high accuracy even with simple matching techniques. However, some States prohibit the use of SSNs as identifiers in educational databases. In SY 2012–2013, about half of central matching States used SSNs in their matching process (Table III.9). Use of SSNs is much more common in local matching States, of which about three-quarters reported including SSNs in the SNAP files provided to districts (Table III.10), and in which 56 percent of districts reported using SSNs in their matching process (Table III.9). The general availability of SSNs in local matching States may help districts conduct efficient and accurate matching without developing highly sophisticated matching algorithms.

Direct Certification Matching procedures

Common practices

- First name, last name, and date of birth are used almost universally as matching identifiers.
- Most systems require three or more identifiers to match and allow inexact matches on some elements.

Key findings

- SSN is a common identifier in local matching States, which may contribute to districts' ability to conduct accurate matching without sophisticated matching algorithms.
- Central matching States typically have a process in which potential matches are investigated further; this investigation is often done by districts.

Among central matching States, the most common data elements used in direct certification matching in SY 2012–2013 were first name, last name, and date of birth: each was used in 95

Table III.9. Data Elements Used for Direct Certification Matching (percentages)

	Central Matching States		Districts in Local Matching States	
	Used in Matching Process	Required to Be Used in Matching Process	Used in Matching Process	Required to Be Used in Matching Process
Student Data Elements				
SSN	50.0	23.7	57.6	30.9
First name	94.7	68.4	97.1	81.4
Phonetic first name	68.4	34.2	40.5	9.3
Middle name	65.8	15.8	70.6	22.3
Phonetic middle name	50.0	15.8	36.1	3.9
Last name	94.7	65.8	98.0	86.8
Phonetic last name	64.9	29.7	36.3	6.2
Date of birth	94.7	76.3	89.6	64.6
Gender	65.8	31.6	56.5	26.8
Street address	43.2	13.5	77.4	41.3
City	50.0	18.4	79.3	45.7
County	22.2	8.3	58.0	27.7
Zip code	45.9	13.5	76.6	47.1
Phone number	16.2	5.4	38.9	8.5
School name	40.5	8.1	51.1	24.4
SNAP or other program ID	43.2	10.8	59.7	30.3
Parent Data Elements				
SSN	13.5	5.4	44.2	19.4
First name	37.8	13.5	76.7	51.4
Phonetic first name	27.8	11.1	34.1	4.9
Middle name	22.2	5.6	54.7	15.9
Phonetic middle name	18.9	5.4	31.4	3.2
Last name	37.8	13.5	78.4	55.3
Phonetic last name	27.8	11.1	32.9	4.1
Date of birth	11.1	2.8	35.7	12.7
Sample Size	38	38	2,882	2,882

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; SSN = Social Security number.

Table III.10. SNAP Data Available for Direct Certification Matching (percentages)

	All States	Central Matching States	Local Matching States
Student Data Elements			
SSN	55.1	47.2	76.9
First name	100.0	100.0	100.0
Middle name	84.8	82.4	91.7
Last name	100.0	100.0	100.0
Date of birth	100.0	100.0	100.0
Gender	71.1	76.5	54.5
Street address	63.6	57.6	81.8
City	68.9	60.6	91.7
County	45.2	36.7	66.7
Zip code	69.8	62.5	90.9
Phone number	19.4	24.1	0.0
School name	40.0	45.5	14.3
SNAP or other program ID	45.2	40.6	60.0
Parent Data Elements			
SSN	13.2	13.8	11.1
First name	51.2	45.5	70.0
Middle name	41.9	36.4	60.0
Last name	51.2	45.5	70.0
Date of birth	8.1	7.1	11.1
Sample Size	51	37	14

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; SSN = Social Security number.

percent of such States (Table III.9). Other common data elements include phonetic first name, phonetic last name, middle name, and gender, each of which was used in about two-thirds of central matching States. The most common data elements that were required to be included in the matching process were first name, last name, and date of birth.

As in central matching States, nearly all districts in local matching States used first and last name and date of birth in their matching processes (Table III.9). However, districts in local matching States were much less likely to use phonetic names as matching criteria: less than 10 percent did so. This finding is consistent with districts being less likely than States to conduct technically sophisticated manipulations of names, such as with Soundex or metaphone. Other common elements used by districts in local matching States were parent first and last name as well as address; these variables were each used in more than three-quarters of districts.

Data elements used in the direct certification matching processes of States interviewed in the case study reflect the range of elements used nationally (Table III.11). All seven States used last name and date of birth, and six use first name; four of the seven States used SSN. Procedures for utilizing these elements in matching are discussed in the next section.

Table III.11. Data Elements Used in Direct Certification Matching for Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

	Alabama	Arizona	Connecticut	Indiana	Nebraska	Texas	West Virginia
First Name		●	○	●	○	○	○
Last Name	○	●	○	●	○	○	○
Date of Birth	○	●	○	●	○	○	○
SSN	●	○				○	○
Address			○				
Gender			○		○	○	
Zip Code			○				
County				●			
Parents' Names			○				

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

Note: Connecticut uses a local matching system and therefore does not specify which data elements districts are required to use in identifying matches; items listed here correspond to items included in the program data files provided to districts.

○ = Exact match can be used in identifying a definite match; inexact match can be used to identify a potential match.

● = An exact match is required for the given field.

No symbol indicates that the criterion is not used or not available.

2. Direct Certification Matching Procedures

In addition to matching on different data elements, direct certification systems vary in their matching procedures. Each central matching State and district in local matching States determines its own matching algorithm. Some systems require exact matches on data elements; others allow inexact matches. Some matching systems have procedures in place for dealing with potential matches, unmatched records, and duplicates; others do not. In this section, we describe some of the variation in matching procedures, focusing on differences between central and local matching systems.

Virtually all central matching States require a minimum number of matching elements for students to be directly certified; almost 80 percent require at least three data elements to match (Table III.12). At the same time, more than three quarters of central matching States allow inexact or near matches on some data elements, such as Soundex or metaphone transformations of names. More than a quarter of central matching States used probabilistic matching, which is discussed in greater detail in the next section. Most central matching States examined potential matches, though among States that did so, it was most commonly a district function. Half of central matching States examined records of children not matched in the primary matching process. More than half of central matching States investigated duplicate matches by examining additional information. An additional 32 percent identified all duplicates as matches.

Table III.12. Features of Direct Certification Matching Procedures (percentages)

	Central Matching States	Districts in Local Matching States
Minimum Number of Matching Elements		
No specific number of matching elements required	5.3	22.5
1	5.3	13.4
2	10.5	22.4
3	47.4	29.2
More than 3	31.6	12.6
Allow Inexact or Near Matching on Some Elements	76.3	65.0
Use Probabilistic Matching	28.9	9.1
Examine Potential Matches		
State or district examines potential matches	65.8	44.7
State examines potential matches	21.1	0.0
District examines potential matches	42.1	42.1
State and district both examine potential matches	5.3	0.0
Other method	7.9	2.6
Examine Records Not Matched in Primary Process		
Using any method	50.0	60.8
Examine manually	18.4	55.1
Examine via computer	47.4	24.1
Process for Duplicate Matches		
Duplicate matches do not occur	10.5	27.8
Identify all duplicate students as matches	31.6	20.4
Identify first duplicate student as match	5.3	0.0
Use additional information to Identify matches	55.3	53.6
Notify students' parents	7.9	8.8
Identify none of the students as matches	5.3	1.7
Sample Size	**38**	**2,926**

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

Matching systems in local matching districts resembled those in central matching States in many respects. More than three quarters of districts required a minimum level of matching elements, though they were less likely than central matching States to require three or more data elements (42 percent compared with 79 percent, Table III.12). Most allowed inexact or near matches on some data elements. Like central matching systems, most district-based systems examined additional information to reconcile duplicate matches. Local matching systems differed from central systems, most notably in the more sophisticated elements of direct certification. District-based systems were much less likely than centralized systems to use probabilistic matching (9 percent compared with 29 percent). Districts were also more likely than central matching States to examine unmatched records using manual processes (55 percent compared with 18 percent).

Most central matching case study States identified definite matches centrally and then allowed districts to identify additional matches (Table III.13). There was variation in this pattern, however. On one end of the continuum, Alabama, after performing a simple match, allowed districts to identify additional matches using the statewide program participation data file. Indiana, Nebraska,

Table III.13. Direct Certification Matching Rules in Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

State	Summary of Matching Algorithm	Approach to Partial Matches	Approach to Unmatched Records
Alabama	The State directly certifies students if their Social Security Number and either their last name or date of birth exactly match between the statewide enrollment data and the SNAP, TANF, or foster care program data.	Optional at the district level. The State does not identify partial matches.	Optional at the district level. The State does not investigate unmatched records.
Arizona	The State has a number of options on matching: (1) exact match on first name, last name, and date of birth; (2) exact match on SSN; (3) exact match on SAIS (school ID) number; or (4) or SNAP/TANF case number.	The State does not identify partial matches.	There is no process for reviewing unmatched records.
Connecticut	Varies by district.	Varies by district.	Varies by district.
Indiana	Indiana requires exact matches of first name, last name, date of birth, and county.	The State provides districts with a list of students who match on first name, last name, date of birth, but not county.	Districts may attempt to match unmatched records using State-generated lists.
Nebraska	The State directly certifies students who exactly match on first name, last name, date of birth, and gender. Potential matches are identified with a probabilistic matching algorithm.	Districts attempt to match partially matched students.	There is no process for reviewing unmatched records.
Texas	The state directly certifies students if they match exactly on four of the following criteria: SSN, date of birth, first name, last name, gender.	Beginning in SY 2013–2014 districts will be able to attempt to certify partial matches.	Beginning in SY 2013–2014 districts will be able to attempt to match these students.
West Virginia	West Virginia directly certifies students who exactly match on SSN or an exact match on first name, last name, and date of birth. Name matches can be by spelling or Soundex. Potential matches are identified with a probabilistic matching algorithm.	Districts attempt to match partially matched students.	Districts attempt to match unmatched students.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

SAIS = Student Accountability Information System; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; SSN = Social Security Number TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

and West Virginia offered more structure to districts. After performing the central match, all three States provided lists of partially matched students that districts could use to attempt to identify additional matches; in Indiana this list included students that matched on all fields except county, while the lists in Nebraska and West Virginia allowed for more diverse types of partial matches (discussed in the next section on probabilistic matching). Indiana and West Virginia also generated lists of unmatched children that districts could use to identify additional matches. To limit the distribution of sensitive personal data, Nebraska did not provide lists of unmatched children to districts. At the other end of the continuum, Arizona and Texas did not have a process for districts to examine partial matches or unmatched children. In addition to protecting sensitive information, restricting district access to lists of children other than definite matches may limit false positives in

the matching process. Texas planned to begin providing districts with lists of partially matched and unmatched children beginning in SY 2013–2014.

E. Probabilistic Matching

Some direct certification systems use matching algorithms to calculate a score that indicates how likely a match is to be accurate. This process, called probabilistic matching, allows matches to be made for cases with minor data quality problems. Probabilistic matching procedures may award higher scores for pairs in which more data elements match. They may also award points for data elements that are near matches, such as names that are spelled differently but sound alike or dates in which months and days have been inverted.

Direct Certification Matching Procedures

Common practices

- Probabilistic matching is used by only 29 percent of central matching States and 9 percent of districts in local matching States.

Key findings

- Central matching States often use probabilistic match scores to identify not only matches but also potential matches that must be investigated further.
- Probabilistic match scores may increase the number of directly certified students while minimizing burden; the scores allow investigation of unmatched records while prioritizing potential matches most likely to be legitimate.

Probabilistic matching results can be used to directly certify students or to identify potential matches requiring manual review before certification. These strategies are not mutually exclusive. Systems may set two thresholds, one that identifies potential matches and a higher one that directly certifies students without requiring manual review. As noted in the previous section, 29 percent of central matching States and 9 percent of districts in local matching States use probabilistic matching (Table III.14). Among central matching States using probabilistic matching, 42 percent use probabilistic matching scores both to identify matches and to identify potential matches that must be investigated further before determining their final status. An equal percentage of central matching States use probabilistic matching scores only to identify matches, and 17 percent use such scores only to identify possible matches. Among local matching States, it was less common to use probabilistic matching for identification of both matches and potential matches: only 8 percent did so. The rest of districts in local matching States using probabilistic matching were evenly split between using such matching only to identify matches and using it only to identify potential matches.

Two case study States provide examples of how probabilistic matching is used in practice. Nebraska and West Virginia both conduct a round of deterministic matching that identifies a list of definite matches and then use probabilistic matching to identify potential matches that require additional review.

Table III.14. Probabilistic Matching Procedures (percentages)

	Central Matching States Using Probabilistic Matching	Districts Using Probabilistic Matching in Local Matching States
Use Probabilistic Matching	28.9	9.1
Among States Using Probabilistic Matching		
Probabilistic matching scores are used		
Only to identify matches	36.4	45.6
Only to identify potential matches to be investigated further	18.2	45.8
To identify both matches and potential matches	45.5	8.6
Sample Size	38	2,800

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

In Nebraska, definite matches require an exact match on first name, last name, date of birth, and gender. All definite matches are included on a list of students to be directly certified. The direct certification system in Nebraska also uses Microsoft fuzzy logic to identify potential matches among students who match or nearly match on some, but not all, elements. Districts are given lists of potential matches for further investigation and can also enter additional information through the individual lookup system to receive an updated probabilistic match score.

In West Virginia, definite matches require a exact match on SSN or a match on Soundex first name, last name, birth day, birth month and birth year. All definite matches are directly certified in the State POS system. Districts are given a list that contains the names of students who match on some data elements, as well as additional student information not included in the match and a match score proportional to the number of data elements that matched. Districts can use these scores to prioritize reconciliation of their list of potential matches. Districts investigate whether these potential matches are legitimate and mark the final direct certification determination in the State POS.

F. Extending Categorical Eligibility

In August 2010, FNS implemented a policy to extend categorical eligibility for free meals to all children in households receiving assistance from SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR. Most matching systems had procedures in place to extend eligibility to additional children in households in SY 2012–2013: only 5 percent of central matching States and 11 percent of districts in local matching States lack such procedures. Central matching States were most likely to extend eligibility through notification letters informing families of their children's eligibility, with about 60 percent doing so. It was also common for central matching States to extend eligibility to students sharing the same parent or guardian as eligible students, or to students sharing the same address as eligible students. Districts in local matching States were about equally likely to extend eligibility with these three methods, with around 45 percent using each. (Table III.15).

Extending Categorical Eligibility

Common practices

- The most common strategy for extending eligibility is revising notification letters informing families of their children's eligibility to indicate that all children in the household are eligible for meal benefits.

Key findings

- Districts are typically given primary responsibility for extending eligibility, even in central matching States.

Table III.15. Process for Extending Eligibility to Additional Children in Household (percentages)

	Central Matching States	Districts in Local Matching States
Procedures for Extending Eligibility		
Notification letters inform of eligibility of other children	59.5	43.4
Students with same parent/guardian are directly certified	32.4	46.5
Students with same address are directly certified	37.8	43.2
No procedures implemented	5.4	11.2
Barriers to Extending Eligibility		
Interpreting policy	8.8	10.6
Developing process for identifying children	47.1	39.7
Lack of technological resources	38.2	19.4
No barriers	23.5	44.9
Planned Changes for Extending Eligibility		
Notification letters inform of eligibility of other children	26.7	38.3
Certify students with same parent/guardian	46.7	41.8
Certify students with same address	66.7	56.5
Sample Size	37	2,805

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

Central matching States were more likely than districts in local matching States to report barriers to extending eligibility to other children in eligible households. Developing processes for identifying eligible children was the most common barrier cited by respondents from both central and local matching systems. Respondents from central matching States also commonly cited lack of technological resources as a barrier (Table III.15).

In five of seven States interviewed as part of the case study, templates for certification notification letters have been revised to notify parents that other children in their household are eligible for free meals (Table III.16). However, the primary responsibility for extending eligibility lies with districts in most interviewed States. This includes the local matching State and five of the six central matching States. These States indicated that their data systems do not have the necessary information to develop automated processes for extending eligibility. However, two States have been able to develop centralized eligibility extension processes. In Indiana, the State provides districts with a list of unmatched children who share SNAP case numbers with matched children; if these children appear in district enrollment data, they are eligible for direct certification. Although this new system feature was potentially useful, neither Indiana district interviewed as part of the case study was making use of it. In West Virginia, the State flags unmatched students whose address is an exact match for the address of a matched student. Districts are instructed to evaluate whether these potential household members are eligible for extension of categorical eligibility.

G. Approach to Nonpublic Schools

Nonpublic and charter schools present special challenges for the direct certification process. Although all districts participating in the school meals programs are mandated to use direct certification, nonpublic and charter schools tend to be small and may not perceive direct certification to be a worthwhile use of time. This may be particularly true in nonpublic schools with student bodies that include few students categorically eligible for free meals. In central matching States, nonpublic and charter schools may not have enrollment data that are easily incorporated into the enrollment data used by the central matching system.

Table III.16. Procedures for Extending Eligibility to Household Members in Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

State	Summary of Procedures to Extend Eligibility
Alabama	Districts have primary responsibility for extending eligibility. State certification notification letter template notifies households of eligibility of other children in household.
Arizona	Districts have primary responsibility for extending eligibility.
Connecticut	Districts have primary responsibility for extending eligibility.
Indiana	State provides districts with lists of students potentially eligible for eligibility extension; children from this list are those who share a SNAP case number with a child who was matched but who were not matched themselves. Many districts use local student information systems to identify siblings and extend eligibility. State certification notification letter template notifies households of eligibility of other children in household.
Nebraska	Districts have primary responsibility for extending eligibility. State certification notification letter template notifies households of eligibility of other children in household.
Texas	This is done at the district level, either through PEIMS or through local student information and POS systems. State certification notification letter template notifies households of eligibility of other children in household.
West Virginia	West Virginia can identify other eligible household members by matching exactly on address in the Statewide POS system. District staff can also reference applications from previous years to identify these individuals. State certification notification letter template notifies households of eligibility of other children in household.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

PEIMS = Public Education Information Management System; POS = point-of-sale; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

In most States, all charter schools participated in direct certification in SY 2012–2103 (Table III.17). In most of the remaining States, at least some charter schools participated. There were only two States in which no charter schools participated.

Local matching States were much more likely than central matching States to report that all private schools participated in direct certification. Similar proportions of central and local matching States reported that no private schools participated.

Reasons nonpublic schools did not participate varied by matching system type (Table III.17). Central matching States with nonparticipating nonpublic schools most commonly cited lack of access to enrollment data as a barrier. Few central matching States and no local matching States cited the lack of a participation requirement or a limited number of eligible students as reasons nonpublic schools did not participate.

Approach to Nonpublic Schools

Common practices

- Most private and charter schools participate in direct certification, as mandated by law.

Key findings

- Central matching States often find incorporating private schools into the central direct certification system to be challenging because the schools' enrollment data are not included in the SSIS.
- Individual student lookup and features that allow batch upload of enrollment lists are some strategies for mitigating the direct certification challenges posed by private schools.

Several States interviewed as part of the case study were able to incorporate private schools directly into the direct certification process used for public schools or to develop alternative electronic matching processes for private schools (Table III.18). In Nebraska, private schools can

Table III.17. Direct Certification Procedures in Nonpublic Schools (percentages)

	Central Matching States	Local Matching States
Participation of Charter Schools in Direct Certification		
All participate	60.5	57.1
Some participate	15.8	21.4
None participate	2.6	7.1
There are no charter schools	21.1	14.3
Participation of Private Schools in Direct Certification		
All participate	34.2	71.4
Some participate	47.4	14.3
None participate	18.4	14.3
There are no private schools	0.0	0.0
Reason Some Nonpublic Schools Do Not Participate		
All nonpublic schools participate	34.2	71.4
No access to enrollment data	26.3	0.0
State does not require participation	10.5	0.0
Too few students likely to be eligible	7.9	0.0
Other reason	36.8	28.6
No nonpublic schools	0.0	0.0
Procedures for Charter Schools		
Submit enrollment data to state for matching	58.6	9.1
Use State-maintained individual student lookup	20.7	9.1
Submit data to nearby district for matching	3.4	18.2
Access statewide program data and perform match locally	24.1	45.5
Access local program data and perform match locally	3.4	9.1
Procedures for Private Schools		
Submit enrollment data to state for matching	51.6	16.7
Use State-maintained individual student lookup	25.8	16.7
Submit data to nearby district for matching	0.0	8.3
Access statewide program data and perform match locally	32.3	33.3
Access local program data and perform match locally	6.5	16.7
Sample Size	38	14

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

Table III.18. Direct Certification Methods in Nonpublic Schools in Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

State	Summary of Procedures
Alabama	Private schools in Alabama do not use the statewide student enrollment system. To conduct direct certification, private school staff download the State's matched list every month and manually compare it with their local enrollment data.
Arizona	Private schools upload the student first name, last name, and date of birth in order to match. Private school student information is not captured in State SSIS
Connecticut	Individual private schools in the NSLP participate in direct certification the same way as public school districts. They receive SNAP/TANF file directly from CTDSS and perform the matching.
Indiana	Private schools may upload enrollment data to the State direct certification system and may also use the individual student lookup feature.
Nebraska	Private schools may upload enrollment data to the State direct certification system through a web-based interface. They may also use the individual student lookup feature.
Texas	Private schools do not participate in direct certification but will start in SY 2013–2014.
West Virginia	Most of the 30 private schools in West Virginia participate in direct certification using the same matching system that public schools use. Private schools upload enrollment data to the State annually. Private schools may also conduct manual matches using lists provided by the State that contain unmatched children in the private school's county.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

CTDSS = Connecticut Department of Social Services; NSLP = National School Lunch Program; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; SSIS = Statewide Student Information System; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

upload a formatted enrollment file and conduct matching with the same Statewide SNAP, TANF and foster care data used with public schools. Private schools also have access to Nebraska's individual student lookup feature. Similarly, private schools in Indiana can upload enrollment data to a State matching system or use the individual student lookup feature. West Virginia has also developed a mechanism to work around the fact that private school enrollment data are not in the SSIS; schools can upload enrollment information through a software product that allows matching in the State's usual direct certification matching system. Private schools can also access the list of unmatched children from the program data for the county in which the school is located. In Connecticut and Arizona, private schools who are in NSLP participate the same way as public school districts either by getting a list of SNAP and TANF children in their county as in Connecticut or uploading student information into the central matching system as they do in Arizona.

In some case study States, private schools had to use less efficient procedures than public schools in order to participate in direct certification in SY 2012-2013. In Alabama, for instance, private schools were not part of the statewide student enrollment system and had to conduct direct certification matching manually. Private schools did not participate in direct certification in Texas in SY 2012–2013, though they were expected to do so in future school years.

H. Direct Certification Systems

Software and technological infrastructure allow direct certification matching algorithms to be implemented, ensure that data security is maintained, and provide the means for users to complete their roles in the direct certification process. In this section, we describe the technology and types of interfaces used for these functions.

In SY 2012–2013, 70 percent of central matching States implemented their matching algorithm with in-house software, such as programs developed by State IT staff (Table III.19). Less than one-third of central matching States used third-party software to conduct matching. After conducting the match, a large majority of central matching States communicated the results by posting them to a secure server or State system that can be accessed by districts. More than three-fourths of central matching States used this method, whereas another 16 percent sent electronic direct certification files by email to districts, and about 11 percent sent match results through the mail (Table III.19). Arizona noted that giving the districts the ability to look up individual students at any time allows them to directly certify new and incoming students prior to having to complete the required direct certification matches, thus assisting in getting school meal benefits to students more quickly and efficiently.

Table III.19. Interface for Direct Certification System (percentages)

	Central Matching States	Districts in Local Matching States
Type of Software Used for Matching		
In-house software	69.7	8.2
Third-party software specifically for direct certification	9.1	34.4
Third-party software not specifically for direct certification	18.2	57.3
Combination of in-house and third-party software	3.0	0.0
Process for Communicating Match Results		
Hard copy lists	7.9	—
Data disks sent via mail	2.6	—
Electronic files sent via email	15.8	—
Results posted on secure server or updated on state system	78.9	—
Sample Size	38	627

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

In contrast to central matching States, a very large majority of districts in local matching States used third-party software to conduct matching; less than 10 percent used software developed in-house (Table III.19). About one-third of districts used third-party software specifically designed for direct certification matching. Because matching is conducted by districts in local matching States, no process to communicate match results is necessary.

States interviewed as part of the case study emphasized the importance of the user-friendliness of their direct certification system interfaces for facilitating districts' proper use of system features. Six of the seven interviewed States use web-based interfaces with password protection (Table III.20). Indiana, Nebraska, and West Virginia all pointed out that a web-based approach not only enables districts to use the direct certification system without technological upgrades, but also allows revision of the interface in response to user feedback.

After downloading direct certification information from the State—match results for central matching States and program data files for the local matching State—districts in six of the seven States must incorporate this information into their local POS system. The lone exception was West Virginia, which uses a Statewide POS. West Virginia districts do not have to complete additional steps to finalize direct certification of definite matches, though they do have to process potential and unmatched records. These extra processing steps take place directly in the State's POS system.

Table III.20. User Interface of Direct Certification Systems for Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

State	Type of User Interface	Process for Integrating Match Results into Local Records	Data Security Measures
Alabama	Student enrollment data are stored in iNOW. iNOW is housed on the same State mainframe as the program participation data. Districts access matching results through a secure VPN.	Districts download file from secure VPN, load it into local POS systems, and match it with their local enrollment records.	Secure VPN
Arizona	Districts download the matched list at least three times a year through the State's web portal.	Districts download matched files of their students and load them into their POS systems.	Districts access matches and upload information through secure common logon using a username and password.
Connecticut	Districts download SNAP/TANF data through secure website.	The downloaded program data are matched with student enrollment files through the districts POS systems, another standalone system, or manually.	Password-protected website.
Indiana	The State system uses a web interface.	Districts download matched files of their students and load them into their POS systems.	Password-protected website.
Nebraska	The State system uses a web interface.	Districts download matched files of their students and load them into their POS systems.	Password-protected website.
Texas	Districts download the matched list through the State's web portal.	Each month, districts download the matched list only for their district. District staff load the list into their local POS system and match it with their local enrollment records.	Private IT contractors sign annual confidentiality agreements. The Education Agency removes student Social Security Numbers from the matched list after using them to conduct match.
West Virginia	Each district uses the central POS system which has a web interface.	Matched and unmatched lists can be viewed through the system. They use lists of unmatched and partially matched students to identify other eligible students in their enrollment files.	Password-protected website. The State maintains county data in separate libraries, so counties have access only to their own data.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

IT = information technology; POS = point-of-sale; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; VPN = virtual private network

I. Feasibility of Using Medicaid Data for Direct Certification

Beginning in SY 2012–2013, FNS authorized demonstrations in which States and districts could use Medicaid data to directly certify students for free school meals. The demonstrations built on interagency relationships and existing processes in using Medicaid data to verify school meal benefit applications. Having data exchange agreements and processes between the Medicaid agency and the agency conducting direct certification in place would ease a transition into using Medicaid data for

direct certification. In this section, we describe the feasibility of incorporating Medicaid data into direct certification matching based on these elements.

In SY 2012–2013, few States appeared well positioned to incorporate Medicaid data into direct certification. For example, only 3 percent of central matching States reported that all children eligible for Medicaid would also be eligible for free school meals; the figure was 17 percent in local matching States (Table III.21). Only 16 percent of central matching States and 21 percent of local matching States used Medicaid data for direct verification.

Feasibility of Using Medicaid Data

Common practices

- FNS authorized a demonstration in which selected States and districts could use Medicaid data to directly certify students.

Key findings

- Few States report that all children eligible for Medicaid would also be eligible for free school meals.

None of the States interviewed as part of the case study participated in the FNS Medicaid demonstration, although several States have explored the feasibility of using Medicaid for direct certification. Texas did so, but determined that Medicaid eligibility rules would make it difficult to use Medicaid data for direct certification and that there were easier changes they could make to improve program performance. West Virginia also looked into use of Medicaid but determined that most Medicaid recipients were also receiving SNAP and would be directly certified through the existing system. Nebraska uses Medicaid data for direct verification and has the infrastructure to use Medicaid for direct certification, but has not applied for participation in the Medicaid demonstration.

Table III.21. Potential Use of Medicaid Data for Direct Certification (percentages)

	Central Matching States	Local Matching States	Districts in Local Matching States
Criteria for Medicaid and Free School Meal Eligibility Align	3.4	16.7	—
Use Medicaid Data for Direct Verification	15.8	21.4	24.3
Provide Data on NSLP Certifications for Medicaid/CHIP Referrals	19.4	15.4	27.5
Medicaid Participates in Data-Matching to Determine Reimbursements to School Districts			
Yes	27.8	0.0	11.0
No	66.7	85.7	89.0
Varies by district	5.6	14.3	0.0
Sample Size	38	14	1,583

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

CHIP = Children's Health Insurance Program.

IV. CHALLENGES AND PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS TO DIRECT CERTIFICATION

Direct certification is a complex process that States and districts across the country continue to refine. As States encounter technological and administrative challenges to effective and efficient matching, they enact new procedures and invest in upgraded data systems. In this chapter, we describe the most common direct certification challenges States encountered in SY 2012–2013, as well as the improvements they plan to make to their systems in the future.

A. Barriers to Effective Direct Certification

Direct certification relies on a wide array of organizations, systems, and data sources. Problems or weaknesses in any component can impede successful identification of eligible students. In this section, we describe common challenges States and districts face pertaining to student enrollment records, program participation data, and financial and technological resources.

Among central matching States, barriers pertaining to enrollment data were by far the most common: 94 percent identified at least one such barrier, 45 percent cited barriers involving program data, and 51 percent cited barriers involving resources (Table IV.1). The three most common barriers specific to enrollment data were as follows:

1. State data were not updated in time for the initial direct certification match, which generally occurred prior to the start of the schools year.
2. It took too long to obtain data from all districts.
3. Data were not sufficiently detailed.

No other barrier was cited by at least 20 percent of central matching States; many States cited barriers that were specific to their own circumstances and not offered on the survey.

Barriers to Effective Direct Certification

Common barriers

- Central matching States most often cited barriers related to enrollment data.
- Local matching States often cited barriers related to enrollment data and resources.

Key findings

- Resource barriers cited by local matching States suggest that central matching systems may be infeasible in many of these States.
- State resource constraints can impede the frequency with which program data are available, thereby affecting the timeliness of direct certification.
- Because of time and resource constraints, low levels of technical skill, or insufficient participation in training, districts might not always be aware of, or appropriately use, all features of direct certification systems.

Enrollment data barriers were also the most cited by local matching States. However, these States were more likely than central matching States to cite barriers related to resources (Table IV.1). Specifically, about 79 percent of local matching States cited enrollment data barriers, 73 percent cited resource barriers, and 57 percent program data barriers. Half of local matching States reported lack of sufficient staff to complete direct certification computer matching; a third cited insufficient computer resources. Other commonly cited specific barriers for local matching States were that State enrollment data do not contain enough information to support matching, and it takes too long to obtain enrollment data files from all districts. The resource barriers cited by local matching States suggest that central matching would be infeasible for them. Most districts in local matching States cited no barriers related to enrollment data, program data, or resources. Moreover, no specific barrier was cited by more than 10 percent of local matching districts.

Table IV.1. Barriers to Effective Direct Certification, SY 2012–2013 (percentage unless indicated otherwise)

	Central Matching States	Local Matching States	Districts in Local Matching States
Barriers Related to Enrollment Records			
No barriers related to enrollment records	5.7	21.4	64.2
State enrollment data not updated in time for fall direct certification	51.4	35.7	9.7
State enrollment data do not contain sufficient information to support matching	25.7	42.9	10.0
It takes too long to obtain enrollment data files from all districts	28.6	14.3	5.5
Naming conventions in enrollment data are not consistent with data in other systems	11.4	28.6	6.2
State does not maintain a database of students	8.6	14.3	4.6
Other barriers related to enrollment records	45.7	42.9	11.8
Barriers Related to Program Participation Data			
No barriers related to program participation data	54.5	42.9	80.5
SNAP agency does not keep records in a manner that makes it cost-effective for computer matching	3.0	28.6	3.1
It is too difficult to get data from the SNAP agency	6.1	14.3	3.6
It is too difficult to get data from agencies with relevant program data other than SNAP	6.1	7.1	3.5
Agencies with relevant program data other than SNAP do not keep records in a manner that makes it cost-effective for computer matching	6.1	7.1	2.1
Other barriers related to program participation	39.4	50.0	10.3
Barriers Related to Resources or Other Factors (percentage)			
No barriers related to resources or other factors	48.6	28.6	75.3
Staff not available at the State level to perform the work required for computer matching for direct certification	8.6	50.0	6.8
Computer resources not available at the State level to conduct the computer matching process	8.6	35.7	3.6
Concerned about how the State central matching system would compromise student confidentiality	17.1	14.3	4.7
Funds are not available to pay to train State staff to do the work required for computer matching	8.6	7.1	4.8
Other barriers related to resources or other factors	37.1	35.7	11.0
Perception of Barriers to Direct Certification in Public Schools (scale range: 1 to 5)			
Cost of software	2.3	2.9	2.4
Lack of technical expertise	2.6	3.2	2.3
Suitability of student enrollment data	2.1	2.7	2.1
Perceived need for computer matching	—	1.0	1.9
Perception of Barriers to Direct Certification in Nonpublic Schools (scale range: 1 to 5)			
Cost of software	2.8	3.5	2.4
Lack of technical expertise	3.4	3.7	2.3
Suitability of student enrollment data	3.3	3.1	2.1
Perceived need for computer matching	—	1.0	2.1
Sample Size	35	14	1,515

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

In-depth interviews in case study States provided a more detailed picture of the types of barriers States face in completing direct certification. Respondents cited barriers spanning technology, established procedures, interagency coordination, and district operations.

Indiana and West Virginia reported technology barriers to completing effective direct certification. In Indiana's case, the diversity of POS systems led to divergent performance across districts. Some districts operated sophisticated systems that automatically integrated State direct certification data. Other districts used simpler POS systems and relied on manual processes to process State data. Staff in West Virginia reported that limited bandwidth impeded performance of the direct certification system (Table IV.2).

Table IV.2. Reported Barriers to Effective Direct Certification in Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

State	Summary of Reported Barriers
Alabama	Additional programs could be used for direct certification if more programs used a common definition of poverty.
Arizona	The lack of a process for investigating partial matches probably reduces the accuracy of direct certification.
Connecticut	Some districts reported that they had trouble getting assistance when they had questions about the SNAP and TANF program file. Infrequent matching can leave transfer students uncertified for several months.
Indiana	The diversity of POS systems leads to wide variation in the ease of loading direct certification matching information. Districts do not always initiate matches as frequently as the State would like. This will change in SY 2013–2014 when automatic matches will be conducted monthly. Districts do not consistently utilize direct certification system features such as the No County Match List and the Unmatched Sibling Match List. Programs other than SNAP, TANF, and foster care that could potentially be used for direct certification are not able to produce the statewide lists that would be necessary.
Nebraska	The level of district technical skill is often low, so multiple modes of effective training are necessary. Establishing the initial MOU with the Department of Health and Human Services was time-consuming.
Texas	Many students are not successfully matched during direct certification. Some students are assigned to incorrect district lists and so are not directly certified.
West Virginia	Bandwidth limitations impede system performance during peak times. The State plans to improve its bandwidth in the near future. Providing SNAP and TANF data more frequently than monthly would be difficult for the Department of Health and Human Services.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

MOU = memorandum of understanding; POS = point-of-sale; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Multiple interviewed States cited existing direct certification practices or procedures as barriers. Staff in Arizona explained that the absence of a process in their State for working partial matches probably resulted in fewer successful matches. Respondents in Texas reported that some matched students ended up on the wrong district's list and so were not certified.

Some States reported that State agency operations presented barriers to direct certification. Staff in Indiana reported that agencies running programs other than SNAP, TANF, or foster care could not produce statewide enrollment lists that might be used for direct certification matching. West Virginia staff reported that one barrier to receiving more frequent program data files was the burden doing so would place on the Department of Health and Human Services. Staff in Connecticut reported that they had difficulty obtaining assistance when they needed to request changes to the

State SNAP and TANF files. They also reported that infrequently provided program data files left students uncertified for months at a time. State staff in Alabama reported that SNAP data could be as much as six months out-of-date due to recertification periods. They also suggested that more data sources could be used for direct certification if assistance programs used a common definition of poverty.

Finally, Staff in Indiana and Nebraska cited district operations as barriers to effective direct certification. Officials in Indiana reported that districts do not always initiate matching as frequently as State staff would like. District staff also did not always utilize the technology resources the State makes available to them for direct certification. This barrier may also be relevant for other States even when State staff did not explicitly cite it; district officials interviewed as part of the case study were often unaware of or not using all features of the direct certification system. State officials in Nebraska reported that low levels of technical skill in a district impeded effective use of direct certification systems; they emphasized the importance of hands-on, in-person training in overcoming this barrier.

B. Planned Improvements to Direct Certification

Direct certification is an evolutionary process. States and districts improve their direct certification processes over time by introducing new technology, refining matching procedures, and adjusting the procedures that district and State staff use to complete the process. Underlying these changes is a broad shift toward greater centralization, as more local matching States transition to central matching. In this section, we describe the most common direct certification changes States have planned for the future, drawing on survey responses from central matching States as well as in-depth interview data from case study States.

The most common changes respondents from central matching States reported involved process. The most common planned change, cited by 42 percent of States, was to add more data elements to the matching process. Forty percent of States planned to increase the frequency of sending program participation data used for matching and 37 percent planned to implement a process to resolve unmatched records. Almost a third of States planned to increase the frequency of data matching (Table IV.3).

Central matching States also planned technical changes to their direct certification data systems. Almost a third reported that they planned to upgrade their matching system algorithm to incorporate probabilistic matching. Twenty-nine percent planned to upgrade the State information system—the same proportion of States that planned to implement a new computer matching system for direct certification (Table IV.3).

Table IV.3. Planned Changes to Direct Certification Systems Among Central Matching States, as of SY 2012–2013 (percentages)

	Central Matching States
Add more elements for data matching	42.1
Increase frequency of sending program data	40.0
Implement a process to resolve unmatched records	36.8
Increase frequency of data matching	31.6
Incorporate probabilistic matching techniques	31.6
State information system upgrade	28.9
Implement new computer matching system	28.9
Implement process to extend categorical eligibility	28.9
Obtain data from additional programs	26.3
Create a web-based lookup system	10.5
Other planned changes to direct certification systems	26.3
Sample Size	38

Source: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices.

Planned Improvements to Direct Certification

- States are planning a wide range of large and small changes to their systems, including adding more data elements, increasing frequency, and adding processes to resolve unmatched records.
- States are taking advantage of FNS grants to transition to central matching systems, upgrade technological infrastructure, and provide improved training to direct certification users.

Interviews with case study States revealed a wide range of planned changes, from minor process reforms to total system overhauls. In the most fundamental change, Connecticut planned to transition its direct certification program to a central matching system, which will alter State agency and district roles. In SY 2012–2013, CSDE developed a matching algorithm that incorporates probabilistic match scoring. The new algorithm will be used statewide and will assume the matching function performed in SY 2012–2013 by districts. CTDSS will no longer divide its program data geographically by school district but will instead send statewide data to CSDE. Program participation data updates will occur weekly rather than three times a year, but the new system will create less administrative burden on CSDE, because dividing the list by district is much more work than simply sending an updated list. Connecticut planned to roll out its centralized system as a pilot in SY 2013–2014, with expected statewide implementation in SY 2015–2016 (Table IV.4).

Other case study States planned to make changes to their direct certification procedures while keeping their overall system in place. For instance, West Virginia planned to increase its matching frequency to biweekly or weekly. Arizona planned to refine its matching algorithm and incorporate probabilistic matching. Staff in Indiana reported that they were considering incorporating probabilistic matching but would do so only if they were convinced it would improve their performance. Texas planned to begin making unmatched lists of students available to districts beginning in SY 2013–2014 (Table IV.4).

Several case study States planned to make improvements to their direct certification technology. Alabama planned to build the capacity to use Medicaid data in future direct certification matching.

Table IV.4. Recent and Planned Changes to Direct Certification in Case Study States, SY 2012–2013

State	Recent Changes	Planned Changes
Alabama	Rolled out iNOW in SY 2011–2012 and began excluding zero-benefit SNAP from the program data around the same time.	Plans to merge SNAP data into Medicaid infrastructure in 2015; building the capacity to incorporate Medicaid and CHIP into the direct certification process. Will move to a push system in which districts do not have to download a matched list each month. Considering centralizing extended eligibility determination.
Arizona	In 2008, Arizona updated the web portal that districts use to download the file to make it more intuitive. In 2006, the State revised the matching algorithm to certify students matching on three data elements rather than five.	Arizona plans to examine additional changes to the direct certification matching algorithm and is considering introducing probabilistic matching.
Connecticut	In 2006, Connecticut increased its matching frequency from annually to three times per year.	Connecticut is using funds from an FNS grant to transition to a central matching system by fall 2015 following a two-year pilot in three districts. They will assign all public school students ID numbers that districts will be able to use to identify eligible students. The Department of Social Services will provide updated SNAP and TANF weekly to support weekly matching. The State also plans to incorporate foster care data.
Indiana	In 2011, Indiana improved the SSIS so that it updates in real time following the start of the school year. This allows easier, more frequent subsequent direct certification matching. Beginning in SY 2012–2013, districts no longer had to upload their local enrollment data to conduct direct certification matching during the school year. Indiana has also simplified its direct certification web interface, added an option to view only newly certified students during subsequent matches, and added an Unmatched Sibling Match List.	Indiana plans to improve the direct certification system so that monthly matches occur automatically. Districts will no longer have to initiate the process manually. The State has also considered introducing probabilistic matching.
Nebraska	Nebraska received a direct certification grant from FNS in 2009 and used it to develop their web-based probabilistic matching system. They have since made a key upgrade by switching from an internally developed matching algorithm to one based on Microsoft fuzzy logic.	Nebraska is using an FNS grant to improve direct certification training by introducing more in-person, hands-on training sessions with districts. The State is investigating the addition of State data on migrant and homeless students into the direct certification process. The State is also considering applying for the Medicaid direct certification demonstration.
Texas	Texas increased the frequency of matching over the past decade, from annually to quarterly to monthly. In 2011 the State added a SNAP or TANF indicator to the matched list.	Beginning in SY 2013–2014, Texas will make the unmatched list available to districts so they can attempt to identify additional matches if they wish.
West Virginia	West Virginia rolled out its POS and matching system in July 2010, following a three-month pilot. They integrated the system with district POS systems in August 2010.	West Virginia plans to transition to semimonthly or weekly receipt of program data. The State also plans to introduce a continuous direct certification training program and to incorporate private schools into the system more fully. The State also plans to invest additional resources to expand its bandwidth. The State is using an FNS grant to purchase additional servers and provide user training.

Source: Direct certification case study interviews.

CHIP = Children's Health Insurance Plan; ID = identification; POS = point-of-sale; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; SSIS = statewide student information system; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

West Virginia planned ongoing improvement to its data systems, including a $15,000 investment in improved bandwidth for direct certification operations (Table IV.4).

Finally, some States sought to improve direct certification by reducing steps districts had to take to complete the process. Alabama planned to begin pushing monthly direct certification files to districts rather than requiring that districts download them. Indiana planned to phase out its current system, which relies on districts to initiate the matching process, and replace it with automatic monthly matching. The State would alert districts when the files were ready to download each month. West Virginia planned to incorporate private schools more fully into the direct certification system public schools use so that they no longer need to conduct matching manually.

V. LESSONS LEARNED

Efficient and accurate direct certification is central to FNS' efforts to provide nutritious meals to students. Direct certification increases access to the program benefits to which eligible students are entitled. It also decreases burden on families and district staff in preparing and processing applications for school meal benefits.

This report presents analysis of data drawn from the National Survey of Direct Certification Practices and case studies of seven States. This analysis documents practices used by States and districts in SY 2012-2013 to conduct direct certification, including the processes and resources used to develop the systems, the characteristics and availability of relevant data, and the technical aspects of matching algorithms. The analysis also catalogs perceived barriers to effective direct certification and strategies that States and districts planned to implement to address them. Key findings from the analysis are summarized in Tables V.1 through V.3 and in the text below.

Central matching has become the dominant means of implementing direct certification. In SY 2012-2013, 38 States use central matching systems, and at least 4 of the remaining 14 planned to switch from local to central matching. Interviews with central matching States indicated that some of the appealing characteristics of central matching systems were efficiency, the opportunity to use more sophisticated matching algorithms than districts may be able to develop, the uniform quality of matching across the State, and reduced confidentiality risk. However, some findings pointed to the continued appeal of local matching for some States. A large majority of local matching States were able to include SSNs in the program data files they provide to districts for direct certification matching. Access to a single, high quality unique identifier may have contributed to districts' ability to conduct accurate matching without sophisticated matching algorithms. Moreover, local matching States cited resource barriers that may have made central matching systems unappealing or infeasible, such as insufficient State staff and computer resources to support computer matching.

Although most States used central matching, districts played key roles in direct certification processes, including uploading enrollment data, reconciling match lists with local data systems, processing lists of potential matches. This division of responsibility, particularly in identifying definite matches centrally and reconciling potential matches locally, may have allowed States to take advantage of both the efficiency offered by centrally developed matching algorithms and the local knowledge and additional student information that districts often have. In some cases, States took steps to minimize burden on districts and allowed them to use their direct certification time most effectively, such as using probabilistic matching scores to identify possible matches that were most likely to be legitimate.

Many central matching States noted that districts did not always take advantage of all the direct certification features available to them or use the system as intended. This was confirmed in case study interviews with district officials, who were often unaware of or not using certain system features. States emphasized the importance of clear communication and training in overcoming these obstacles. States used a variety of training and communication tools, including webinars, conferences, web videos, email, phone help centers, and in-person training. In-person, hands-on training was cited as particularly effective.

States and districts used available resources in innovative ways to improve the efficiency of direct certification. Enrollment data were often drawn from well-designed SSIS, some of which allowed daily updates and automatic processing of transfer students within the State. States expanded sources of program data beyond SNAP and TANF to include foster care and other

program sources. Most States conducted matching monthly or more frequently, enabling timely updates to certification status when students' circumstances change. Many States used matching algorithms that allowed for inexact matches for certain data elements or for calculation of probabilistic match scores.

States' plans to improve their direct certification systems were nearly universal, so many of these strategies for improving direct certification should become even more common in the coming years. States noted plans:

- To add more data elements to their matching algorithms
- To increase the frequency of data receipt and matching
- To incorporate additional program data sources
- To add processes to resolve unmatched or partially matched records
- To upgrade technological infrastructure
- To transition from local to central matching systems
- To provide improved training to direct certification users

Many States took advantage of FNS grants to plan and implement these changes. As they progress, the efficiency and accuracy of direct certification should continue to improve.

Table V.1. Findings on Planning and Implementation of Direct Certification Procedures Synthesized from National Survey on Direct Certification Practices and Case Study Analysis

Direct Certification Procedure	Findings
Use of Central and Local Matching	• Thirty-eight States used central matching systems; at least 4 of the 14 States using local matching planned to transition to central matching systems. • Efficiency, reduced district burden, availability of sophisticated matching algorithms, and reduced confidentiality risk were all cited as advantages of central matching systems.
Role of Districts	• In central matching States, district roles varied substantially across States and included uploading enrollment data, reconciling match lists with local data systems, processing lists of potential matches, and other key activities to increase match rates. • Districts did not always take advantage of the direct certification functions available to them.
Training and Communication	• States used a variety of training and communication tools, including webinars, conferences, web videos, email, phone help centers, and in-person training. • Clear communication and hands-on, in-person training were cited as important to effective direct certification.
Monitoring Direct Certification Activities	• Although some State systems included sophisticated monitoring tools, many did not. • Discrepancies between the number of students matched in the central system and the number districts reported as directly certified was a key indicator of whether districts properly used direct certification systems.
Development Resources	• Federal grants represented an important development resource; grants were used to upgrade computer matching systems, provide training, and transition to central matching.

Sources: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices and direct certification case study interviews.

Table V.2. Findings on Technical Aspects of Direct Certification Procedures Synthesized from National Survey on Direct Certification Practices and Case Study Analysis

Direct Certification Procedure	Findings
Enrollment Data	• States using central matching typically used SSIS as the source for enrollment data; local matching States used other sources. • In some States in which the SSIS was not updated immediately at the beginning of the school year, special procedures were developed to allow districts to directly certify newly enrolled students.
Program Data	• States were required to use or provide SNAP records for direct certification, but most also used TANF records, and many used foster care records. • Use of foster care records contributed to increased numbers of directly certified students; one State reported that 7 percent of direct certified students were matched through foster care.
Matching Frequency	• A large majority of central matching States conducted matching at least monthly, whereas matching was often conducted less frequently in local matching States. • States conducting daily matching cited match frequency as a key strength of their direct certification systems.
Matching Procedures	• Most matching systems required three or more identifiers to match and allowed for inexact matches on some elements. • Central matching States typically had a process in which potential matches were investigated further; this investigation was often done by districts.
Probabilistic Matching	• Probabilistic matching was used by only 29 percent of central matching States and 9 percent of districts in local matching States. • Probabilistic match scores may increase the number of directly certified students while minimizing burden; the scores allowed investigation of unmatched records while prioritizing potential matches most likely to be legitimate.
Extending Eligibility	• Districts were typically given primary responsibility for extending eligibility, even in central matching States.
Nonpublic Schools	• Central matching States often found incorporating private schools into the central direct certification system to be challenging because the schools' enrollment data were not included in the SSIS. • Individual student lookup and features that allow for batch upload of enrollment lists were some strategies for mitigating the direct certification challenges posed by private schools.
Feasibility of Using Medicaid	• Few States reported that all children eligible for Medicaid would also be eligible for free school meals. • Some States expressed doubts that incorporation of Medicaid data would provide substantial increases in direct certification.

Sources: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices and direct certification case study interviews.

SSIS = statewide student information system; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Table V.3. Findings on Perceived Barriers and Planned Improvements to Direct Certification Procedures Synthesized from National Survey on Direct Certification Practices and Case Study Analysis

Direct Certification Procedure	Findings
Barriers to Effective Direct Certification	• Central matching States most often cited barriers related to enrollment data, whereas local matching States often cited barriers related to enrollment data and resources. • Resource barriers cited by local matching States suggest that central matching systems may be infeasible in many of these States. • In central matching States, districts were not always aware of and did not always appropriately use all features of direct certification systems, due to time and resource constraints, low levels of technical skill, or insufficient training.
Planned Improvements	• States planned a wide range of large and small changes to their direct certification systems, including adding more data elements, increasing frequency, and adding processes to resolve unmatched records. • States took advantage of FNS grants to transition to central matching systems, upgrade technological infrastructure, and provide improved training to direct certification users.

Sources: National Survey of Direct Certification Practices and direct certification case study interviews.

APPENDIX A

NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION STATE PROFILES

ALABAMA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Southeast

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	159	Number of Schools	6,401
With fewer than 500 students	24	Public schools	6,356
With 500 to 999 students	7	Private schools	45
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	90		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	26		
With 10,000 students or more	12		

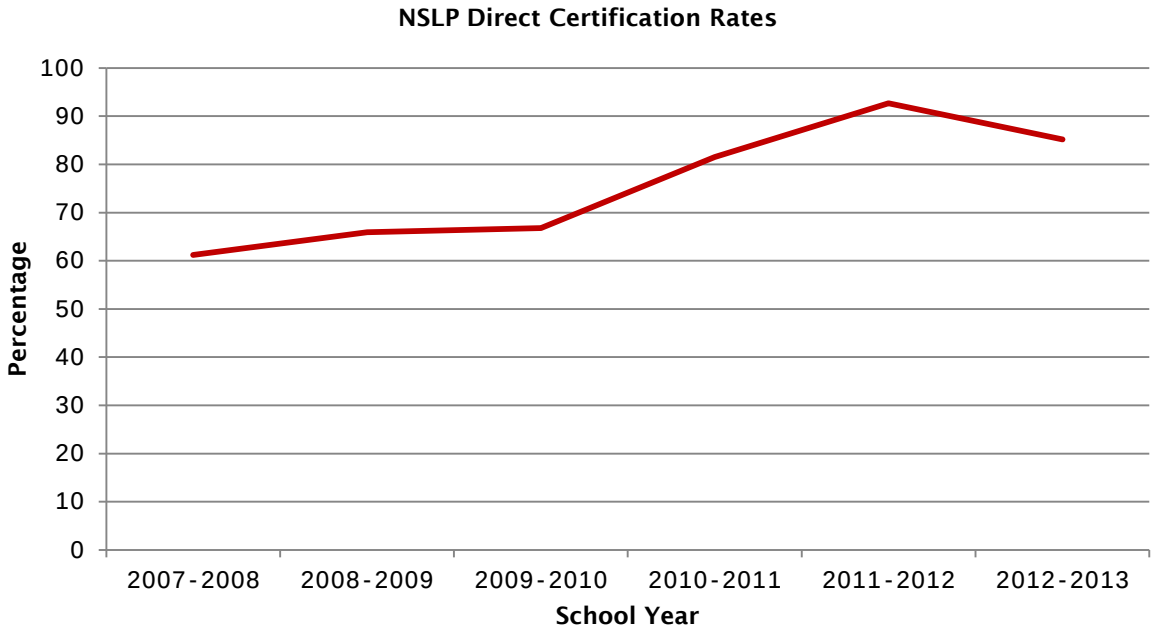
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
Foster Care	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender
	City
	Zip code
	Parent SSN
	Parent first name
	Parent middle name / initial
	Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	District
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified Certify all with same parent/guardian Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Monthly
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	303.5	255.9	3.1	85.2
SY 2011-2012	281.2	253.9	7.4	92.7
SY 2010-2011	281.1	224.4	5.7	81.5
SY 2009-2010	270.8	178.7	3.2	66.8
SY 2008-2009	231.9	146.7	9.1	65.9
SY 2007-2008	205.5	121.9	6.5	61.2



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

ALASKA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Western

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	69	Number of Schools	447
With fewer than 500 students	52	Public schools	418
With 500 to 999 students	4	Private schools	29
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	8		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	2		
With 10,000 students or more	3		

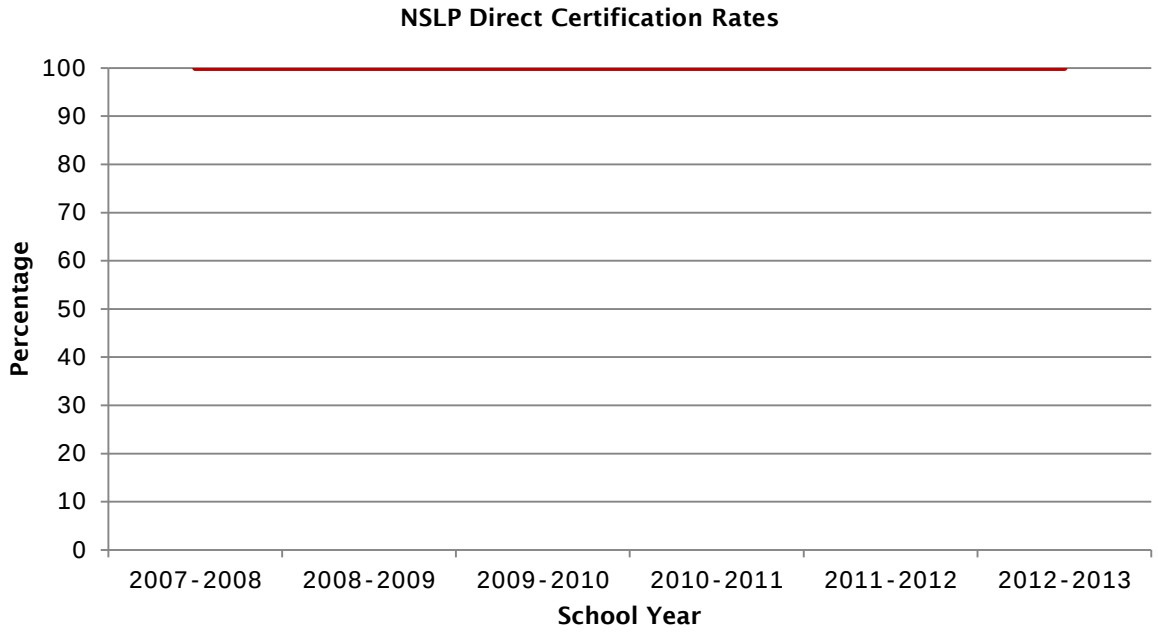
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Middle name / initial
Foster Care	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender
	Street address
	City
	Zip code

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified Certify all with same parent/guardian
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Once per school year
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	28.0	29.6	8.0	100.0
SY 2011-2012	28.8	30.2	5.1	100.0
SY 2010-2011	28.1	24.7	4.8	100.0
SY 2009-2010	23.5	22.4	5.1	100.0
SY 2008-2009	20.4	18.2	6.3	100.0
SY 2007-2008	19.1	18.0	4.8	100.0



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

ARIZONA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Western

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	464	Number of Schools	1,788
With fewer than 500 students	288	Public schools	1,716
With 500 to 999 students	51	Private schools	72
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	71		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	27		
With 10,000 students or more	27		

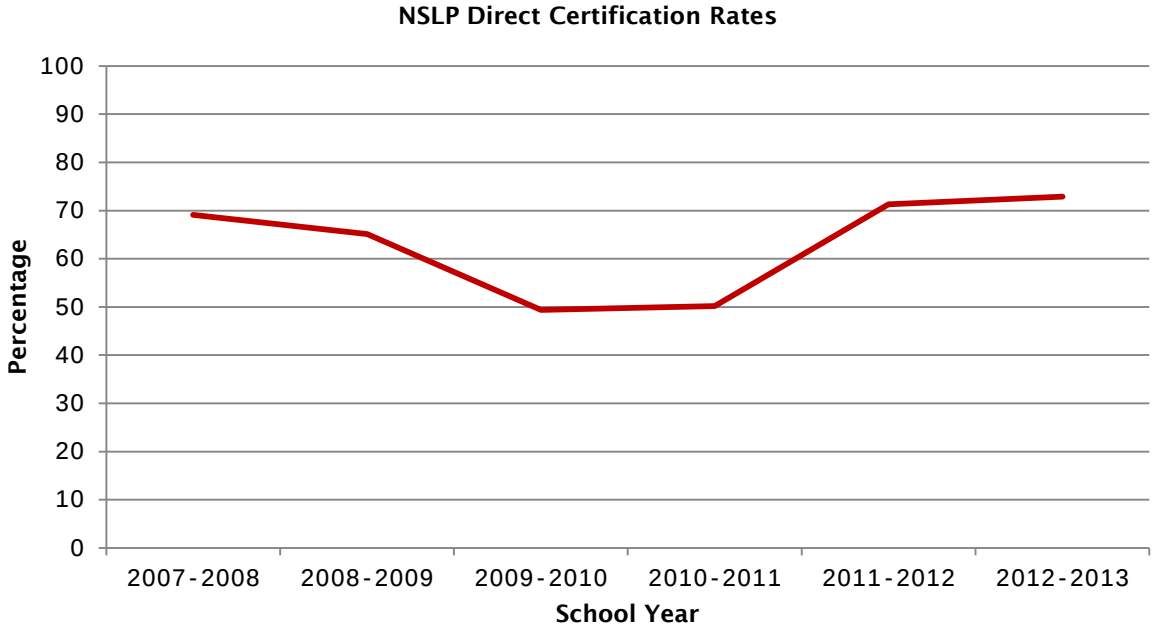
Programs Matched:	Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
	Last name
	Date of birth
	SNAP or other program ID

Timing of Initial Match:	August
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Three times per school year
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	District
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify both/all students as matches
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Certify all with same parent/guardian Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	More than three times, less than monthly
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	90

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	391.2	256.4	39.4	72.9
SY 2011-2012	382.7	243.6	41.3	71.3
SY 2010-2011	363.4	167.7	29.3	50.2
SY 2009-2010	320.8	147.6	22.0	49.4
SY 2008-2009	258.0	152.8	23.4	65.1
SY 2007-2008	211.8	130.5	23.0	69.1



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

ARKANSAS NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Southwest

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	284	Number of Schools	1,119
With fewer than 500 students	68	Public schools	1,081
With 500 to 999 students	94	Private schools	38
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	107		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	8		
With 10,000 students or more	7		

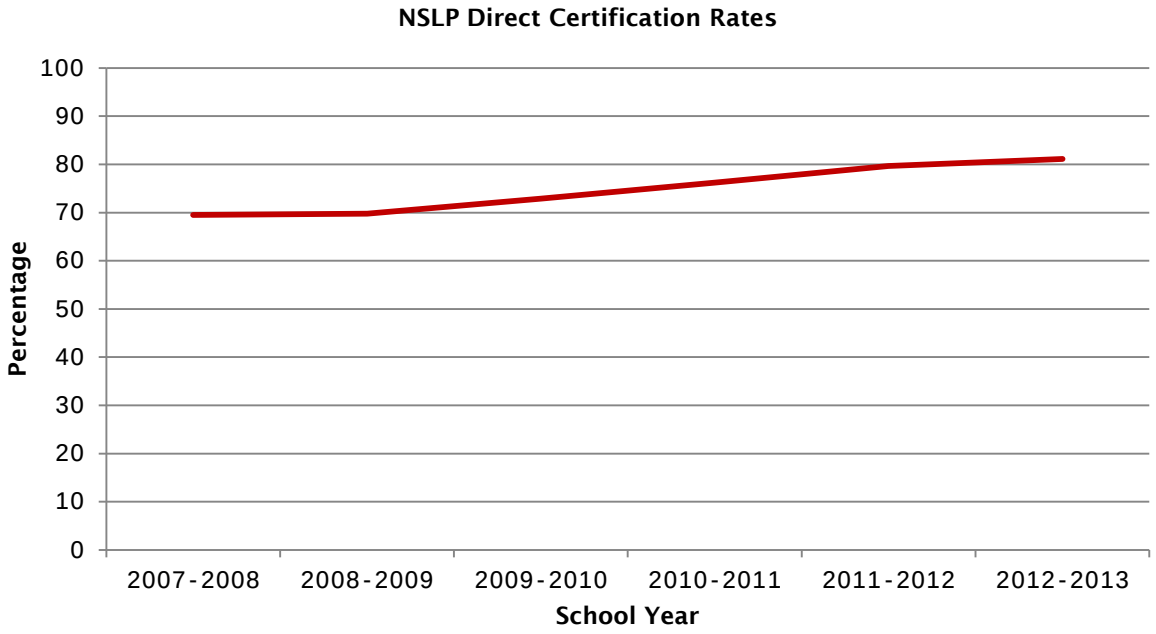
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN First name Middle name / initial Last name Date of birth Gender School name / ID SNAP or other program ID Parent SSN Parent first name Parent middle name / initial Parent last name Parent date of birth

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Three times per school year
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify both/all students as matches
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified Certify all with same parent/guardian Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	State Agency match once and three times or more this year if Direct Cert. Grant is funded.
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	158.3	117.8	13.0	81.1
SY 2011-2012	154.2	114.5	10.5	79.7
SY 2010-2011	148.9	104.0	12.4	76.2
SY 2009-2010	138.9	91.6	13.2	72.9
SY 2008-2009	132.0	82.9	13.3	69.8
SY 2007-2008	126.5	78.4	13.7	69.5



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

CALIFORNIA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Western

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	1,094	Number of Schools	9,971
With fewer than 500 students	403	Public schools	9,743
With 500 to 999 students	123	Private schools	228
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	287		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	113		
With 10,000 students or more	168		

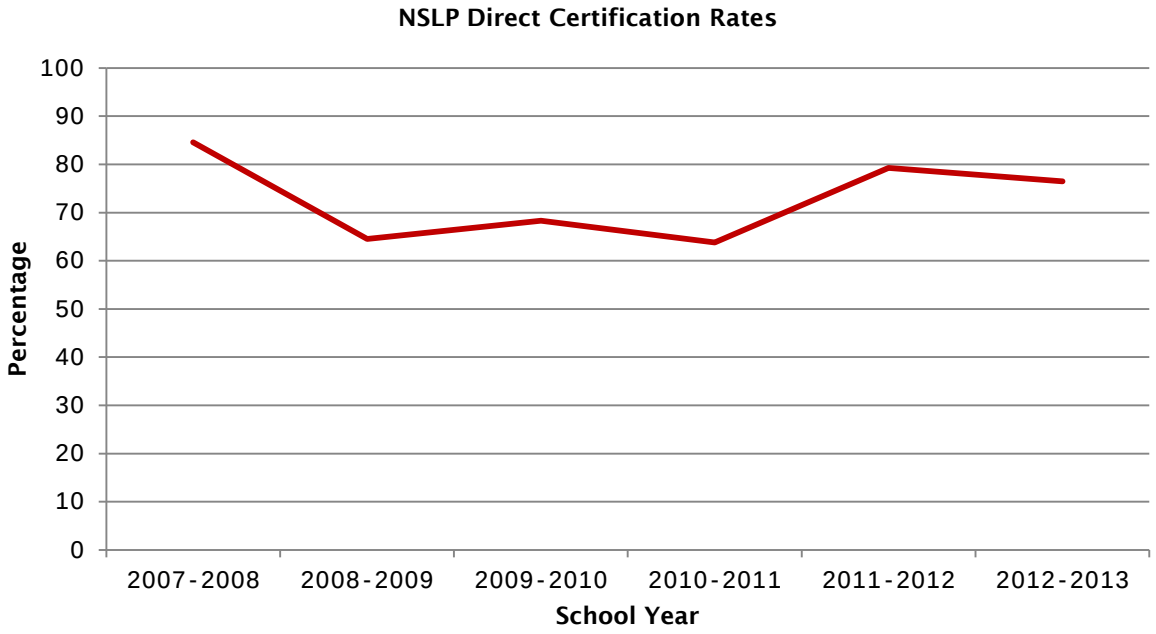
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Middle name / initial
FDPIR	Last name
Foster Care	Date of birth
KinGAP	Gender
	Street address
	City
	County code
	Zip code

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify both/all students as matches
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	None
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Three times per school year
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	1,645.9	1,008.9	327.1	76.5
SY 2011-2012	1,521.0	926.5	352.3	79.3
SY 2010-2011	1,527.4	768.0	323.2	63.8
SY 2009-2010	1,249.7	703.5	219.3	68.3
SY 2008-2009	1,074.4	574.8	182.9	64.5
SY 2007-2008	936.3	662.2	153.4	84.6



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

COLORADO NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mountain Plains

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	209	Number of Schools	1,717
With fewer than 500 students	113	Public schools	1,671
With 500 to 999 students	23	Private schools	46
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	42		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	12		
With 10,000 students or more	19		

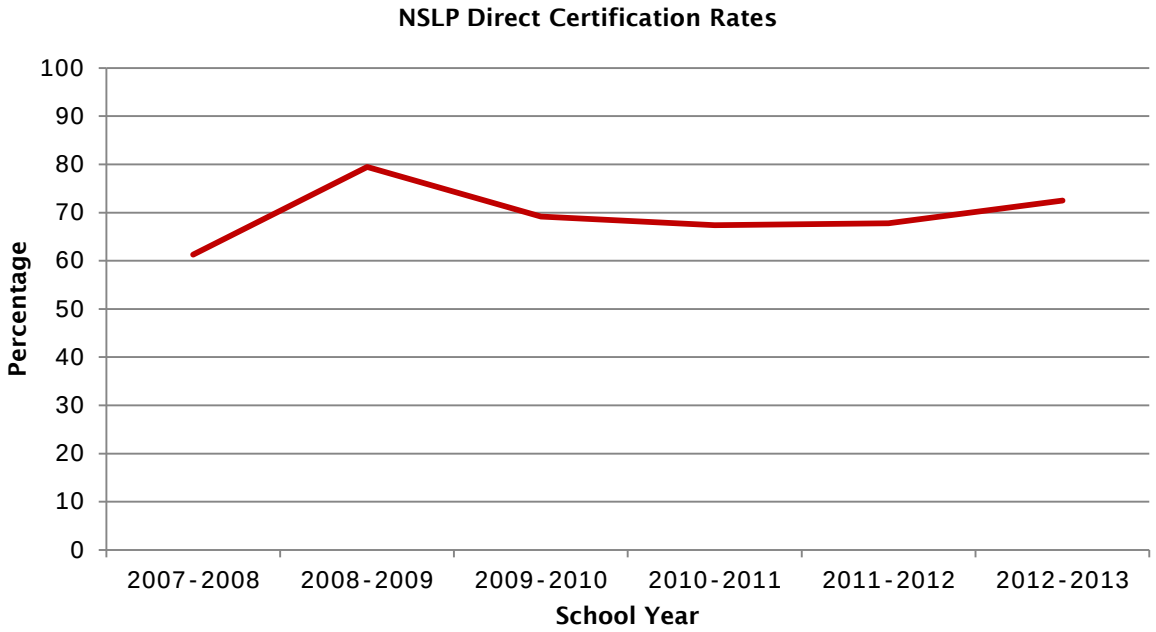
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
	First name
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Street address
	City
	Zip code
	School name / ID

Timing of Initial Match:	August
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Three times per school year
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	District
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Other
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Not applicable
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	Not applicable

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	178.0	128.2	1.2	72.5
SY 2011-2012	179.5	121.1	0.8	67.8
SY 2010-2011	155.8	104.9	0.1	67.4
SY 2009-2010	126.2	86.7	0.9	69.2
SY 2008-2009	94.9	69.1	7.9	79.5
SY 2007-2008	89.0	54.5	0.0	61.3



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CONNECTICUT NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Northeast

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	188	Number of Schools	1,159
With fewer than 500 students	57	Public schools	1,115
With 500 to 999 students	18	Private schools	44
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	85		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	18		
With 10,000 students or more	10		

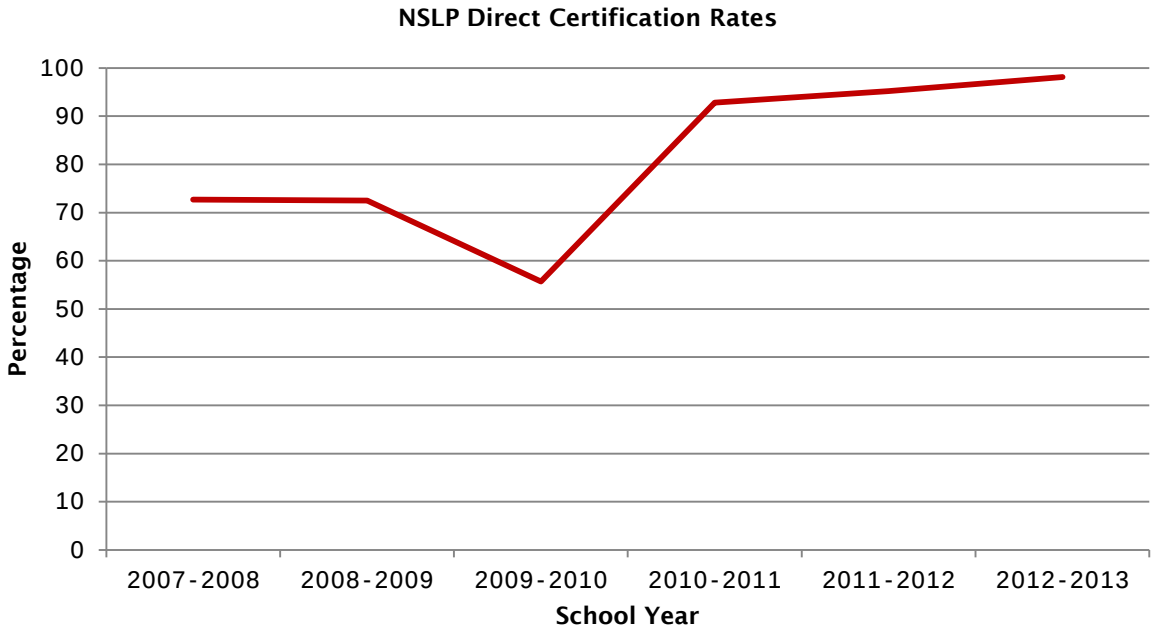
Programs Matched:
- SNAP
- TANF

SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
- First name
- Middle name / initial
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Street address
- City
- County code
- Zip code

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable
Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	105.4	85.8	17.9	98.1
SY 2011-2012	98.2	65.0	29.9	95.2
SY 2010-2011	95.0	57.9	32.6	92.8
SY 2009-2010	81.4	38.6	12.0	55.7
SY 2008-2009	62.7	35.5	13.8	72.5
SY 2007-2008	60.7	33.9	14.2	72.7



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DELAWARE NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mid-Atlantic

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	44	Number of Schools	224
With fewer than 500 students	20	Public schools	212
With 500 to 999 students	4	Private schools	12
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	10		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	6		
With 10,000 students or more	4		

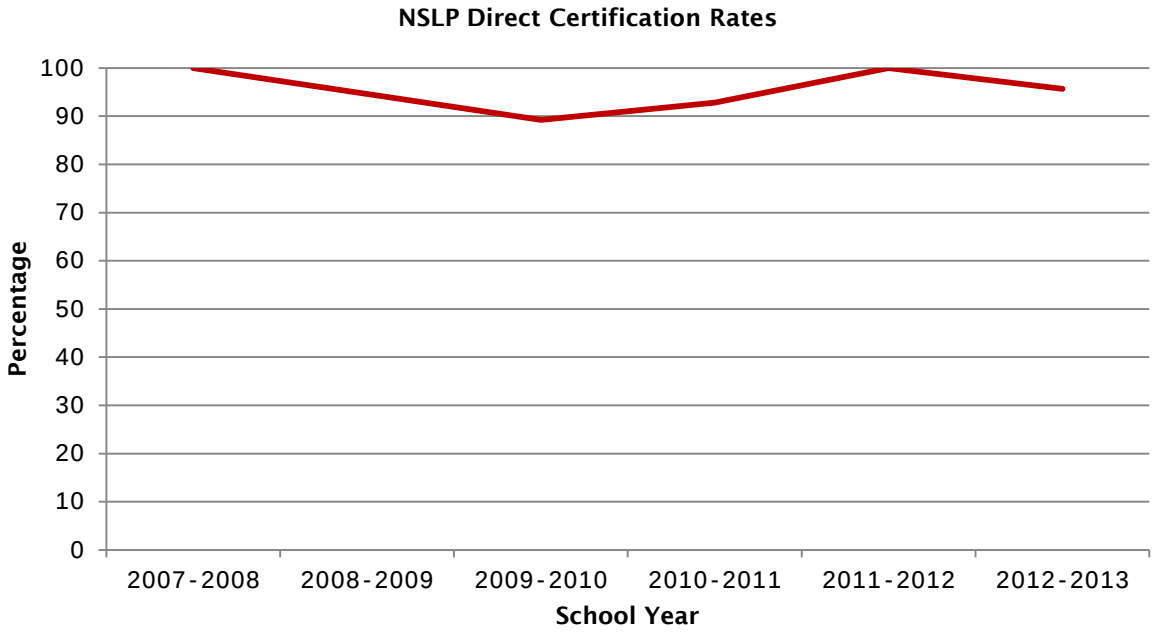
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Middle name / initial
FDPIR	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender

Timing of Initial Match:	August
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	51.5	47.3	2.1	95.7
SY 2011-2012	46.9	45.7	1.2	100.0
SY 2010-2011	41.2	36.9	1.5	92.8
SY 2009-2010	36.6	31.2	1.6	89.2
SY 2008-2009	25.7	24.2	0.1	94.6
SY 2007-2008	25.4	25.2	1.5	100.0



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mid-Atlantic

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	63	Number of Schools	229
With fewer than 500 students	43	Public schools	216
With 500 to 999 students	13	Private schools	13
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	6		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	0		
With 10,000 students or more	1		

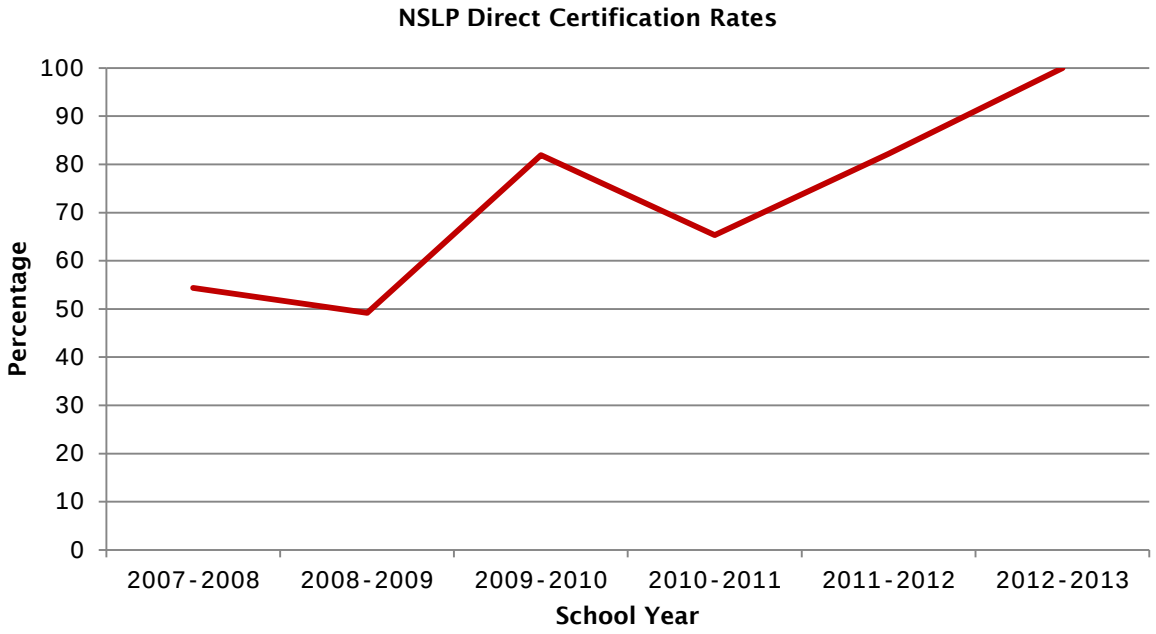
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
Foster Care	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender
	Street address
	City
	Zip code
	Phone number
	School name / ID
	SNAP or other program ID
	Parent SSN
	Parent first name
	Parent middle name / initial
	Parent last name
	Parent date of birth

Timing of Initial Match:	August
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Daily or real-time updates
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Duplicate matches do not occur
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	Yes
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Yes

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	35.0	34.5	1.4	100.0
SY 2011-2012	36.9	17.0	16.2	82.2
SY 2010-2011	33.6	12.0	15.2	65.3
SY 2009-2010	30.9	25.3	0.0	81.9
SY 2008-2009	27.1	13.3	0.0	49.2
SY 2007-2008	28.3	15.4	0.0	54.4



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FLORIDA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Southeast

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	226	Number of Schools	3,592
With fewer than 500 students	102	Public schools	3,463
With 500 to 999 students	29	Private schools	129
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	42		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	14		
With 10,000 students or more	39		

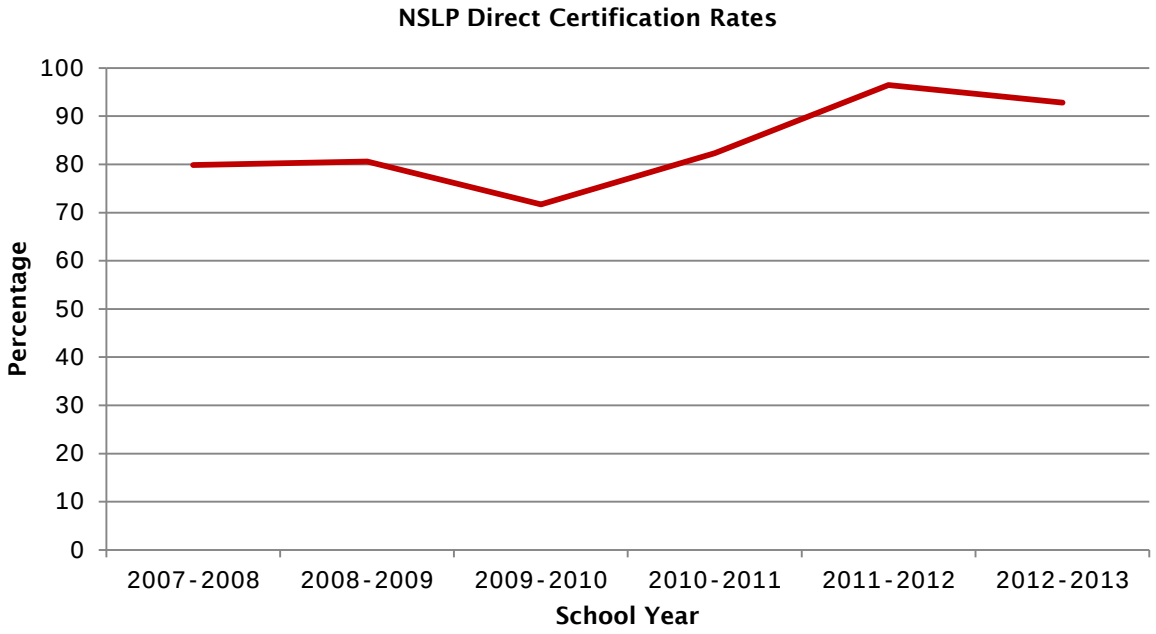
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
Medicaid	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Not applicable
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	Not applicable

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	1,002.2	913.9	17.0	92.8
SY 2011-2012	912.1	868.5	11.7	96.5
SY 2010-2011	863.4	706.8	4.4	82.3
SY 2009-2010	685.0	491.0	0.3	71.7
SY 2008-2009	485.8	390.9	0.5	80.6
SY 2007-2008	415.8	331.9	0.7	79.9



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GEORGIA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Southeast

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	222	Number of Schools	2,258
With fewer than 500 students	32	Public schools	2,258
With 500 to 999 students	18	Private schools	0
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	108		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	27		
With 10,000 students or more	37		

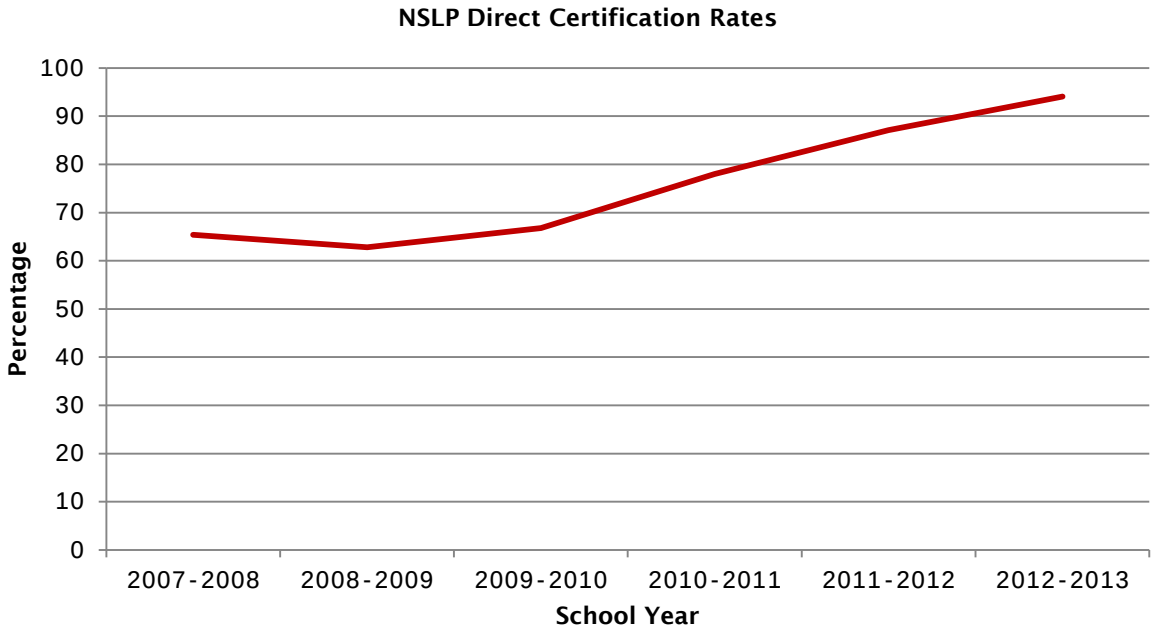
Programs Matched:
- SNAP
- TANF

SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
- SSN
- First name
- Middle name / initial
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Street address
- City
- Zip code

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Three times per school year
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	District
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify one of the students as matches Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No
Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Three times per school year
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	80

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	613.9	538.0	42.0	94.1
SY 2011-2012	613.0	509.6	27.6	87.1
SY 2010-2011	588.7	444.5	18.9	78.0
SY 2009-2010	485.5	305.3	28.6	66.8
SY 2008-2009	405.1	238.7	25.2	62.8
SY 2007-2008	336.4	203.9	24.7	65.4



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GUAM NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Western

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	2	Number of Schools	43
With fewer than 500 students	0	Public schools	43
With 500 to 999 students	0	Private schools	0
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	1		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	0		
With 10,000 students or more	1		

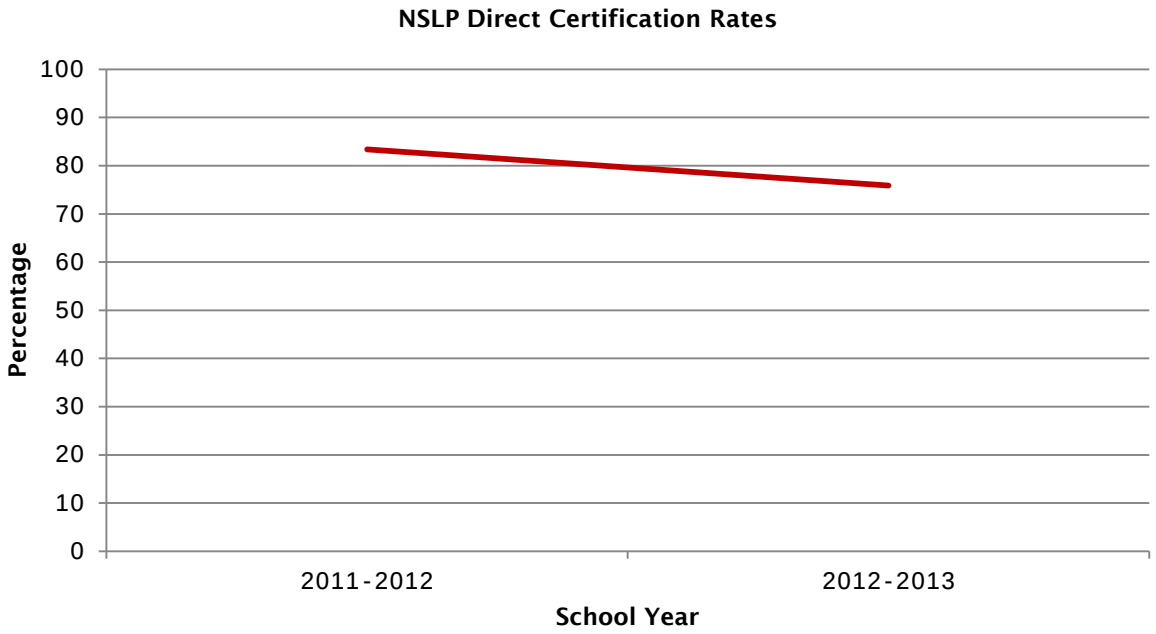
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender
	Street address
	SNAP or other program ID
	Parent first name
	Parent middle name / initial
	Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	September
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	More than three times, less than monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Send letter to students' parents
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Certify all with same parent/guardian
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Not applicable
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	Not applicable

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	18.4	13.9	0.0	75.9
SY 2011-2012	17.4	14.5	0.0	83.4



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HAWAII NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Western

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	35	Number of Schools	309
With fewer than 500 students	31	Public schools	299
With 500 to 999 students	3	Private schools	10
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	0		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	0		
With 10,000 students or more	1		

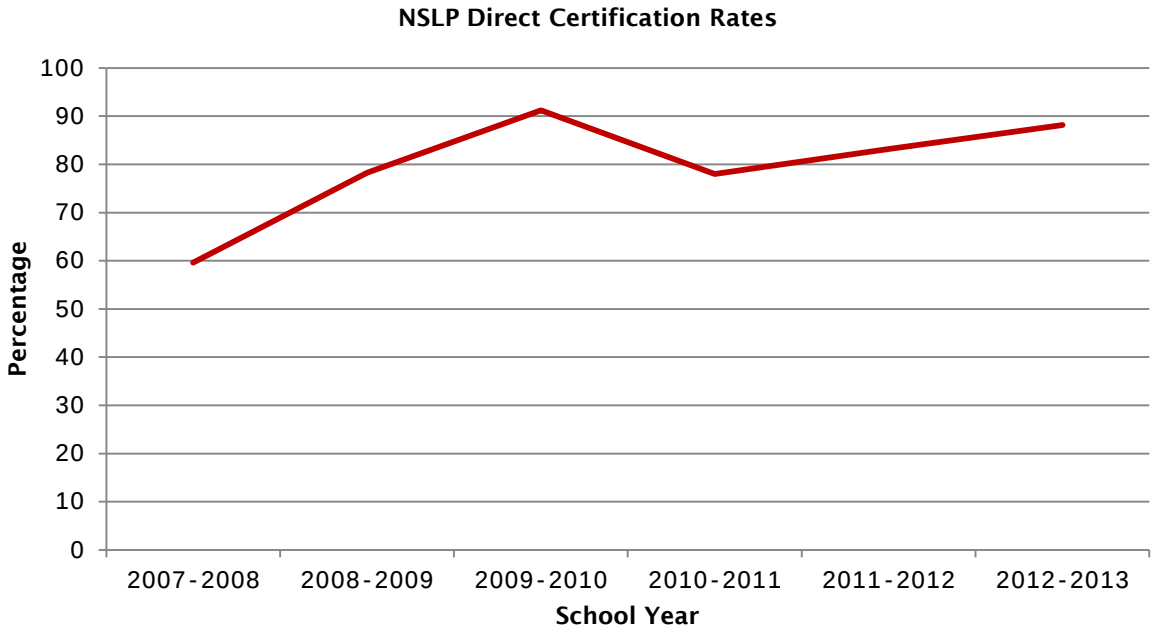
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Last name
	Date of birth
	Parent first name
	Parent middle name / initial
	Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Twice per school year
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify both/all students as matches Send letter to students' parents
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified Certify all with same parent/guardian Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	98

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	53.3	46.5	0.6	88.2
SY 2011-2012	45.7	38.0	0.0	83.2
SY 2010-2011	42.2	32.9	0.0	78.0
SY 2009-2010	35.0	31.9	0.0	91.2
SY 2008-2009	28.1	22.0	0.0	78.3
SY 2007-2008	26.2	15.6	0.0	59.6



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IDAHO NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Western

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	149	Number of Schools	644
With fewer than 500 students	75	Public schools	622
With 500 to 999 students	25	Private schools	22
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	36		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	8		
With 10,000 students or more	5		

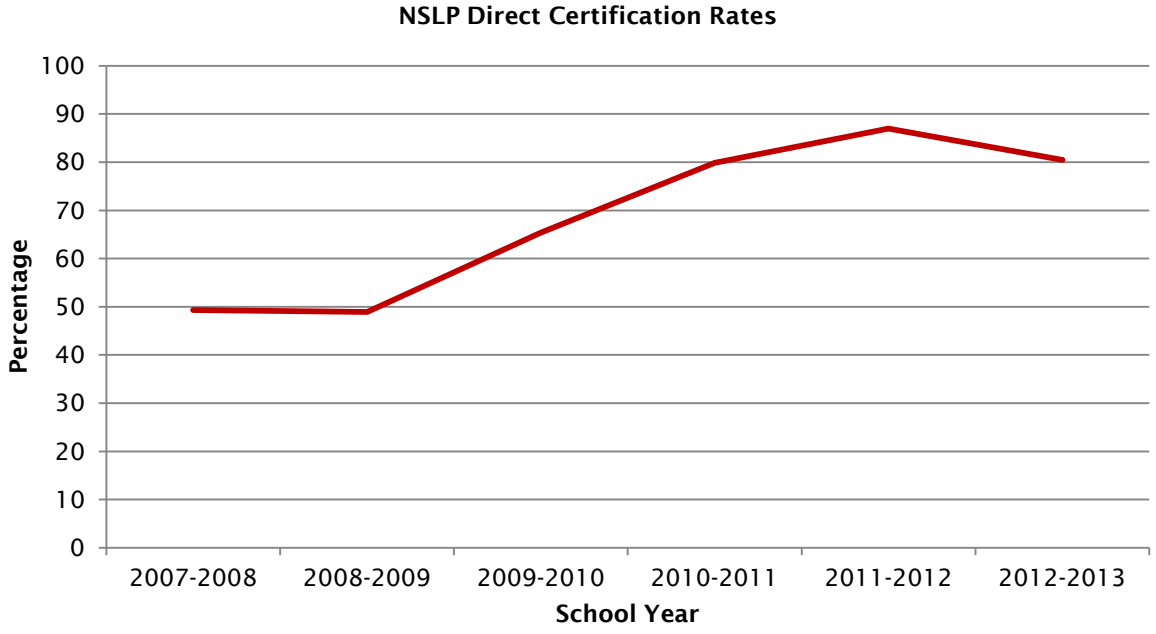
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First, middle, and last name
TANF	Date of birth
	Gender
	Street address
	City
	County code
	Zip code
	Phone number
	School name / ID
	SNAP or other program ID
	Parent first, middle, and last name

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Daily or real-time updates
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	District
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify both/all students as matches
	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Certify all with same parent/guardian
	Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	Yes
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Yes

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	98

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012-2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	78.1	61.9	1.1	80.5
SY 2011-2012	77.4	66.8	0.6	87.0
SY 2010-2011	71.6	56.6	0.7	79.9
SY 2009-2010	54.6	35.3	0.7	65.4
SY 2008-2009	36.3	17.5	0.5	48.9
SY 2007-2008	29.8	14.4	0.6	49.3



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ILLINOIS NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Midwest

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	1,051	Number of Schools	4,109
With fewer than 500 students	513	Public schools	3,734
With 500 to 999 students	195	Private schools	375
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	277		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	41		
With 10,000 students or more	25		

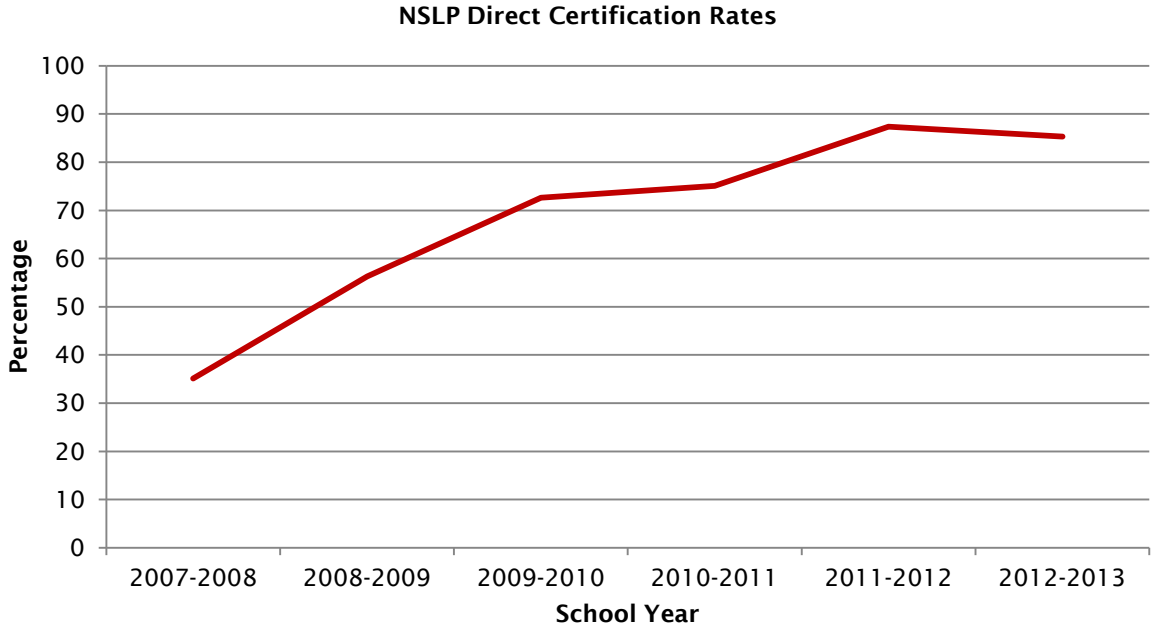
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Last name
Medicaid	Date of birth
Foster Care	Gender
	Street address
	City
	Zip code
	School name / ID
	SNAP or other program ID

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify both/all students as matches
	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	60

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012-2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	643.4	548.9	0.0	85.3
SY 2011-2012	609.0	529.6	3.0	87.4
SY 2010-2011	564.9	419.3	6.7	75.1
SY 2009-2010	515.4	369.5	6.2	72.6
SY 2008-2009	436.3	245.5	0.2	56.3
SY 2007-2008	434.4	152.2	0.3	35.1



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INDIANA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Midwest

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	504	Number of Schools	2,072
With fewer than 500 students	174	Public schools	1,863
With 500 to 999 students	79	Private schools	209
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	193		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	36		
With 10,000 students or more	22		

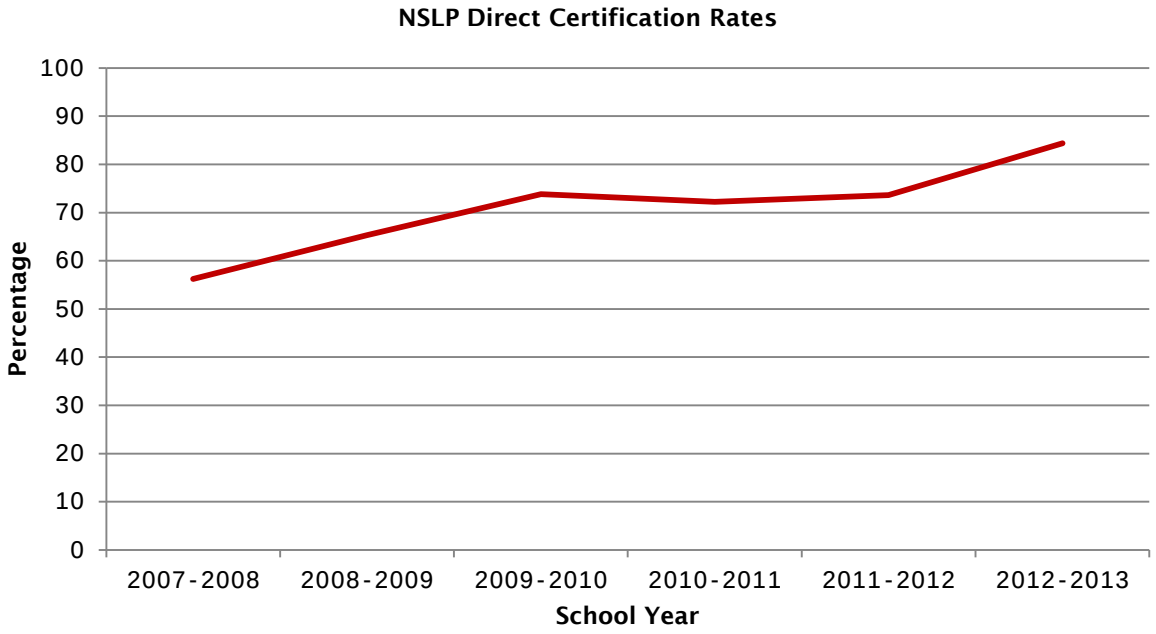
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Last name
Foster Care	Date of birth
	County code

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	As needed
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	District
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Duplicate matches do not occur
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Weekly
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	295.1	239.7	11.1	84.4
SY 2011-2012	303.1	216.1	9.4	73.6
SY 2010-2011	276.7	193.1	9.0	72.2
SY 2009-2010	241.8	171.9	8.8	73.8
SY 2008-2009	227.8	143.2	8.6	65.3
SY 2007-2008	195.6	100.6	16.3	56.2



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

IOWA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mountain Plains

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	474	Number of Schools	1,399
With fewer than 500 students	219	Public schools	1,258
With 500 to 999 students	135	Private schools	141
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	102		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	11		
With 10,000 students or more	7		

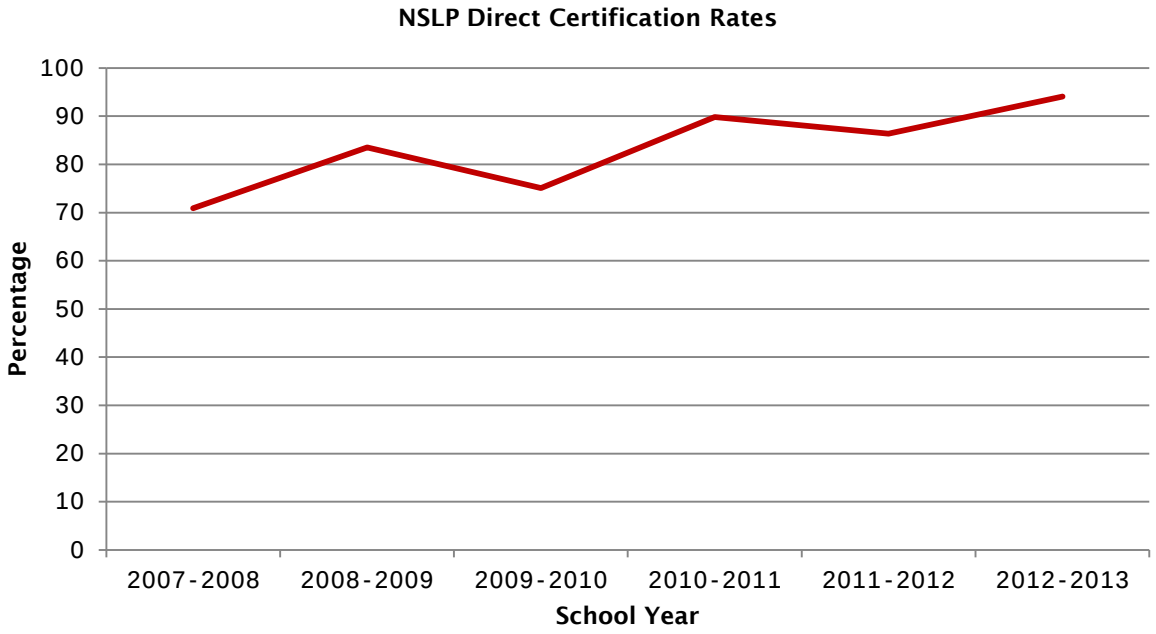
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
Foster Care	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Weekly or biweekly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Other
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	SFAs are provided with student names with the same address as a SNAP or FIP participant matched.
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Yes

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Not applicable
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	Not applicable

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	124.0	113.4	3.5	94.1
SY 2011-2012	120.7	102.0	2.6	86.4
SY 2010-2011	99.8	88.1	1.8	89.8
SY 2009-2010	97.8	73.1	0.5	75.1
SY 2008-2009	82.5	68.9	0.0	83.5
SY 2007-2008	71.7	50.5	0.5	70.9



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KANSAS NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mountain Plains

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	398	Number of Schools	1,521
With fewer than 500 students	218	Public schools	1,402
With 500 to 999 students	87	Private schools	119
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	72		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	14		
With 10,000 students or more	7		

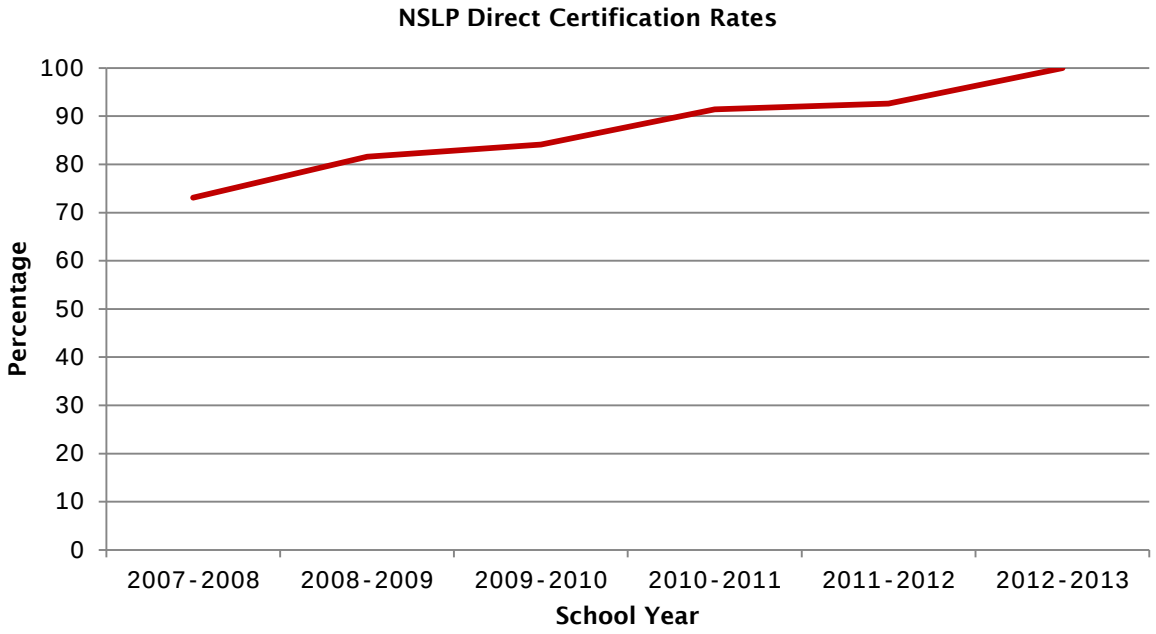
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
Foster Care	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	SNAP or other program ID
	Parent first name
	Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Daily or real-time updates
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	All students with the same SNAP/TANF number are considered matched.
Is individual look-up available?	Yes
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Yes

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	93.9	98.7	0.0	100.0
SY 2011-2012	97.2	90.0	0.0	92.6
SY 2010-2011	89.7	82.0	0.0	91.4
SY 2009-2010	75.6	63.5	0.2	84.1
SY 2008-2009	61.6	50.1	0.2	81.6
SY 2007-2008	60.0	43.6	0.3	73.1



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KENTUCKY NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Southeast

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	188	Number of Schools	1,443
With fewer than 500 students	17	Public schools	1,340
With 500 to 999 students	24	Private schools	103
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	116		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	20		
With 10,000 students or more	11		

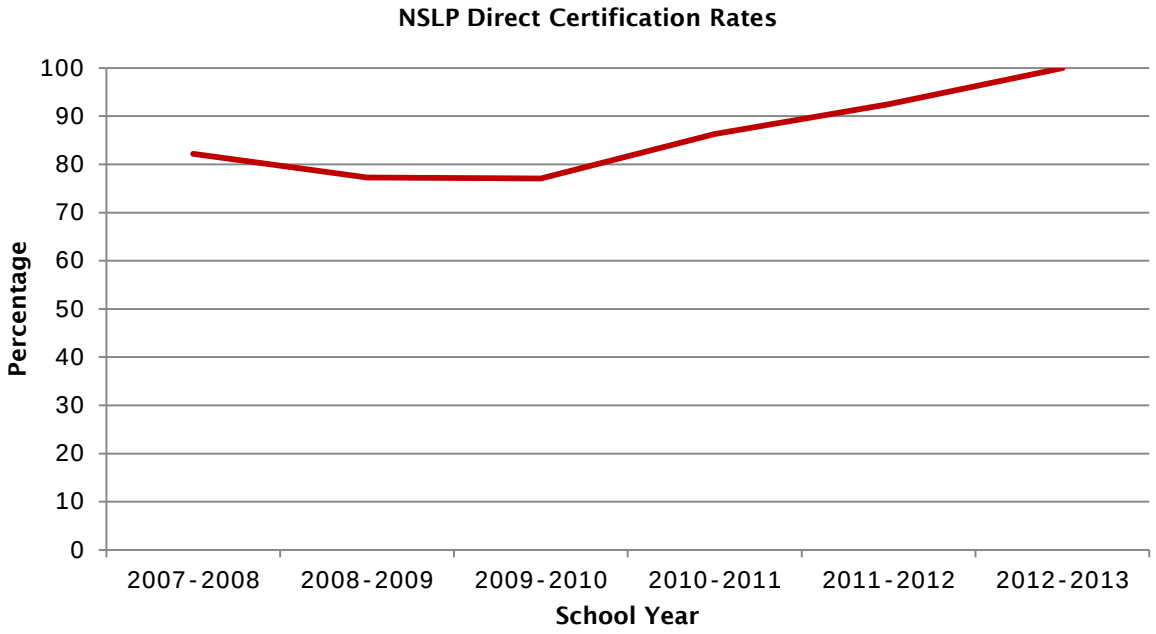
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
Medicaid	Last name
Foster Care	Date of birth

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	229.0	263.1	3.6	100.0
SY 2011-2012	237.1	218.7	0.7	92.5
SY 2010-2011	233.9	200.9	1.0	86.3
SY 2009-2010	232.5	177.5	2.4	77.1
SY 2008-2009	195.5	147.8	4.3	77.3
SY 2007-2008	187.9	149.1	6.5	82.2



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LOUISIANA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Southwest

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	114	Number of Schools	1,570
With fewer than 500 students	18	Public schools	1,389
With 500 to 999 students	14	Private schools	181
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	40		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	22		
With 10,000 students or more	20		

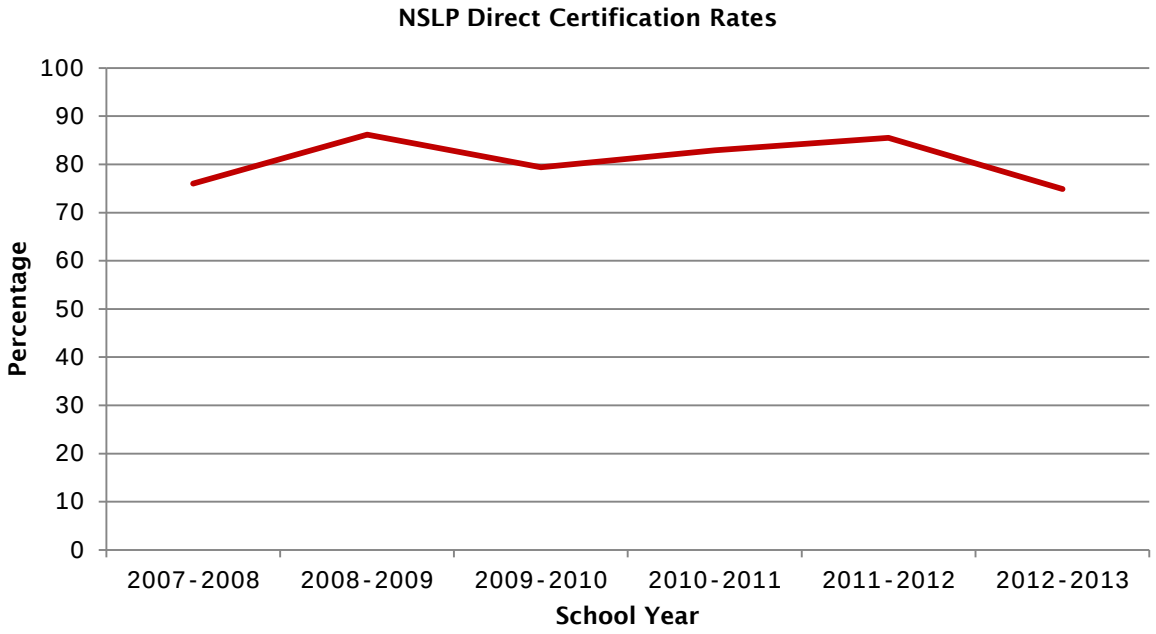
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
	First name
	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Twice per school year
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Other
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Districts can research further.
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	More than three times, less than monthly
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	69

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	338.1	253.4	0.0	74.9
SY 2011-2012	301.5	257.8	0.0	85.5
SY 2010-2011	284.7	235.9	0.0	82.9
SY 2009-2010	261.8	207.8	0.0	79.4
SY 2008-2009	234.3	202.0	0.0	86.2
SY 2007-2008	233.5	177.5	0.0	76.0



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MAINE NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Northeast

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	189	Number of Schools	593
With fewer than 500 students	94	Public schools	569
With 500 to 999 students	29	Private schools	24
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	64		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	2		
With 10,000 students or more	0		

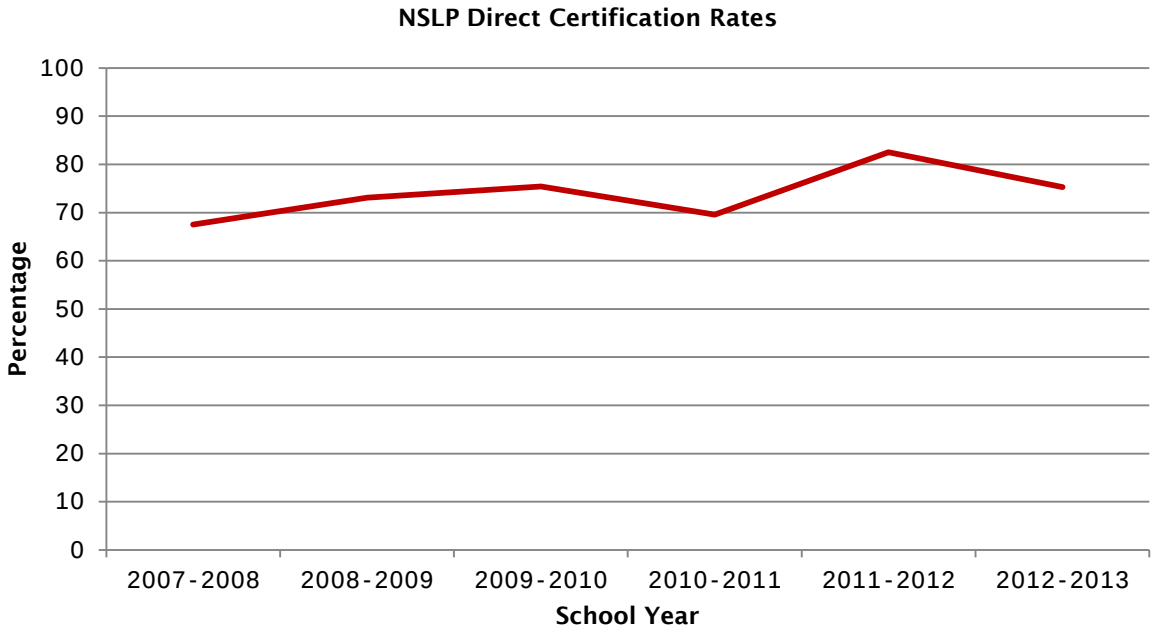
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Last name
	Date of birth
	City
	County code

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	95

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	66.1	49.6	0.2	75.3
SY 2011-2012	63.2	52.0	0.3	82.5
SY 2010-2011	66.9	46.4	0.3	69.6
SY 2009-2010	60.6	45.6	0.1	75.4
SY 2008-2009	48.6	35.4	0.2	73.1
SY 2007-2008	47.0	31.6	0.2	67.5



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MARYLAND NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mid-Atlantic

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	55	Number of Schools	1,509
With fewer than 500 students	26	Public schools	1,447
With 500 to 999 students	4	Private schools	62
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	6		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	4		
With 10,000 students or more	15		

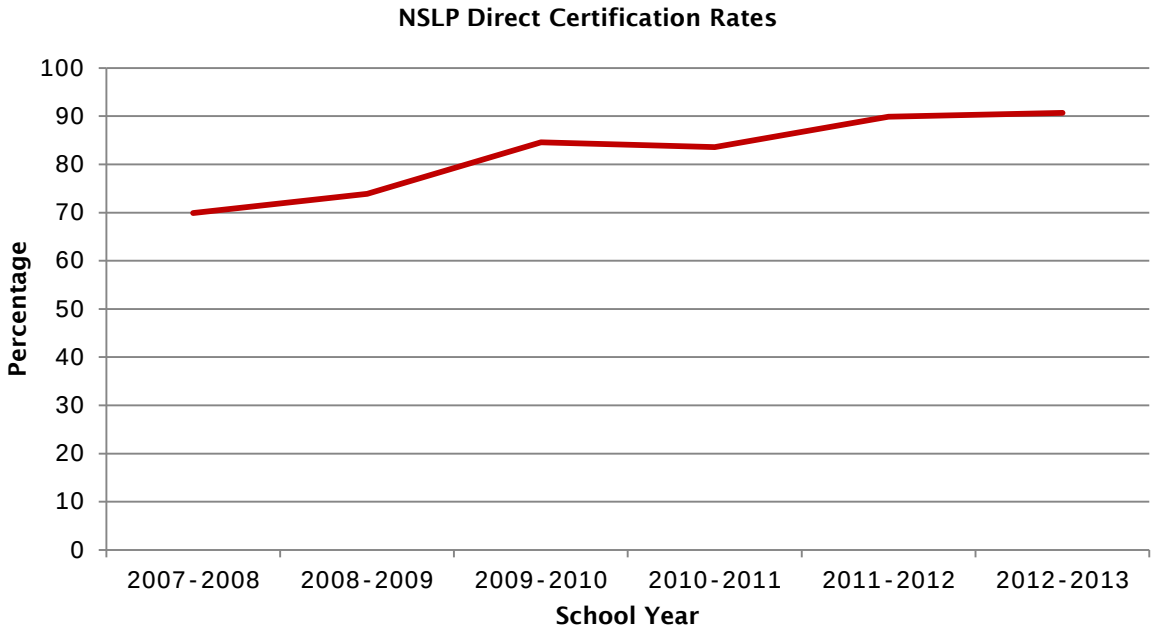
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
Foster Care	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Street address
	City
	County code
	Zip code
	SNAP or other program ID

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Unknown
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	Unknown

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	223.9	202.8	0.2	90.7
SY 2011-2012	206.8	185.8	0.2	89.9
SY 2010-2011	186.9	156.1	0.2	83.6
SY 2009-2010	162.1	136.9	0.2	84.6
SY 2008-2009	116.4	86.0	0.0	73.9
SY 2007-2008	114.7	80.1	0.2	69.9



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MASSACHUSETTS NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Northeast

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	363	Number of Schools	1,808
With fewer than 500 students	108	Public schools	1,746
With 500 to 999 students	43	Private schools	62
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	173		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	29		
With 10,000 students or more	10		

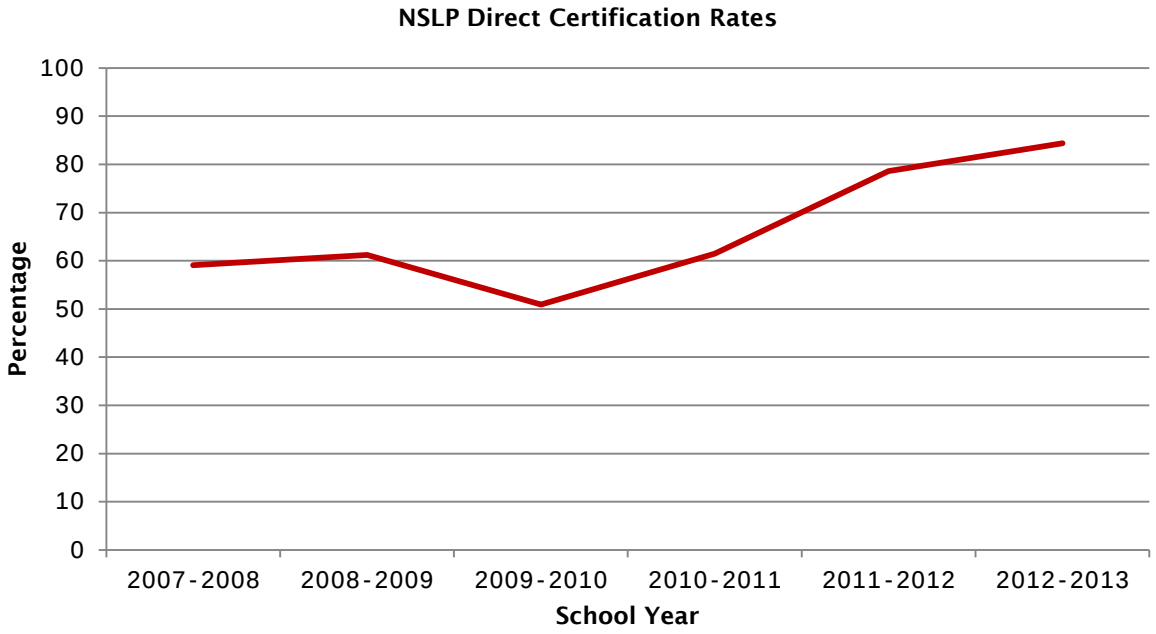
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth

Timing of Initial Match:	August
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Twice per school year
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify both/all students as matches
	Send letter to students' parents
	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified
	Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Three times per school year
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	73

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	242.8	191.6	15.7	84.4
SY 2011-2012	242.6	183.0	9.6	78.6
SY 2010-2011	226.3	128.2	18.0	61.5
SY 2009-2010	205.0	98.6	11.2	50.9
SY 2008-2009	166.3	91.1	17.5	61.2
SY 2007-2008	144.3	75.8	16.0	59.1



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MICHIGAN NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Midwest

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	847	Number of Schools	3,427
With fewer than 500 students	287	Public schools	3,233
With 500 to 999 students	176	Private schools	194
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	316		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	45		
With 10,000 students or more	23		

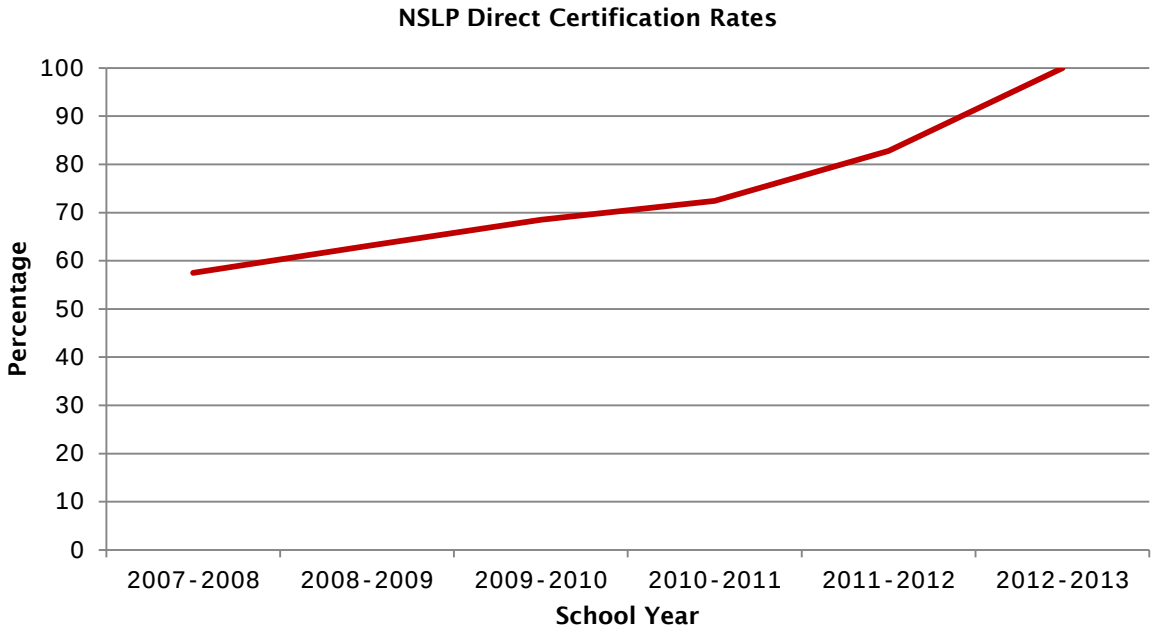
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Middle name / initial
Foster Care	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender
	Zip code

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Weekly or biweekly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify one of the students as matches Other
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified
Is individual look-up available?	Yes
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Yes

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Three times per school year
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	494.4	495.4	0.0	100.0
SY 2011-2012	544.5	450.6	0.0	82.8
SY 2010-2011	542.0	392.2	0.0	72.4
SY 2009-2010	474.2	325.0	0.0	68.5
SY 2008-2009	392.0	247.3	0.0	63.1
SY 2007-2008	404.7	232.8	0.0	57.5



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MINNESOTA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Midwest

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	694	Number of Schools	2,044
With fewer than 500 students	420	Public schools	1,787
With 500 to 999 students	113	Private schools	257
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	120		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	27		
With 10,000 students or more	14		

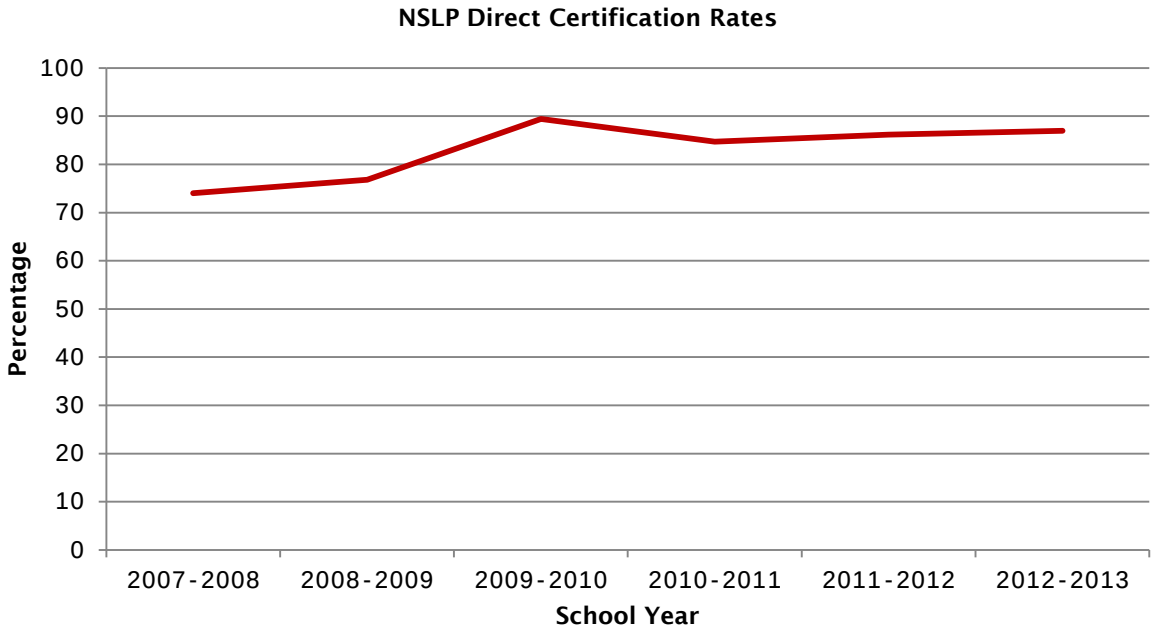
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender

Timing of Initial Match:	June
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify both/all students as matches
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Three times per school year
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	169.9	145.6	2.6	87.0
SY 2011-2012	164.0	140.0	1.6	86.2
SY 2010-2011	147.5	124.3	0.9	84.7
SY 2009-2010	120.9	107.5	0.7	89.4
SY 2008-2009	102.9	78.1	1.3	76.8
SY 2007-2008	99.4	73.0	0.8	74.0



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MISSISSIPPI NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Southeast

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	172	Number of Schools	930
With fewer than 500 students	25	Public schools	913
With 500 to 999 students	17	Private schools	17
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	110		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	15		
With 10,000 students or more	5		

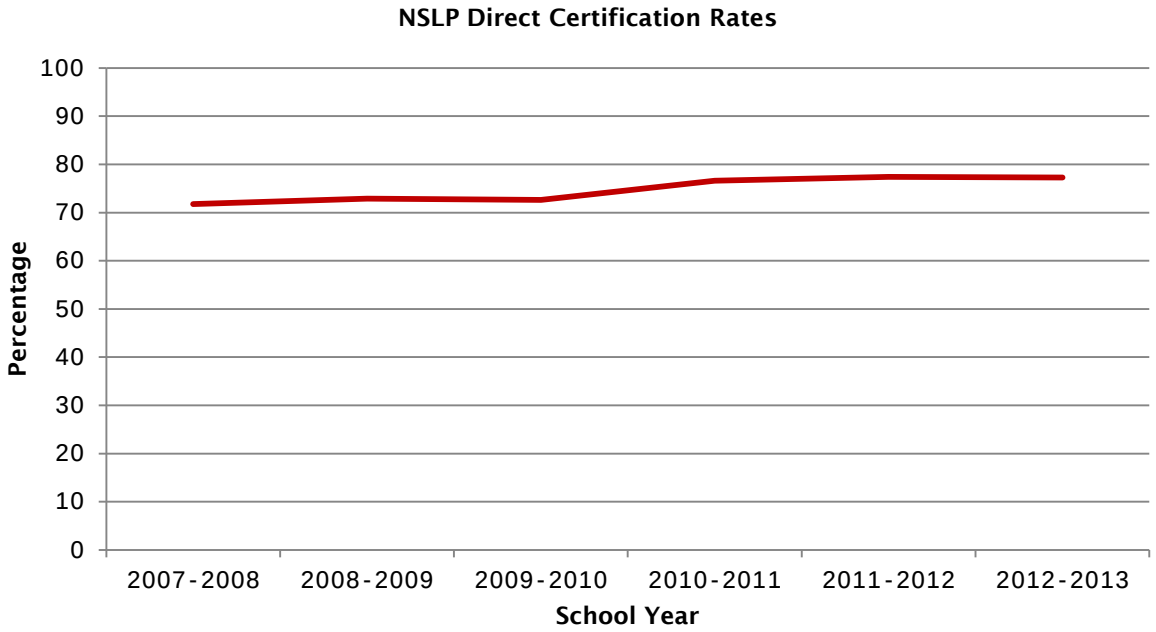
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
	First name
	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender
	Street address
	City
	County code
	Zip code
	SNAP or other program ID
	Parent first name
	Parent middle name / initial
	Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	75

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	228.5	165.5	14.6	77.3
SY 2011-2012	221.4	159.9	14.7	77.4
SY 2010-2011	204.6	148.3	11.1	76.6
SY 2009-2010	187.3	128.7	10.0	72.6
SY 2008-2009	162.9	111.6	9.8	72.9
SY 2007-2008	154.4	101.1	13.5	71.8



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MISSOURI NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mountain Plains

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	762	Number of Schools	2,468
With fewer than 500 students	454	Public schools	2,257
With 500 to 999 students	134	Private schools	211
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	135		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	19		
With 10,000 students or more	20		

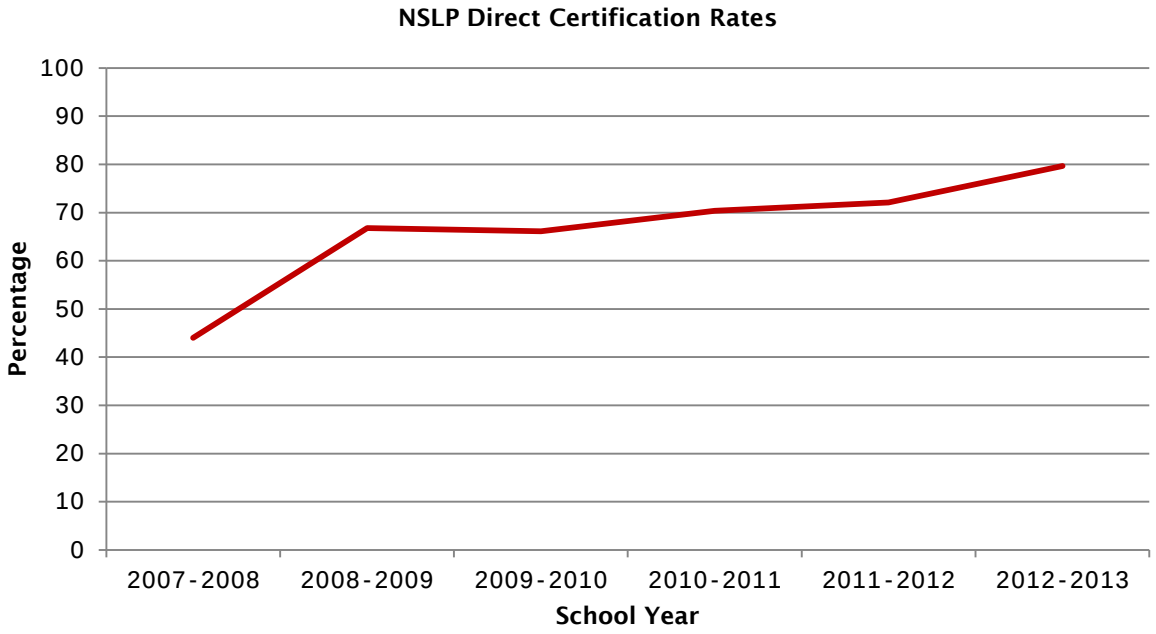
Programs Matched:
- SNAP
- TANF

SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
- SSN
- First name
- Middle name / initial
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Street address
- City
- Zip code
- Parent first name
- Parent middle name / initial
- Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable
Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Not applicable
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	Not applicable

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	302.9	241.3	0.0	79.7
SY 2011-2012	308.3	222.1	0.0	72.1
SY 2010-2011	295.2	207.6	0.1	70.4
SY 2009-2010	266.1	175.7	0.1	66.1
SY 2008-2009	223.8	149.6	0.0	66.8
SY 2007-2008	307.0	135.1	0.0	44.0



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MONTANA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mountain Plains

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	239	Number of Schools	744
With fewer than 500 students	182	Public schools	711
With 500 to 999 students	27	Private schools	33
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	24		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	4		
With 10,000 students or more	2		

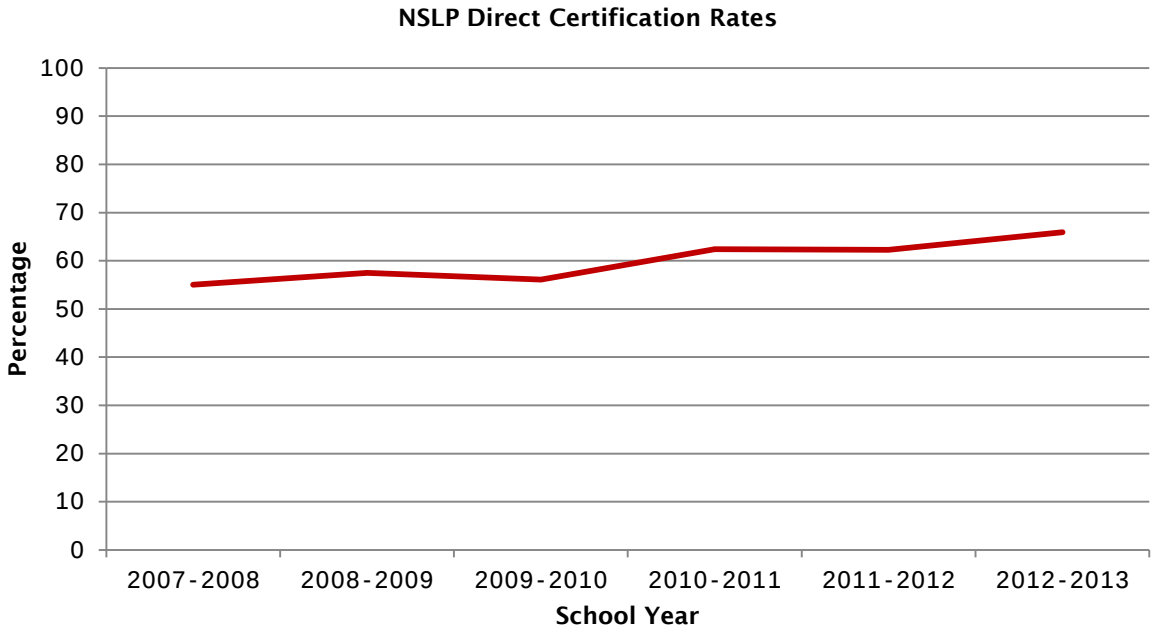
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender
	Street address
	City
	County code
	Zip code
	School name / ID
	SNAP or other program ID
	Parent first name
	Parent middle name / initial
	Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	More than three times, less than monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	District
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Other
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	State staff relay info to school district staff during trainings, emails and technical assistance
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Unknown
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	94

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	35.6	19.4	6.0	65.9
SY 2011-2012	37.3	20.0	5.1	62.3
SY 2010-2011	33.3	17.8	4.9	62.4
SY 2009-2010	30.2	14.1	5.1	56.1
SY 2008-2009	23.1	11.1	3.8	57.5
SY 2007-2008	22.9	10.7	3.5	55.0



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NEBRASKA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mountain Plains

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	370	Number of Schools	905
With fewer than 500 students	268	Public schools	751
With 500 to 999 students	64	Private schools	154
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	29		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	4		
With 10,000 students or more	5		

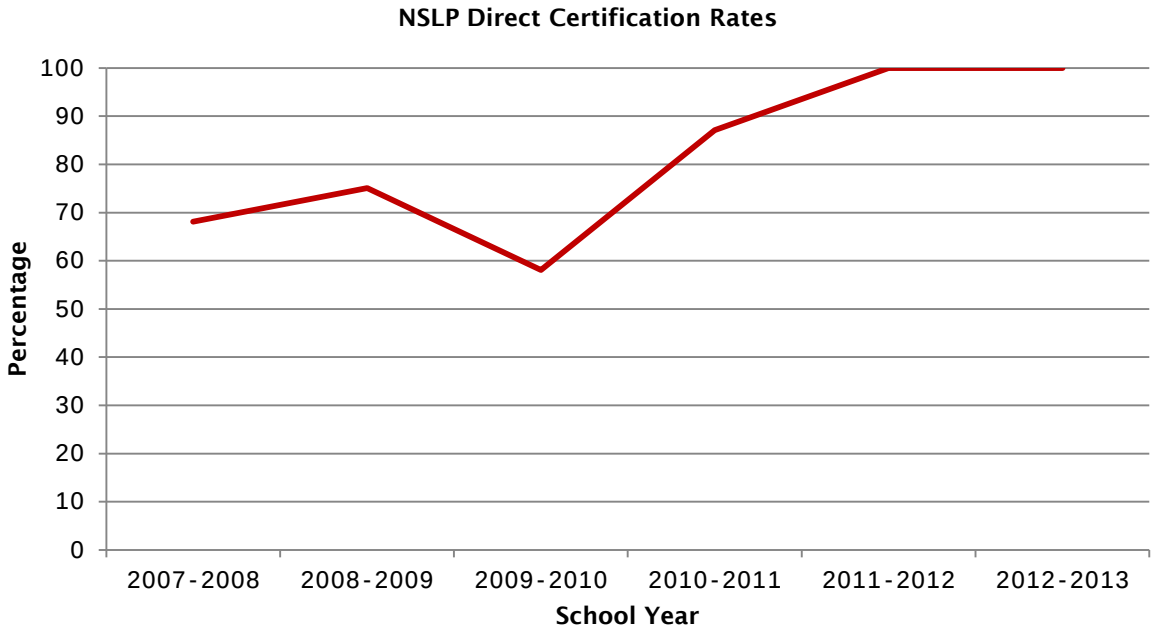
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Last name
Foster Care	Date of birth
	Gender

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Daily or real-time updates
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	State leaves this up to Schools to identify
Is individual look-up available?	Yes
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Yes

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	2 Major Due Dates and Occasional other uploads
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	56

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	56.1	63.6	0.0	100.0
SY 2011-2012	55.5	58.7	0.6	100.0
SY 2010-2011	54.4	47.0	0.4	87.1
SY 2009-2010	49.5	28.5	0.4	58.1
SY 2008-2009	38.2	28.5	0.1	75.1
SY 2007-2008	40.7	27.7	0.0	68.1



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NEVADA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Western

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	25	Number of Schools	582
With fewer than 500 students	11	Public schools	571
With 500 to 999 students	3	Private schools	11
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	4		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	5		
With 10,000 students or more	2		

Programs Matched:

- SNAP
- TANF

SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:

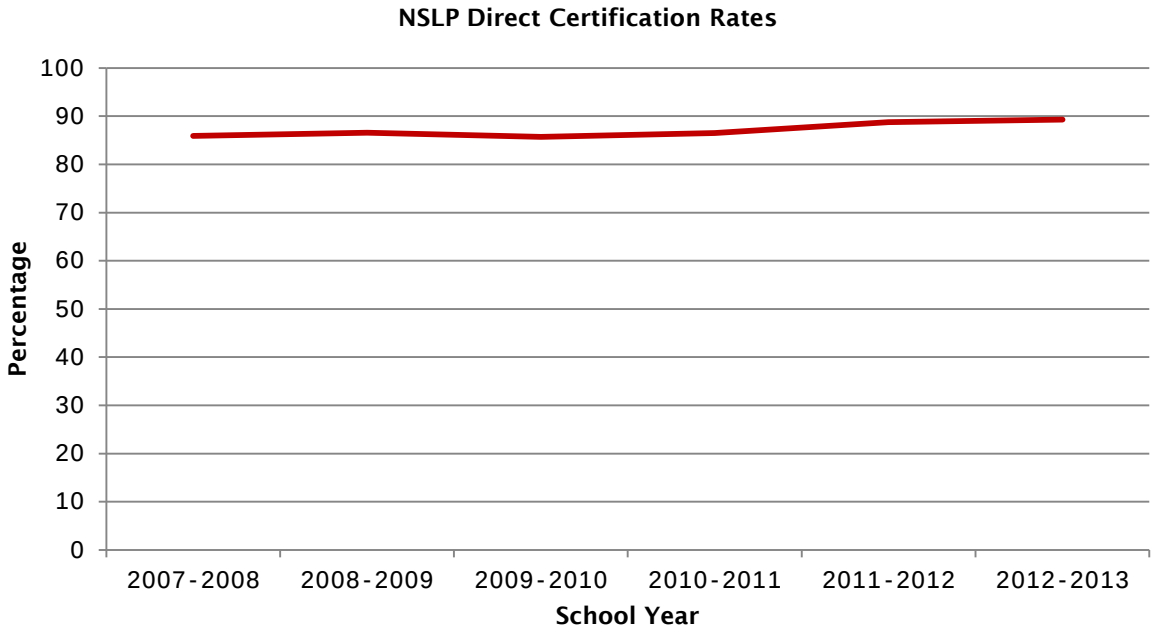
- SSN
- First name
- Middle name / initial
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Street address
- City
- County code
- Zip code
- School name / ID
- SNAP or other program ID
- Parent first name
- Parent middle name / initial
- Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	123.6	104.5	6.5	89.3
SY 2011-2012	108.0	90.7	5.9	88.8
SY 2010-2011	98.9	82.2	3.9	86.5
SY 2009-2010	75.1	60.8	4.1	85.7
SY 2008-2009	51.0	41.0	3.5	86.6
SY 2007-2008	42.7	31.9	5.6	85.9



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NEW HAMPSHIRE NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Northeast

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	98	Number of Schools	444
With fewer than 500 students	20	Public schools	433
With 500 to 999 students	18	Private schools	11
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	55		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	3		
With 10,000 students or more	2		

Programs Matched:

- SNAP
- TANF
- FDPIR

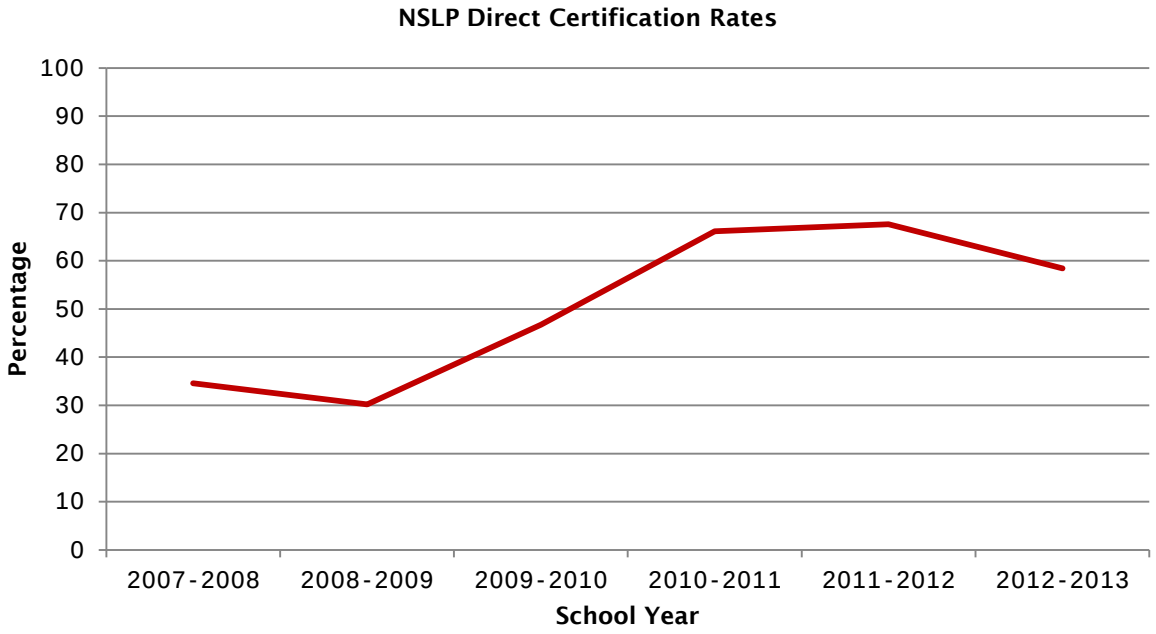
SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:

- SSN
- First name
- Middle name / initial
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Street address
- City
- County code
- Zip code
- School name / ID
- SNAP or other program ID

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	None
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No
Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Once per school year
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	35.2	20.5	0.0	58.4
SY 2011-2012	35.1	23.7	0.0	67.6
SY 2010-2011	33.7	22.3	0.0	66.1
SY 2009-2010	24.7	11.5	0.0	46.7
SY 2008-2009	18.2	5.5	0.0	30.2
SY 2007-2008	18.2	6.3	0.0	34.6



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NEW JERSEY NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mid-Atlantic

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	699	Number of Schools	6,755
With fewer than 500 students	287	Public schools	6,354
With 500 to 999 students	118	Private schools	401
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	226		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	49		
With 10,000 students or more	19		

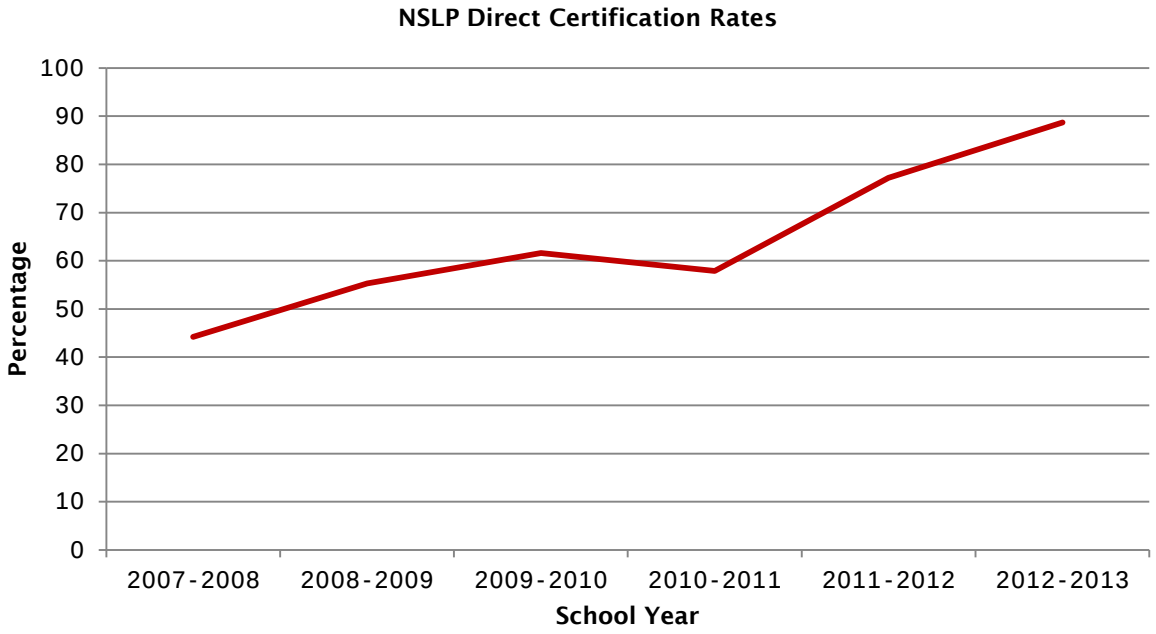
Programs Matched:
- SNAP
- TANF

SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
- SSN
- First name
- Middle name / initial
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Street address
- City
- County code
- Zip code
- Phone number
- Parent first name
- Parent middle name / initial
- Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	August
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Other frequency
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	District
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify both/all students as matches
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified Certify all with same parent/guardian Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No
Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Not applicable
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	Not applicable

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	256.3	227.2	0.3	88.7
SY 2011-2012	274.2	211.5	0.2	77.2
SY 2010-2011	234.8	135.8	0.3	57.9
SY 2009-2010	175.4	107.9	0.2	61.6
SY 2008-2009	154.6	85.5	0.0	55.3
SY 2007-2008	144.8	63.1	2.0	44.2



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NEW MEXICO NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Southwest

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	205	Number of Schools	910
With fewer than 500 students	146	Public schools	876
With 500 to 999 students	18	Private schools	34
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	26		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	7		
With 10,000 students or more	8		

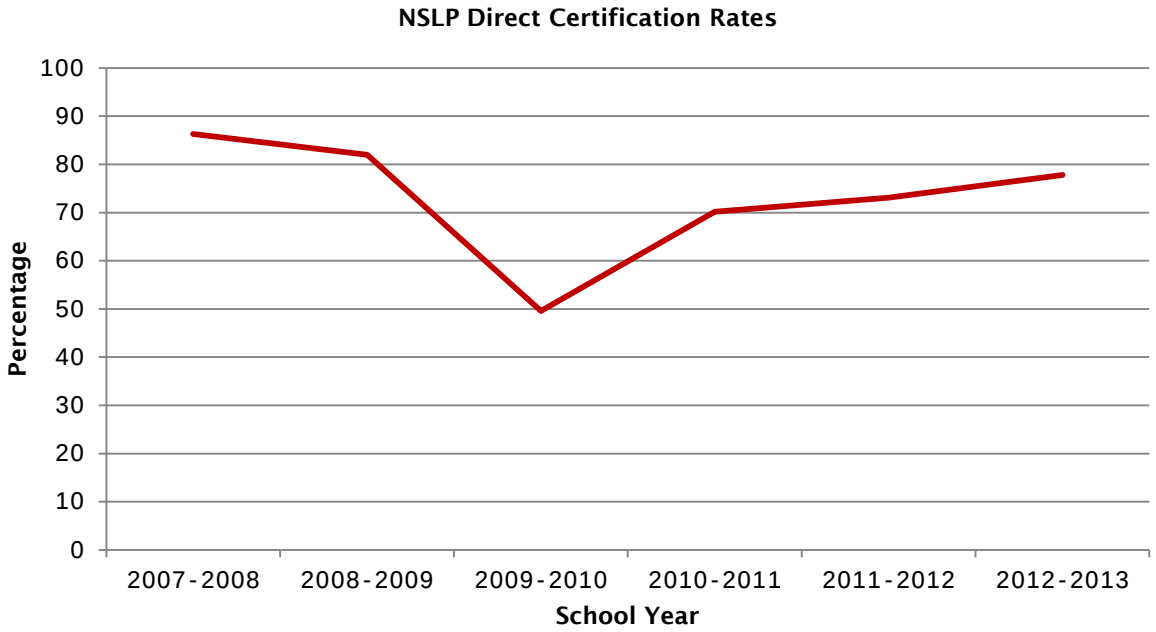
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Not applicable
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	Not applicable

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	149.0	59.8	72.1	77.8
SY 2011-2012	148.2	60.2	65.9	73.1
SY 2010-2011	128.6	44.4	65.4	70.2
SY 2009-2010	120.0	32.9	53.8	49.6
SY 2008-2009	92.5	33.1	52.2	82.0
SY 2007-2008	85.6	27.9	53.2	86.3



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NEW YORK NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Northeast

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	1,093	Number of Schools	5,764
With fewer than 500 students	445	Public schools	4,874
With 500 to 999 students	187	Private schools	890
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	375		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	69		
With 10,000 students or more	17		

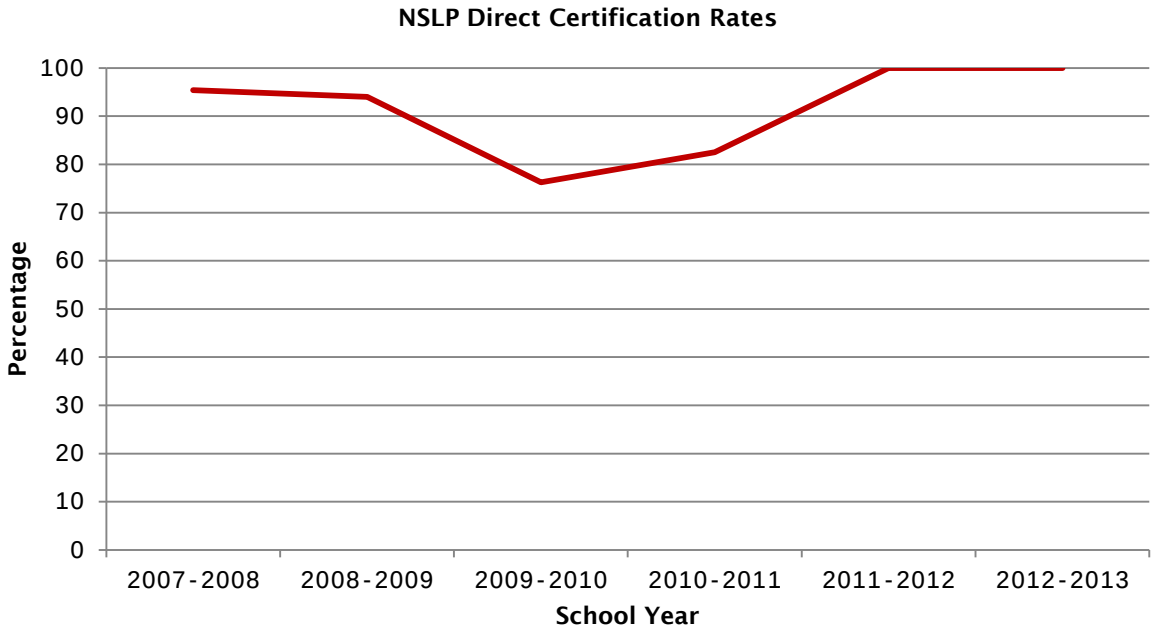
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Middle name / initial
Medicaid	Last name
	Date of birth
	Street address
	City
	Zip code
	SNAP or other program ID
	Parent first name
	Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Not applicable
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	Not applicable

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	839.4	819.3	185.9	100.0
SY 2011-2012	855.9	740.4	225.5	100.0
SY 2010-2011	906.5	533.9	259.3	82.5
SY 2009-2010	748.8	435.1	178.2	76.3
SY 2008-2009	602.4	406.5	169.8	94.0
SY 2007-2008	526.2	353.7	155.5	95.4



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NORTH CAROLINA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Southeast

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	161	Number of Schools	2,478
With fewer than 500 students	32	Public schools	2,474
With 500 to 999 students	11	Private schools	4
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	52		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	29		
With 10,000 students or more	37		

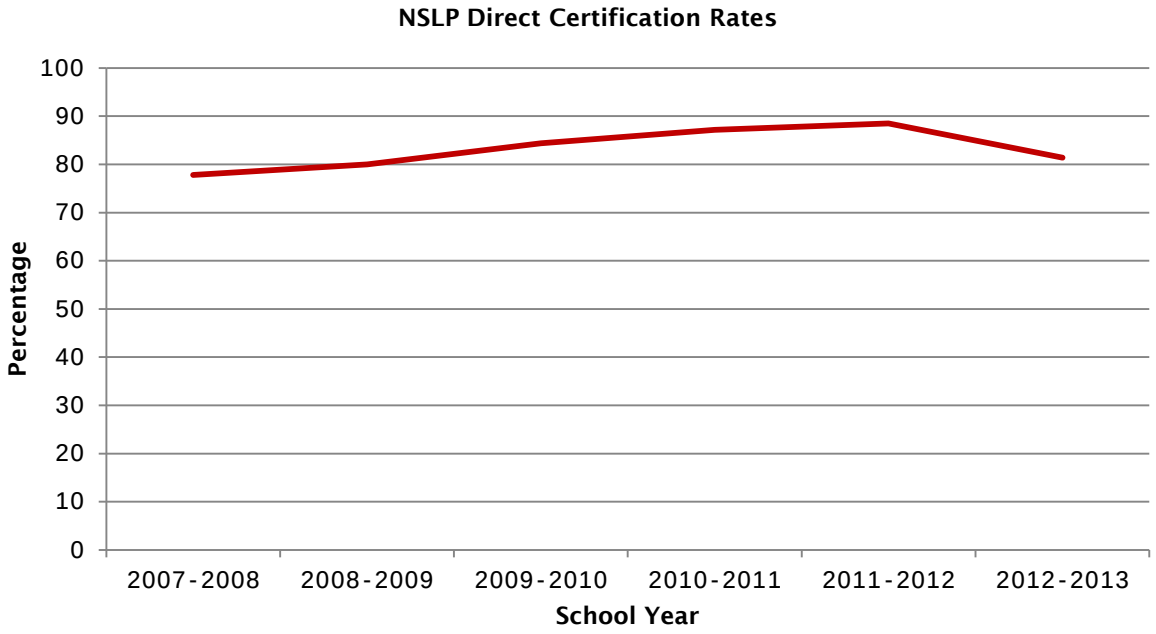
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
FDPIR	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender
	Street address
	City
	County code
	Zip code
	School name / ID
	SNAP or other program ID
	Parent first name
	Parent middle name / initial
	Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Daily or real-time updates
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	All students with same qualifying elements are manually verified before certifying
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	544.0	442.7	0.0	81.4
SY 2011-2012	522.0	461.7	0.0	88.5
SY 2010-2011	474.3	413.7	0.0	87.2
SY 2009-2010	415.0	350.4	0.0	84.4
SY 2008-2009	339.8	271.9	0.0	80.0
SY 2007-2008	314.4	244.7	0.0	77.8



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NORTH DAKOTA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mountain Plains

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	202	Number of Schools	389
With fewer than 500 students	170	Public schools	355
With 500 to 999 students	18	Private schools	34
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	9		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	3		
With 10,000 students or more	2		

Programs Matched:
- SNAP
- TANF

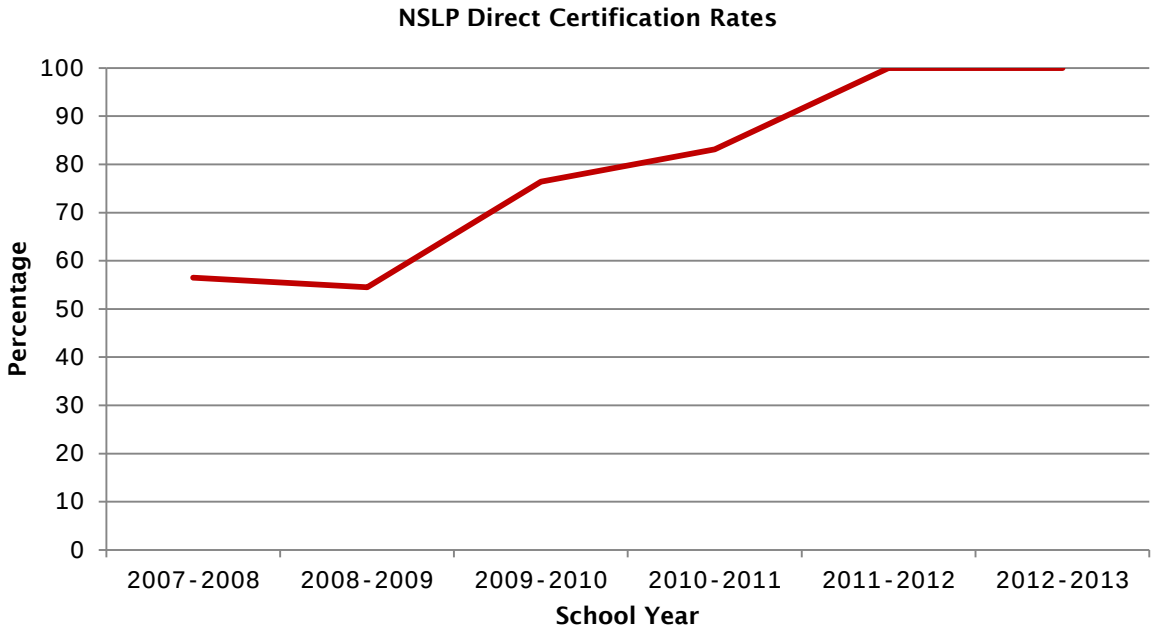
SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
- First name
- Middle name / initial
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Street address
- City
- Zip code
- SNAP or other program ID

Timing of Initial Match:	August
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Daily or real-time updates
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Duplicate matches do not occur
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Yes

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	15.2	13.4	4.8	100.0
SY 2011-2012	18.6	15.7	4.4	100.0
SY 2010-2011	18.5	12.4	3.6	83.1
SY 2009-2010	15.8	8.9	4.1	76.4
SY 2008-2009	15.2	8.3	0.0	54.5
SY 2007-2008	13.8	7.8	0.0	56.5



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OHIO NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Midwest

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	1,219	Number of Schools	3,725
With fewer than 500 students	538	Public schools	3,378
With 500 to 999 students	213	Private schools	347
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	401		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	50		
With 10,000 students or more	17		

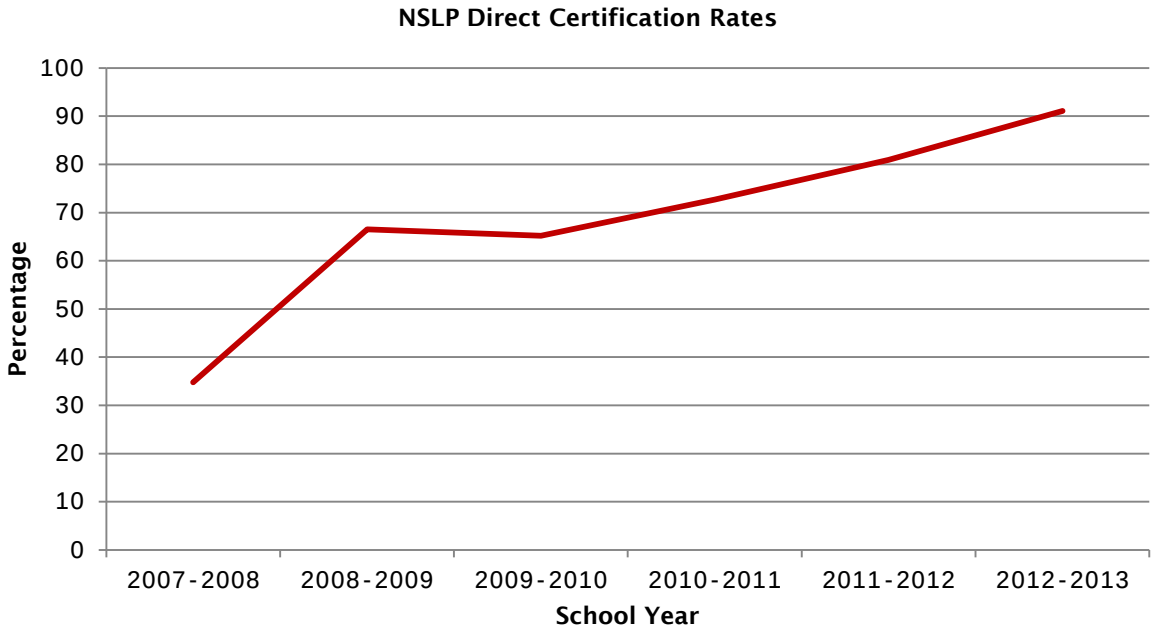
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender
	Street address
	City
	Zip code
	Phone number
	School name / ID
	Parent first name
	Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	District
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify both/all students as matches
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified Certify all with same parent/guardian
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	More than three times, less than monthly
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	534.9	481.2	6.5	91.1
SY 2011-2012	538.2	398.1	46.3	80.9
SY 2010-2011	529.6	373.7	15.7	72.7
SY 2009-2010	462.1	280.1	32.8	65.2
SY 2008-2009	387.1	237.0	30.8	66.5
SY 2007-2008	347.4	116.2	13.7	34.8



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

OKLAHOMA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Southwest

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	572	Number of Schools	1,818
With fewer than 500 students	330	Public schools	1,793
With 500 to 999 students	107	Private schools	25
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	113		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	10		
With 10,000 students or more	12		

Programs Matched:

- SNAP
- TANF

SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:

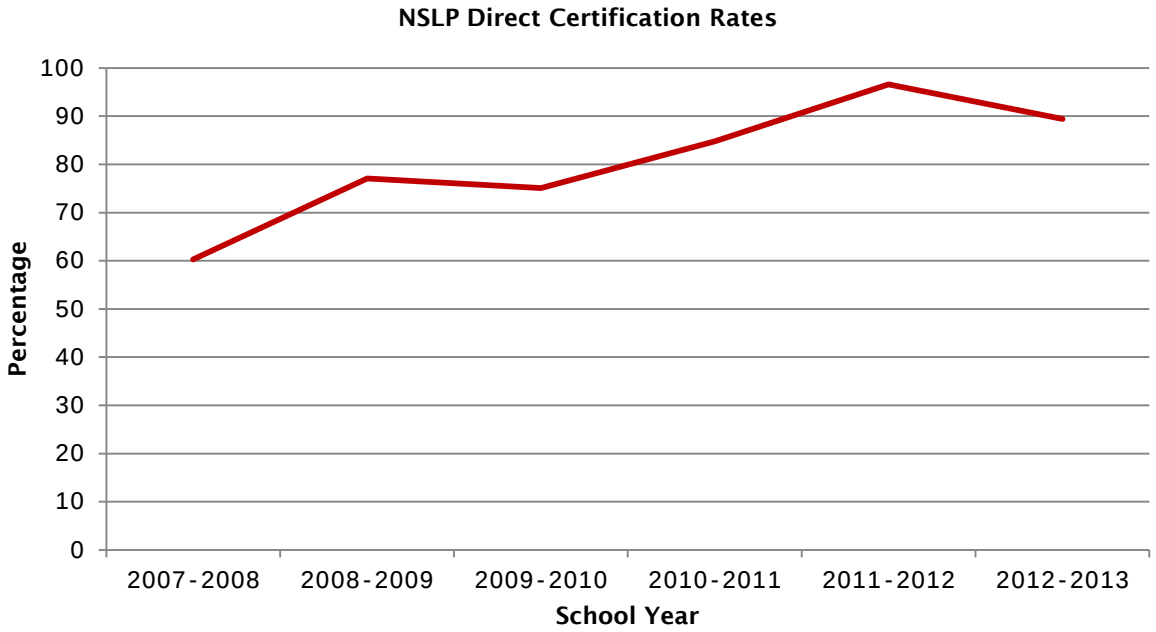
- SSN
- First name
- Middle name / initial
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Street address
- City
- County code
- Zip code
- Phone number
- School name / ID
- Parent first name
- Parent middle name / initial
- Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Daily or real-time updates
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Duplicate matches do not occur
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	The SFA is responsible for this.
Is individual look-up available?	Yes
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	199.6	170.5	8.7	89.4
SY 2011-2012	195.4	180.9	8.1	96.6
SY 2010-2011	193.9	158.4	7.0	84.8
SY 2009-2010	173.2	125.6	6.0	75.1
SY 2008-2009	135.7	100.3	5.6	77.1
SY 2007-2008	135.6	78.7	5.1	60.3



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OREGON NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Western

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	239	Number of Schools	1,223
With fewer than 500 students	123	Public schools	1,154
With 500 to 999 students	30	Private schools	69
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	59		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	15		
With 10,000 students or more	12		

Programs Matched:

- SNAP
- TANF

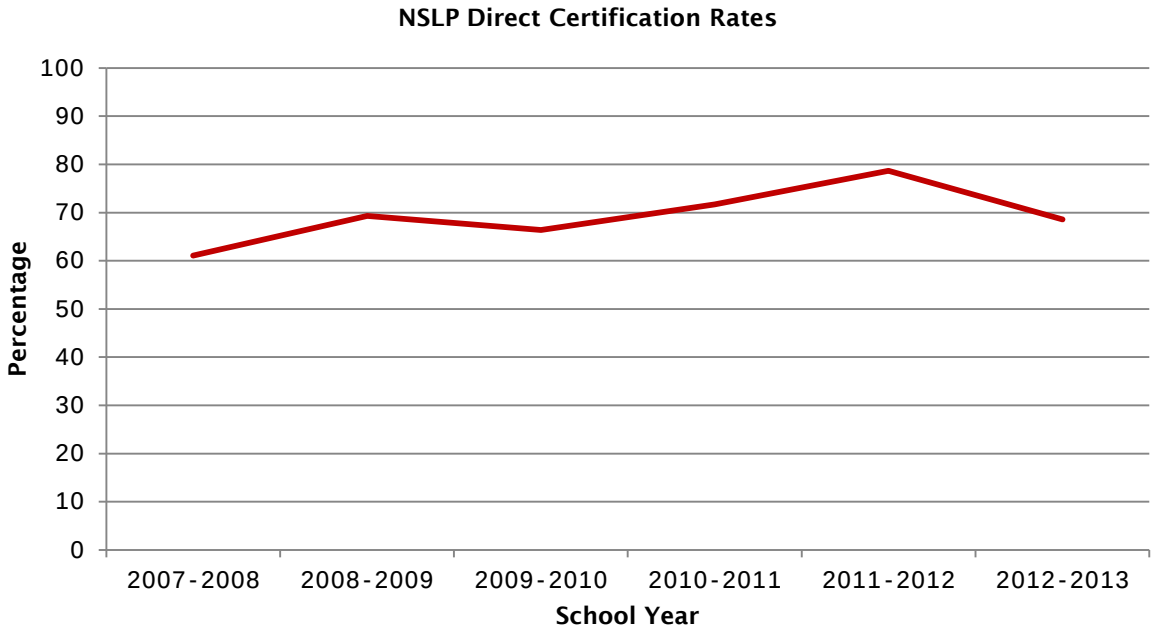
SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:

- First name
- Middle name / initial
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Street address
- City
- County code
- Zip code
- Phone number
- School name / ID
- SNAP or other program ID
- Parent first name
- Parent middle name / initial
- Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Weekly or biweekly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Other
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Yes
Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	225.0	151.4	4.3	68.6
SY 2011-2012	212.3	163.6	4.4	78.7
SY 2010-2011	199.2	142.3	0.6	71.7
SY 2009-2010	178.3	115.7	4.1	66.4
SY 2008-2009	138.8	93.9	3.2	69.3
SY 2007-2008	137.5	82.3	2.7	61.1



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PENNSYLVANIA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mid-Atlantic

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	853	Number of Schools	3,391
With fewer than 500 students	289	Public schools	3,041
With 500 to 999 students	116	Private schools	350
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	379		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	54		
With 10,000 students or more	15		

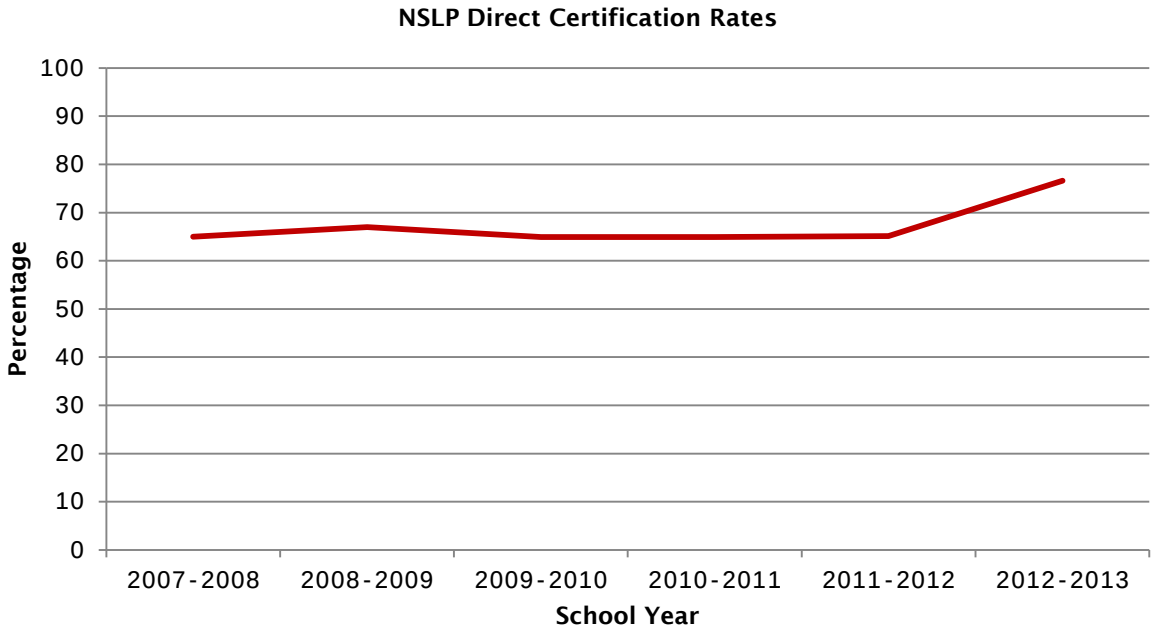
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
Medicaid	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Street address
	City
	County code
	Zip code
	SNAP or other program ID
	Parent SSN
	Parent first name
	Parent middle name / initial
	Parent last name
	Parent date of birth

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Unknown
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	Unknown

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	450.9	333.2	15.8	76.6
SY 2011-2012	461.9	290.5	15.8	65.1
SY 2010-2011	422.1	263.3	16.6	64.9
SY 2009-2010	355.0	223.1	11.0	64.9
SY 2008-2009	280.9	187.6	0.8	67.0
SY 2007-2008	275.6	178.3	1.4	65.0



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RHODE ISLAND NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Northeast

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	53	Number of Schools	327
With fewer than 500 students	20	Public schools	327
With 500 to 999 students	2	Private schools	0
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	23		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	6		
With 10,000 students or more	2		

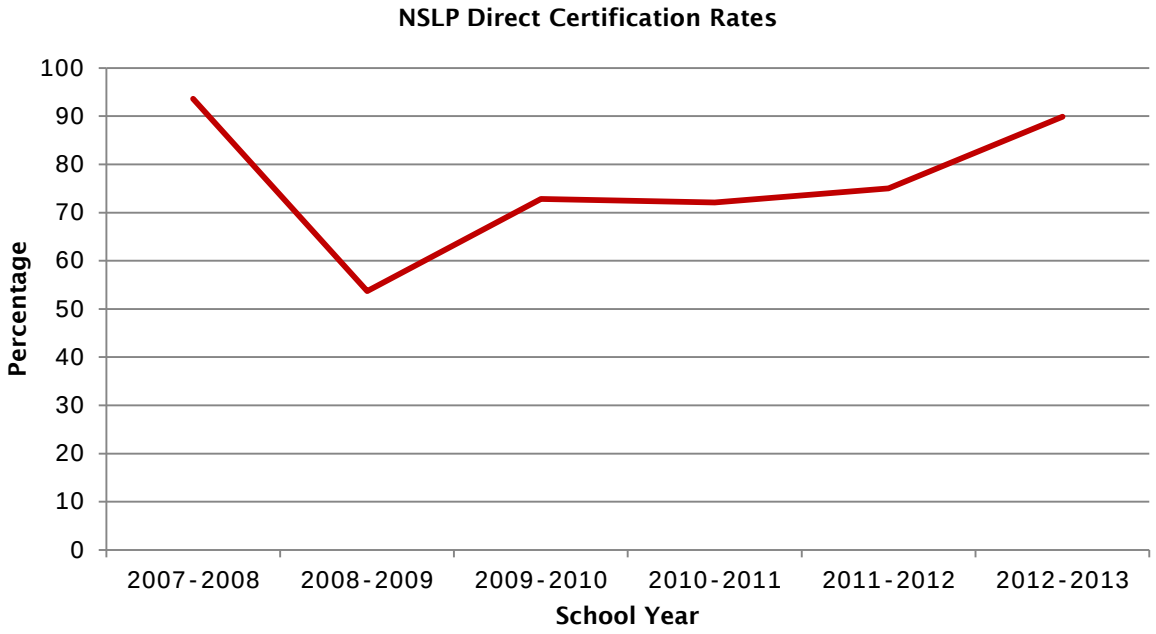
Programs Matched:
- SNAP
- TANF

SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
- First name
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- City

Timing of Initial Match:	August
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Yes
Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	45.1	40.5	0.0	89.9
SY 2011-2012	44.6	33.5	0.0	75.0
SY 2010-2011	42.6	29.1	2.2	72.1
SY 2009-2010	36.0	24.8	1.9	72.8
SY 2008-2009	28.5	15.3	0.0	53.7
SY 2007-2008	26.9	25.2	0.0	93.6



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SOUTH CAROLINA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Southeast

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	94	Number of Schools	1,179
With fewer than 500 students	12	Public schools	1,176
With 500 to 999 students	6	Private schools	3
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	36		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	17		
With 10,000 students or more	23		

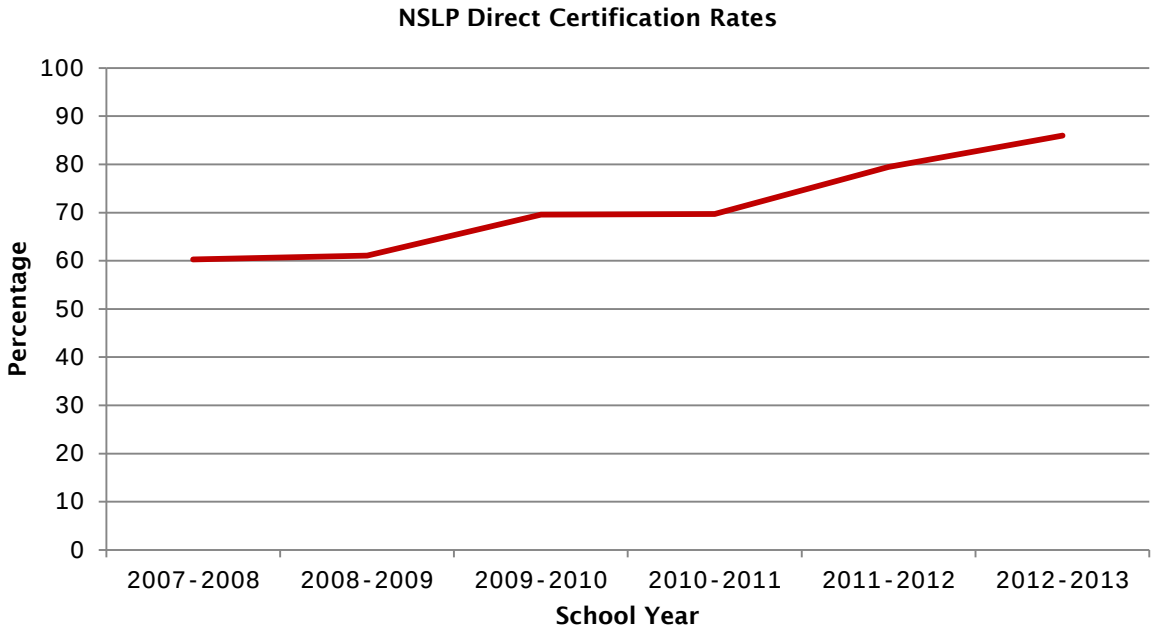
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name Middle name / initial Last name Date of birth Gender Street address City County code Zip code Phone number School name / ID Parent SSN Parent first name Parent middle name / initial Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified Certify all with same parent/guardian Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	Yes
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Yes

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	More than three times, less than monthly
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	273.2	235.0	0.0	86.0
SY 2011-2012	283.4	225.3	0.0	79.5
SY 2010-2011	271.4	189.2	0.0	69.7
SY 2009-2010	234.5	163.1	0.0	69.6
SY 2008-2009	205.4	125.5	0.0	61.1
SY 2007-2008	198.0	119.3	0.0	60.3



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SOUTH DAKOTA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mountain Plains

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	208	Number of Schools	797
With fewer than 500 students	151	Public schools	626
With 500 to 999 students	32	Private schools	171
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	23		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	0		
With 10,000 students or more	2		

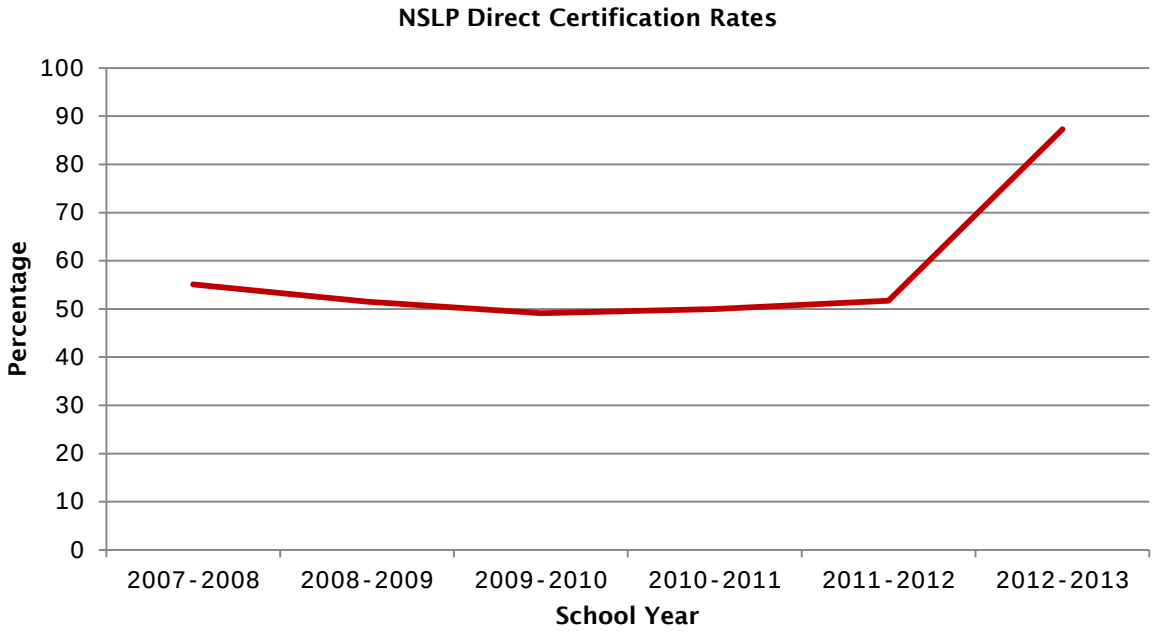
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender
	County code

Timing of Initial Match:	August
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify both/all students as matches Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified Certify all with same parent/guardian Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Minimum once, other as needed, no set schedule
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	32.6	23.1	6.1	87.3
SY 2011-2012	33.9	14.9	5.1	51.7
SY 2010-2011	32.3	12.3	7.7	50.0
SY 2009-2010	27.7	9.5	8.4	49.1
SY 2008-2009	20.4	7.3	6.2	51.5
SY 2007-2008	18.1	6.0	7.3	55.1



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TENNESSEE NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Southeast

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	182	Number of Schools	1,789
With fewer than 500 students	45	Public schools	1,726
With 500 to 999 students	15	Private schools	63
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	78		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	24		
With 10,000 students or more	20		

Programs Matched:
- SNAP
- TANF
- Foster Care

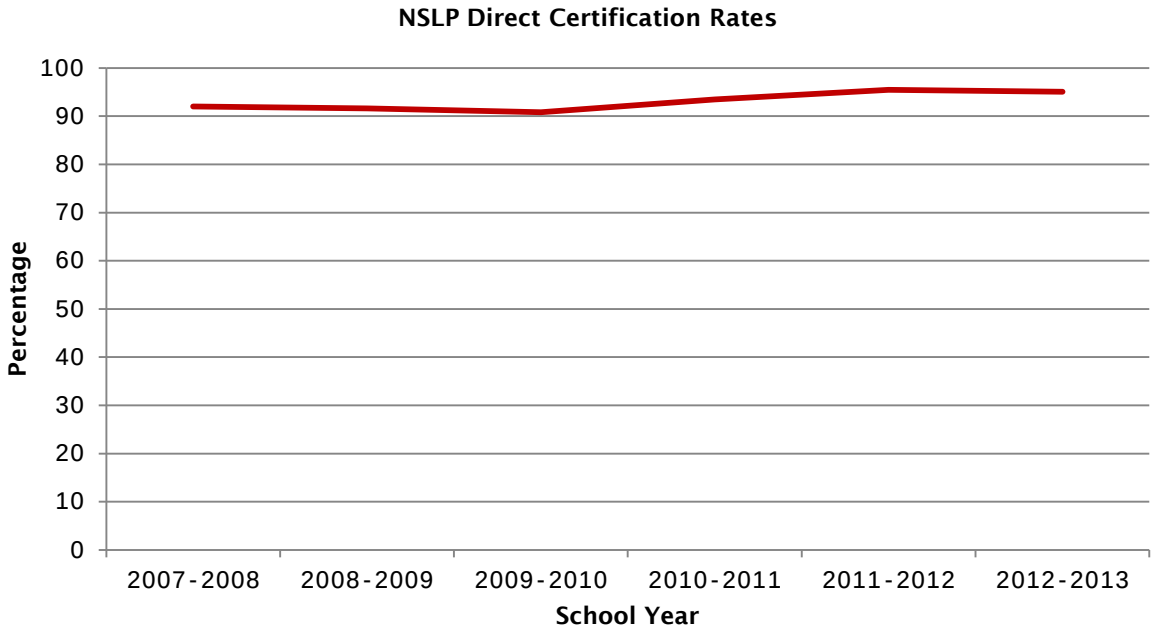
SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
- SSN
- First name
- Middle name / initial
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Street address
- City
- County code
- Zip code
- SNAP or other program ID
- Parent first name
- Parent middle name / initial
- Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Unknown
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	58

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	400.1	379.2	1.3	95.1
SY 2011-2012	389.9	370.9	1.4	95.5
SY 2010-2011	387.5	361.1	1.2	93.5
SY 2009-2010	368.7	333.9	1.1	90.8
SY 2008-2009	296.9	270.8	1.3	91.6
SY 2007-2008	279.9	256.3	1.3	92.0



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TEXAS NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Southwest

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	1,247	Number of Schools	8,240
With fewer than 500 students	471	Public schools	8,152
With 500 to 999 students	235	Private schools	88
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	368		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	66		
With 10,000 students or more	107		

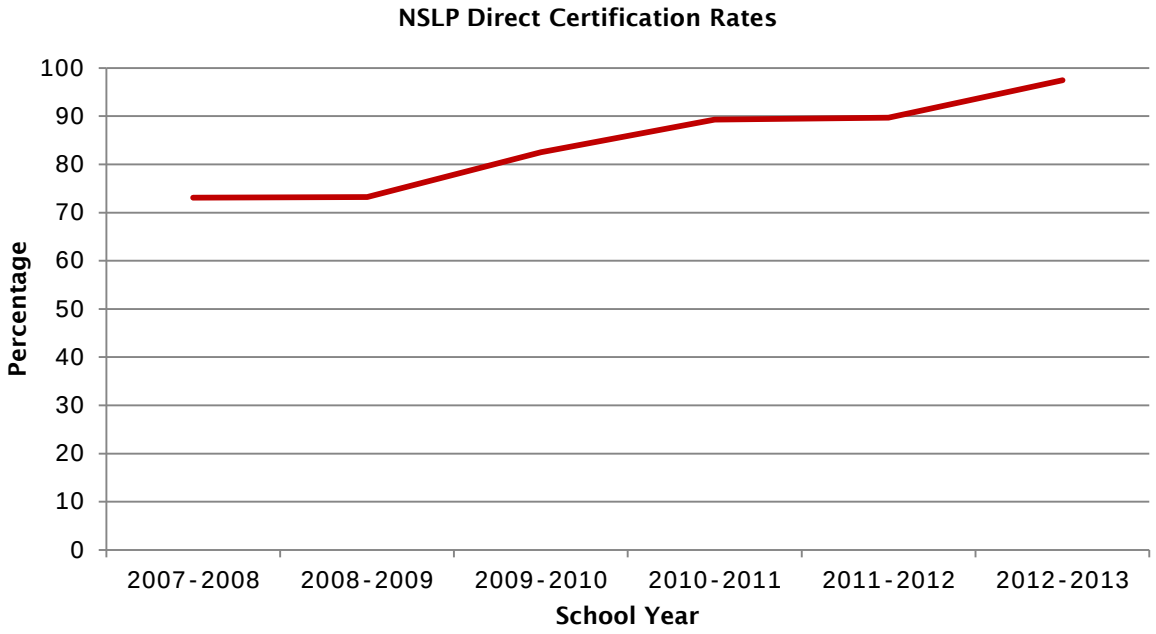
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
	Last name
	Date of birth
	Gender

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	More than three times, less than monthly
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	88

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	1,570.2	1,213.0	325.7	97.5
SY 2011-2012	1,611.8	1,166.0	311.2	89.7
SY 2010-2011	1,457.5	1,052.1	279.4	89.3
SY 2009-2010	1,208.6	760.4	286.4	82.5
SY 2008-2009	1,035.1	596.2	220.5	73.2
SY 2007-2008	942.9	522.1	228.5	73.1



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UTAH NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mountain Plains

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	94	Number of Schools	890
With fewer than 500 students	27	Public schools	883
With 500 to 999 students	23	Private schools	7
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	25		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	5		
With 10,000 students or more	14		

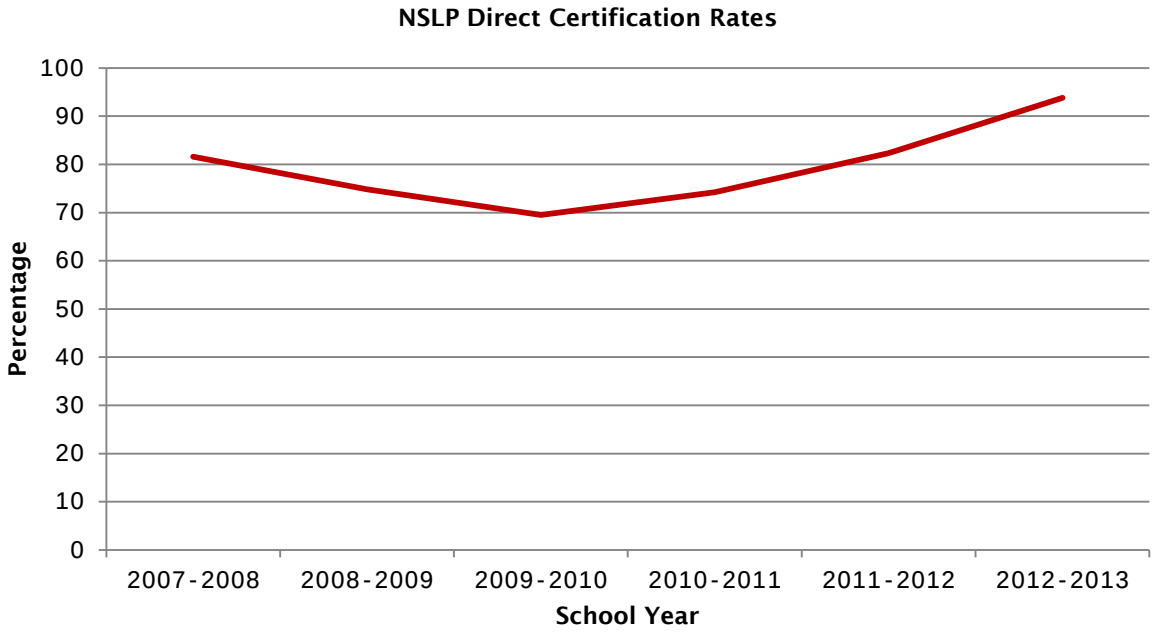
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
TANF	Last name
Foster Care	Date of birth
	Street address
	City
	Zip code
	School name / ID
	Parent first name
	Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Daily or real-time updates
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	District
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Identify both/all students as matches
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified
Is individual look-up available?	Yes
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Monthly
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	94.3	86.0	2.7	93.8
SY 2011-2012	97.1	78.9	1.3	82.3
SY 2010-2011	97.4	71.3	1.3	74.2
SY 2009-2010	75.6	51.6	1.3	69.5
SY 2008-2009	51.8	37.8	1.3	74.8
SY 2007-2008	42.5	33.1	1.9	81.6



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VERMONT NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Northeast

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	88	Number of Schools	350
With fewer than 500 students	32	Public schools	318
With 500 to 999 students	17	Private schools	32
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	37		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	2		
With 10,000 students or more	0		

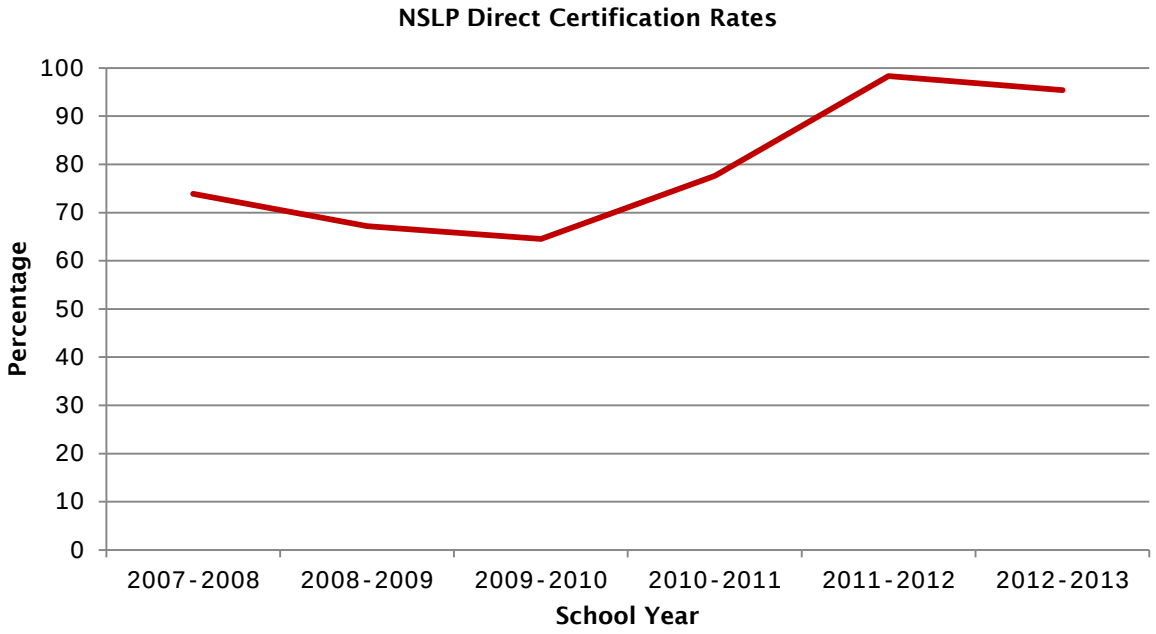
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	Unknown
TANF	

Timing of Initial Match:	August
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified Certify all with same parent/guardian Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Unknown
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	23.1	20.7	1.4	95.4
SY 2011-2012	21.5	20.6	0.5	98.3
SY 2010-2011	21.9	16.9	0.1	77.6
SY 2009-2010	22.1	14.2	0.0	64.5
SY 2008-2009	14.5	9.8	0.0	67.2
SY 2007-2008	12.6	9.3	0.0	73.9



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

VIRGINIA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mid-Atlantic

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	151	Number of Schools	1,966
With fewer than 500 students	18	Public schools	1,938
With 500 to 999 students	12	Private schools	28
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	72		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	21		
With 10,000 students or more	28		

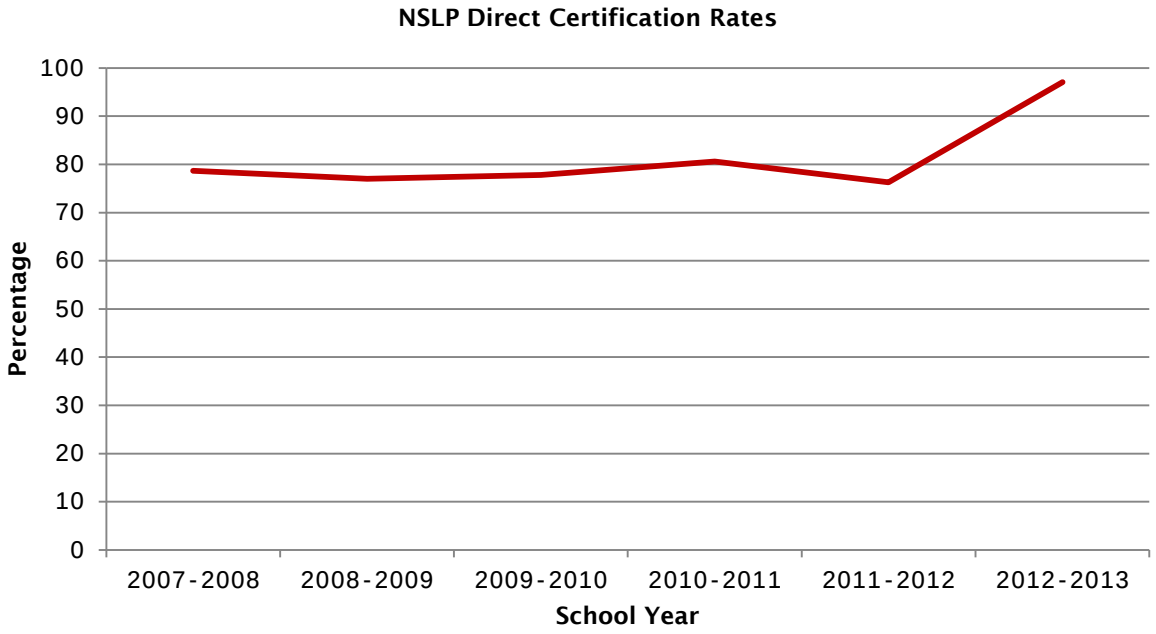
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
	Middle name / initial
	Date of birth
	Gender
	Street address
	City
	County code
	Zip code
	Parent first name
	Parent middle name / initial
	Parent last name

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	More than three times, less than monthly
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	249.5	242.4	0.0	97.1
SY 2011-2012	290.6	221.7	0.0	76.3
SY 2010-2011	257.9	207.9	0.0	80.6
SY 2009-2010	224.1	174.4	0.0	77.8
SY 2008-2009	183.4	141.3	0.0	77.0
SY 2007-2008	170.3	133.1	1.2	78.7



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

WASHINGTON NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Western

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	319	Number of Schools	2,152
With fewer than 500 students	131	Public schools	2,119
With 500 to 999 students	46	Private schools	33
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	86		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	27		
With 10,000 students or more	29		

Programs Matched:
- SNAP
- TANF

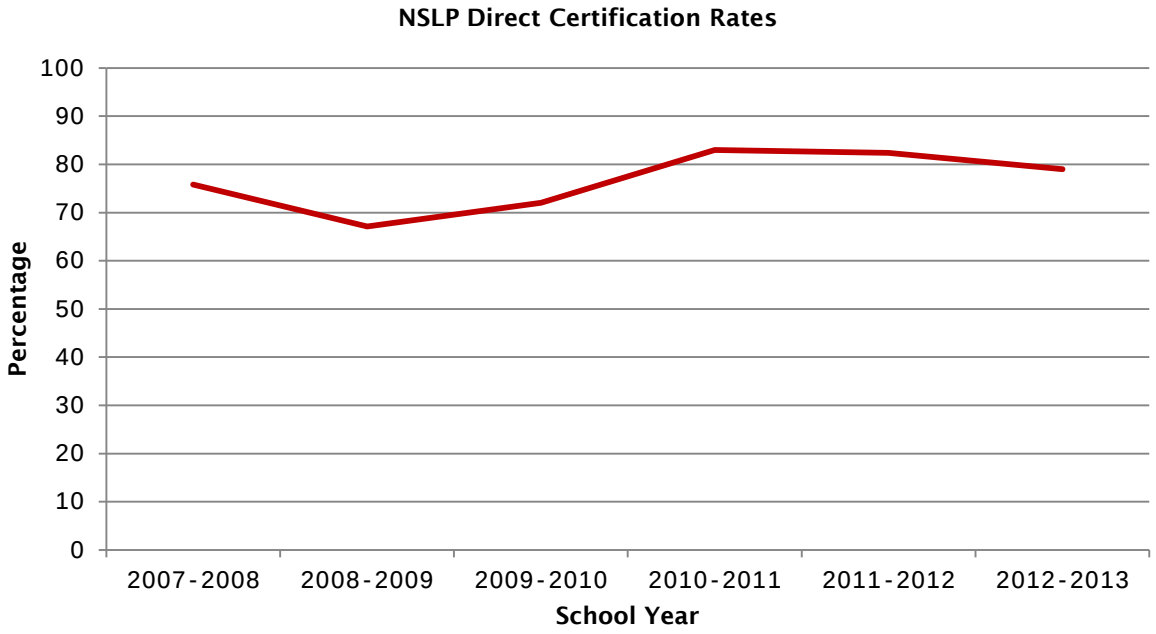
SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
- First name
- Middle name / initial
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Street address
- City
- Zip code
- School name / ID
- SNAP or other program ID

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Other
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	Yes
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Monthly
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	100

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	323.5	246.2	11.9	79.0
SY 2011-2012	312.2	246.5	12.9	82.4
SY 2010-2011	290.5	232.4	10.4	83.0
SY 2009-2010	256.5	182.2	3.5	72.0
SY 2008-2009	180.2	119.3	2.4	67.1
SY 2007-2008	158.2	117.8	2.7	75.8



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

WEST VIRGINIA NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mid-Atlantic

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	71	Number of Schools	713
With fewer than 500 students	16	Public schools	694
With 500 to 999 students	1	Private schools	19
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	38		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	9		
With 10,000 students or more	7		

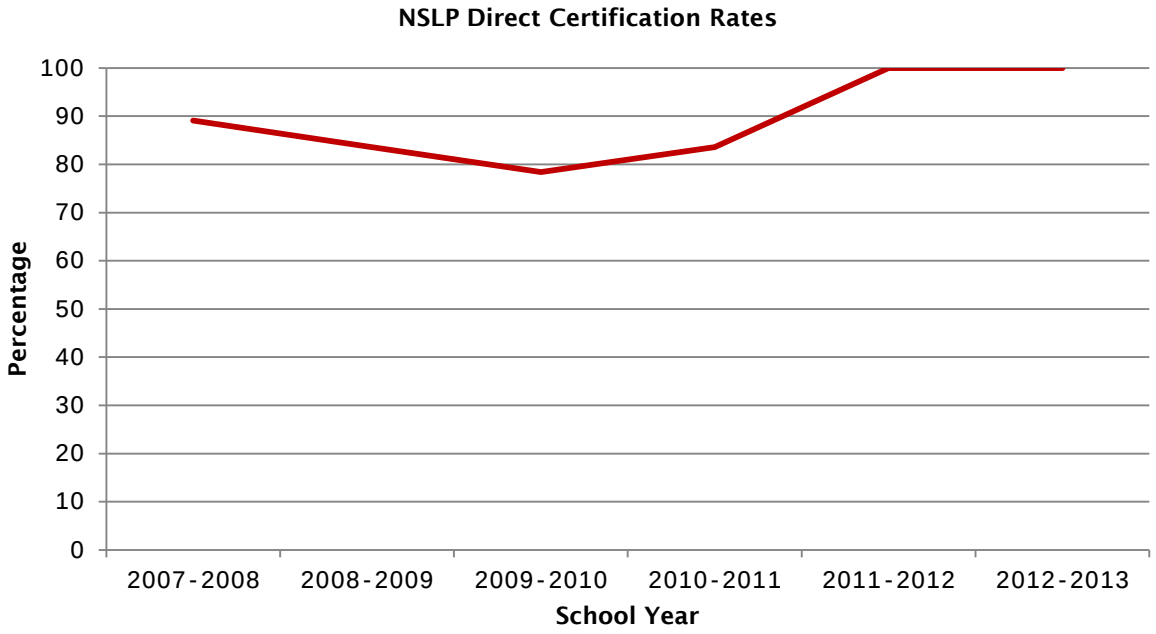
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	SSN
TANF	First name
Foster Care	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth

Timing of Initial Match:	July
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Monthly
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	State
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Yes
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Use additional information to determine which student matches the program data
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Notification letters modified Certify all with same address
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Yes

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Ongoing
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	77

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	97.8	107.2	0.0	100.0
SY 2011-2012	99.5	99.7	0.0	100.0
SY 2010-2011	95.9	80.1	0.0	83.6
SY 2009-2010	93.3	73.2	0.0	78.4
SY 2008-2009	82.1	68.7	0.0	83.7
SY 2007-2008	75.9	67.6	0.0	89.1



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

WISCONSIN NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Midwest

Matching Method:	Central matching		
Number of School Districts	799	Number of Schools	2,515
With fewer than 500 students	459	Public schools	2,088
With 500 to 999 students	142	Private schools	427
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	168		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	21		
With 10,000 students or more	9		

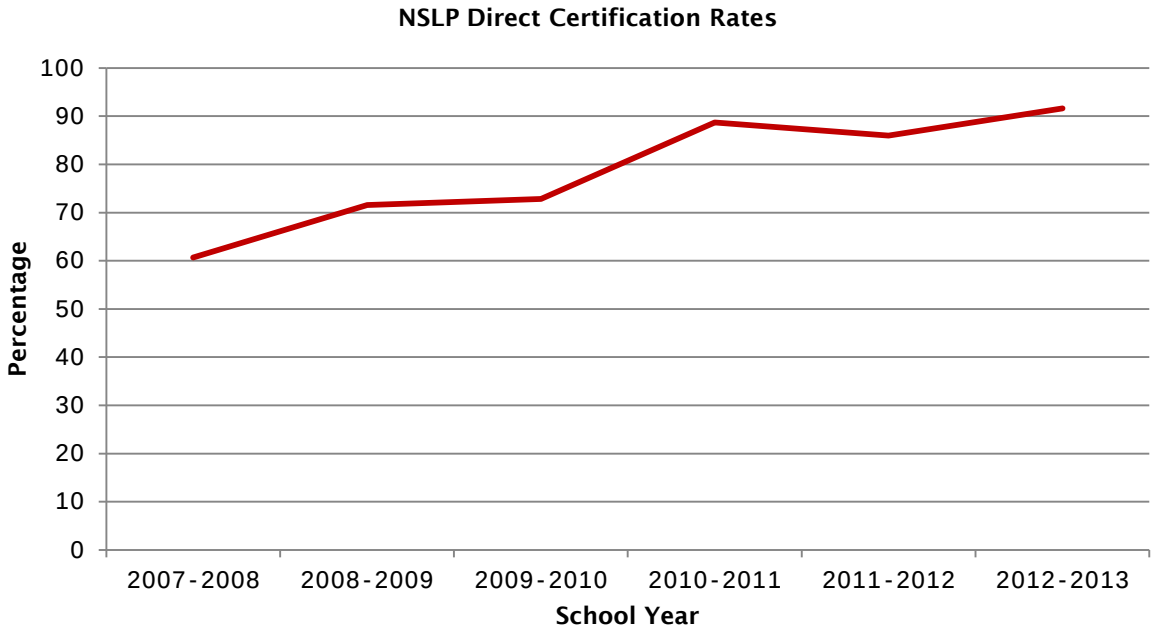
Programs Matched:
- SNAP
- TANF

SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
- First name
- Middle name / initial
- Last name
- Date of birth
- School name / ID

Timing of Initial Match:	August
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Three times per school year
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	District
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	No
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Other
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Not Applicable
Is individual look-up available?	No
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	No
Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Electronic files maintained at district
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Not applicable
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	Not applicable

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	260.4	237.3	1.3	91.6
SY 2011-2012	268.1	229.6	1.0	86.0
SY 2010-2011	247.0	217.6	1.8	88.7
SY 2009-2010	210.4	151.5	2.2	72.8
SY 2008-2009	156.4	111.1	1.2	71.6
SY 2007-2008	139.5	84.1	1.1	60.7



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

WYOMING NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILE, SY 2012-2013

FNS Region: Mountain Plains

Matching Method:	Local matching		
Number of School Districts	62	Number of Schools	331
With fewer than 500 students	26	Public schools	316
With 500 to 999 students	15	Private schools	15
With 1,000 to 4,999 students	17		
With 5,000 to 9,999 students	2		
With 10,000 students or more	2		

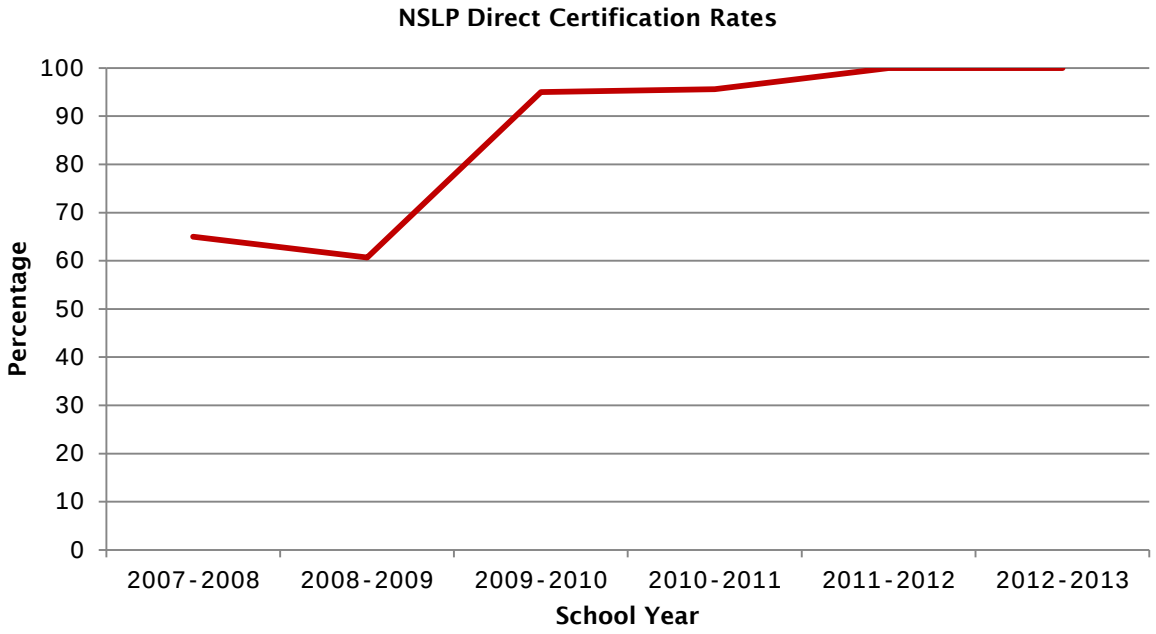
Programs Matched:	SNAP Data Elements Used in Match:
SNAP	First name
Foster Care	Middle name / initial
	Last name
	Date of birth
	City
	Zip code

Timing of Initial Match:	Varies by district
Frequency of Subsequent Matches:	Varies by district
Who is responsible for subsequent matches?	Districts
Are steps taken to follow up on students in program data who do not match enrollment data?	Varies by district
What is the process for dealing with duplicate matches?	Varies by district
What methods are used to identify additional children in households with directly certified children?	Varies by district
Is individual look-up available?	Not applicable
Does the State use probabilistic matching?	Not applicable

Source of Student Enrollment Data:	Statewide Student Information System
Frequency of SSIS Updates (if applicable)	Not applicable
Percentage of Districts Using SSIS (if applicable)	Not applicable

NSLP Direct Certification Rates and Component Statistics, SY 2007–2008 through SY 2012- 2013

	School-Age SNAP Participants (thousands)	NSLP Direct Certifications (thousands)	SNAP Participants in Non-Base Year NSLP Provision 2 or Provision 3 Schools (thousands)	Direct Certification Rates (percentage)
SY 2012-2013	11.8	11.3	0.5	100.0
SY 2011-2012	10.1	11.1	0.8	100.0
SY 2010-2011	11.3	10.2	0.6	95.6
SY 2009-2010	8.7	7.6	0.7	95.0
SY 2008-2009	7.4	4.5	0.0	60.7
SY 2007-2008	6.8	4.4	0.0	65.0



This NSLP direct certification profile was compiled using data from the SY 2012-2013 National Survey of Direct Certification Practices, Verification and Summary Reports from SY 2007-2008 through SY 2012-2013, and FNS' annual Direct Certification in the NSLP: State Implementation Progress Reports to Congress.

APPENDIX B

IN- DEPTH CASE STUDY NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILES

IN-DEPTH CASE STUDY NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILES INTRODUCTION

The In-Depth Case Study NSLP Direct Certification Profiles expand on the information presented in the summary profile by providing additional detail in how direct certification worked in the seven in-depth case study States in SY 2012-2013. The profiles provide narrative descriptions of each State's approach to direct certification; details on the data, systems, and algorithms used in the matching process; the history of the State's direct certification program; plans for future improvement; and strengths and challenges staff reported in the process.

A diagram illustrating each step in the direct certification process follows each narrative description. The flow chart depicts the sequence of events and indicates the agency and district functions in the process. Each flow chart contains a legend identifying the symbols used in the chart. The symbols represent the key steps and system components involved in the process to directly certify school age children for free school meals.

APPENDIX B.1

IN- DEPTH CASE STUDY NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILES

ALABAMA

Table B.1. Profile of Direct Certification Procedures for Alabama, SY 2012–2013

Approach to Matching	Alabama is a central matching State that allows districts great flexibility in how to carry out direct certification. The State Department of Education produces a list of directly certified students and provides it to district child nutrition offices. Districts can either match this list to their local enrollment data or they can match to the State program enrollment data directly.
Timing of match or data distribution	The State provides its matched list to districts monthly and encourages districts to match monthly. Districts may match more frequently during some times in the year.
Use of program participation data and integration with other agencies	The State matches using data from SNAP, TANF, and Foster Care, using data provided by the Department of Human Resources. Staff reported a productive interagency relationship.
Matching algorithms or guidelines	The state's algorithm uses an exact match of the Social Security Number and either the last name or date of birth for direct certification. Districts are permitted to use other algorithms if they choose.
Approach to identifying children from the same household	Districts are responsible for identifying other children in direct certification households.
Transmission procedures for direct certification results or matching data	The Department of Human Resources provides program data to the Department of Education by moving it to a shared location on the state mainframe. The Department of Education makes the matched file available to the districts for download via secure VPN.
History of Direct Certification Process	Alabama successfully piloted an automated process in one school in 1996-1997 that led to statewide implementation of direct certification in 2001. Gradual improvements and grants led to statewide student management system (iNOW) that allowed ALSDE to transition from annual matching to monthly matching in 2010-2011.
Plans for Improving Direct Certification Process	The district plans to update their data systems to push the matched list to the districts every month rather than requiring them to download it.
Strengths of Process	• Recent automation may have improved accuracy of matching. • Strong data security reduces risk to students • Positive interagency relationships help the process run smoothly. • Good communication between Child Nutrition office and IT staff in the Department of Education ensures that data systems meet program needs.
Challenges of Process	Private schools use a manual matching process. The wide variety of point-of-sale systems in use by the districts may lead to variation in direct certification procedures. Respondents expressed data quality concerns and DHR staff suggested that more data sources could be used for direct certification if additional assistance programs used a common definition of poverty.

Alabama NSLP Direct Certification Process Flow

AL Department of Human Resources

AL State Department of Education

Districts

State mainframe shared between ALSDE and DHR. SNAP, TANF, Foster Care data accessed monthly by ALSDE

State mainframe system

iNOW combines and de-dupes file and performs match

Exact match?

No

Yes

Post program data and matched list and send email to districts

Nightly batch process

District updates to iNOW with student enrollment info

Monthly

Use State match list?

Yes

Link State match list with enrollment info on POS

Sent notification of DC certfied to household

No

Conduct separate matching process in district POS

Exact match?

No

Manually review/ match potential matches in POS

Yes

Sent notification of DC certified to household

Legend

- Automated Process
- Task that sends or makes available a file or list
- A manual task
- A task that involves an ad-hoc or non-automated subprocess
- A point in the process tasks go in multiple, parallel paths.
- A point in the process when tasks can go in only one of two different paths
- An event trigger to indicate frequency or timing.
- An end point of a process where the task ends in a file, list, or notification sent
- An end point of that particular process
- A database or system

APPENDIX B.2

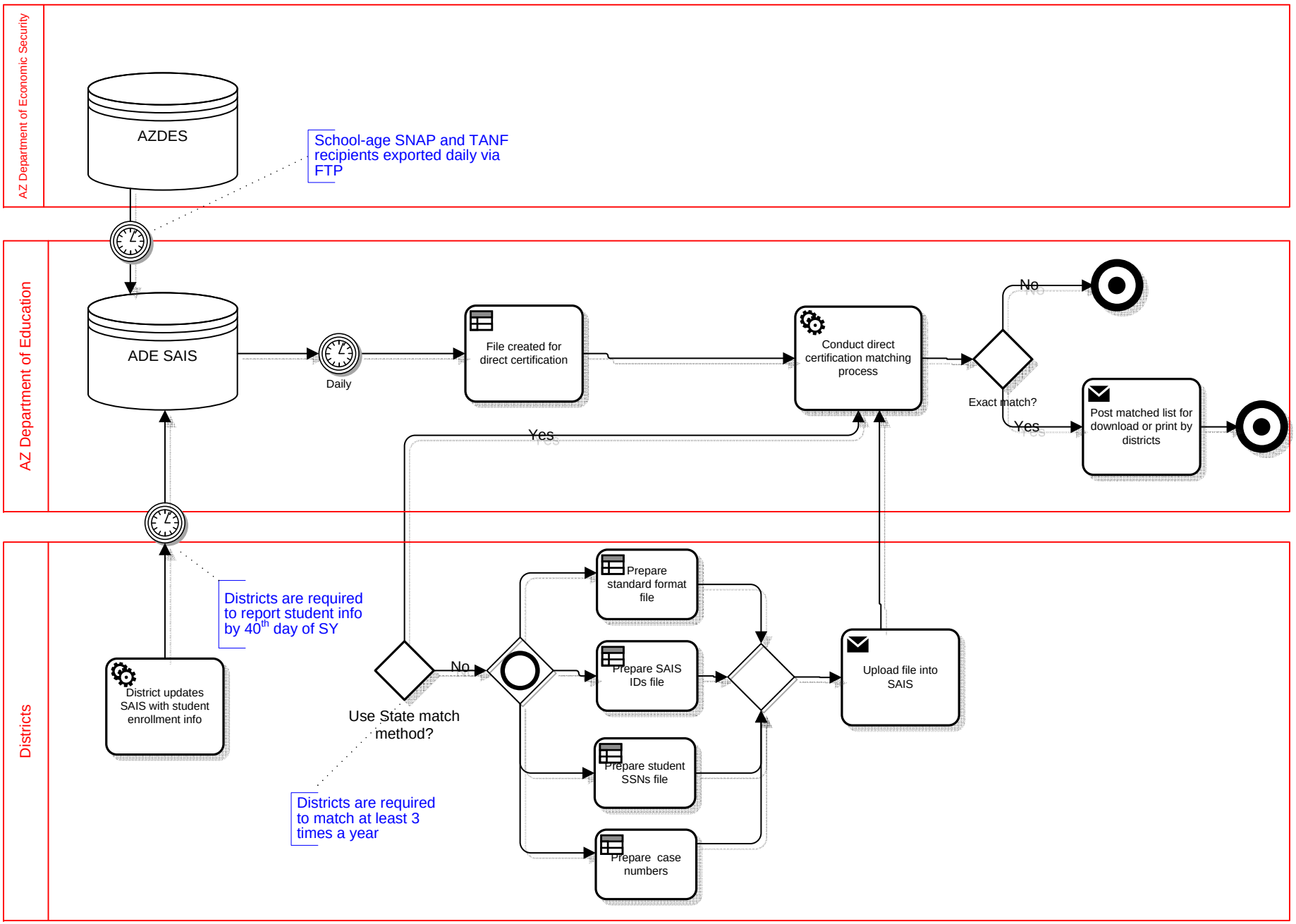
IN- DEPTH CASE STUDY NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILES

ARIZONA

Table B.2. Profile of Direct Certification Procedures for Arizona, SY 2012–2013

Approach to Matching	The Arizona Department of Economic Security (AZDES) provides SNAP and TANF program data to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) daily. ADE stores the program data and statewide school enrollment data, and districts logon to the child nutrition web portal and initiate matches using one of five match methods. Districts can query the direct certification system any time in the year to determine the certification status for individual students.
Timing of match or data distribution	ADE requires districts to perform a match at least three times but districts often do more frequent matching. The initial match is performed in September. Districts can look up individual students' direct certification status at any time.
Use of program participation data and integration with other agencies	Arizona uses SNAP and TANF program data for direct certification. AZDES pushes the program data file to ADE daily through an FTP server.
Matching algorithms or guidelines	An exact match on all of the elements (first name, last name, date of birth; or SSN, or student ID; or SNAP/TANF case number) is required for a student to be directly certified regardless of match method used
Approach to identifying children from the same household	The districts are responsible for extending categorical eligibility to students within the same household.
Transmission procedures for direct certification results or matching data	Once a match is complete, districts can download or view match or unmatched results from the central matching system web portal. At any time, districts can pull the direct certification status for individual students by querying the State system.
History of Direct Certification Process	Direct certification began in Arizona in 2003. The State revised the matching system in 2006, creating a more user-friendly process for districts.
Plans for Improving Direct Certification Process	Arizona is considering revising the direct certification matching algorithm and introducing probabilistic matching. ADE is also planning on enhancing the report functionality in the central matching system as well as incorporating Medicaid and possibly foster care data in the near future.
Strengths of Process	The State provides multiple options and flexibility for districts to perform direct certification matching through centralized system. Districts can look up the certification status of students at any time, enabling them to directly certify new and transfer students.
Challenges of Process	Because there is an exact match required for the three elements in order for a student to be directly certified, many potential matches are lost. Additionally, the lack of review process for unmatched or partially matched students limits the direct certification accuracy. High migrant population makes matching eligible kids not registered in the NSLP program problematic. There are a good amount of subgroups of schools that participate in FDPIR, but are not part of the matching process currently. Some issues in the reporting of the FNS-742 data at the district level.

Arizona NSLP Direct Certification Process Flow



Legend

- Automated Process
- Task that sends or makes available a file or list
- Task that creates a file
- A point in the process where a task may trigger one or more different paths.
- A point in the process when tasks can go in only one of two different paths
- An event trigger to indicate frequency or timing.
- An end point of that particular process
- A database or system

APPENDIX B.3

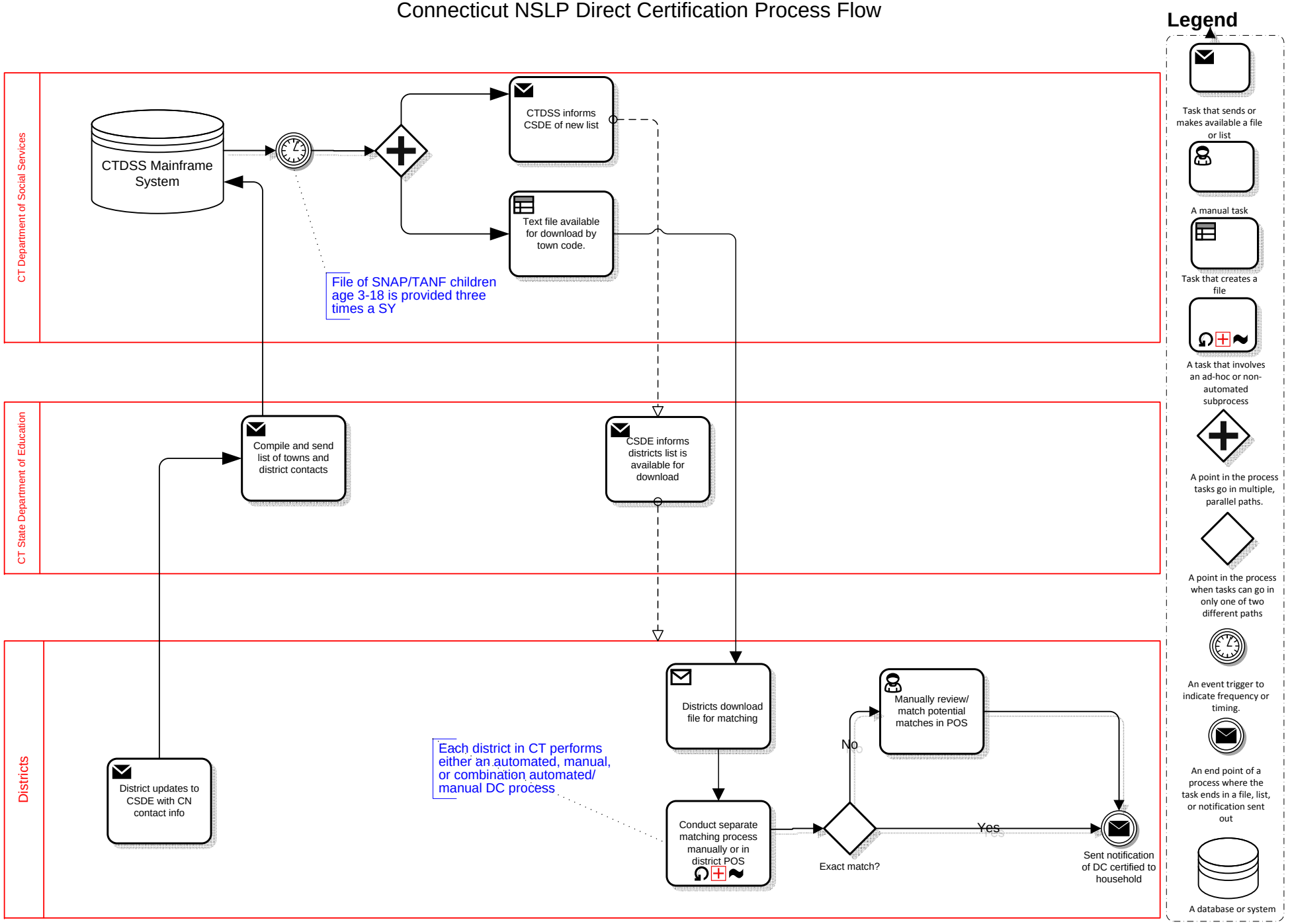
IN- DEPTH CASE STUDY NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILES

CONNECTICUT

Table B.3. Profile of Direct Certification Procedures for Connecticut, SY 2012–2013

Approach to Matching	Connecticut is a local matching state. The Department of Social Services (CTDSS) provides the SNAP and TANF enrollment data to the districts three times per year. Each district matches its local enrollment data against the SNAP and TANF program data to complete direct certification. District procedures vary greatly across the State. Connecticut will transition to a central matching model in fall 2015.
Timing of match or data distribution	CTDSS makes SNAP and TANF program data available to districts three times per year: in August/September, in November/December, and in March.
Use of program participation data and integration with other agencies	Connecticut uses SNAP and TANF program data, both maintained by CTDSS. It is exploring using Foster Care data in the future, which would involve working with the Department of Child and Family Services.
Matching algorithms or guidelines	Procedures vary by district.
Approach to identifying children from the same household	Procedures vary by district.
Transmission procedures for direct certification results or matching data	CTDSS makes the SNAP and TANF program data available to districts on a password-protected website as fixed-length text files.
History of Direct Certification Process	Connecticut has conducted direct certification in some districts since the early 1990s. In the beginning, State staff sent the program data to districts on tapes. More districts gradually began conducting direct certification until 2005, when all districts in the State participated. Districts matched once per year until 2006 when all districts matched three times per year.
Plans for Improving Direct Certification Process	Connecticut plans to transition to a central matching model and increase the frequency of direct certification matching from three times per year to weekly in fall 2015.
Strengths of Process	The strength of Connecticut's local matching model is that each district is responsible for its own students. Staff reported that they therefore have a particularly strong incentive not to miss any eligible students.
Challenges of Process	The weaknesses of the current local matching model are infrequent matching and inconsistent procedures across the state.

Connecticut NSLP Direct Certification Process Flow



APPENDIX B.4

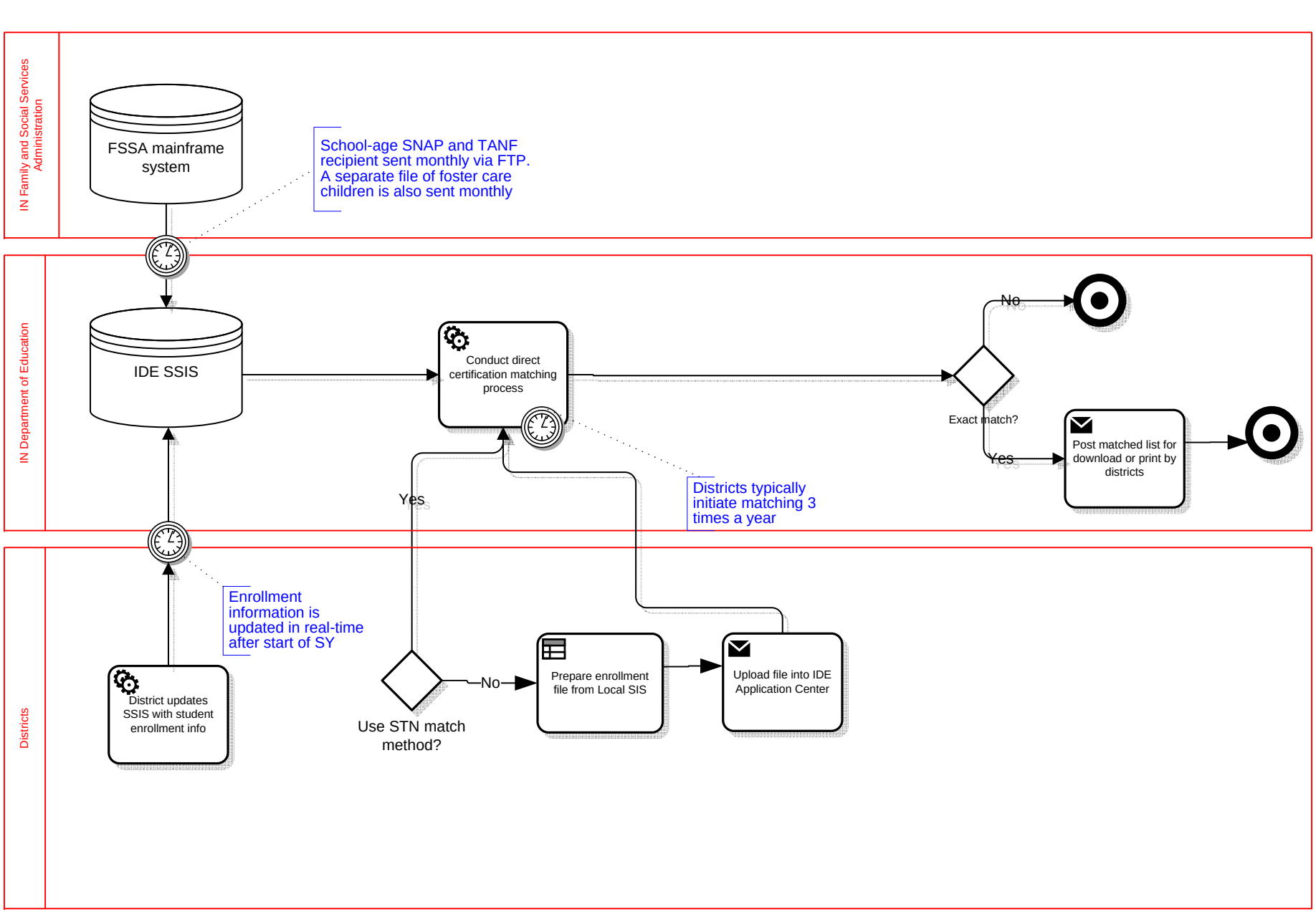
IN- DEPTH CASE STUDY NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILES

INDIANA

Table B.4. Profile of Direct Certification Procedures for Indiana, SY 2012–2013

Approach to Matching	Indiana uses a central matching system and conducts two types of direct certification matching: With the "traditional matching" method, districts upload their local enrollment files to the State's matching tool. The State then matches these local files with State SNAP, TANF, and Foster Care program data to produce lists of matched students. With the "student test number matching" (STN) method, the State draws student enrollment information directly from the statewide student information system, which is updated in real time during the school year. This method is easier, but can only be done during the school year. Therefore, the initial match, which is conducted prior to the start of school each year, uses the traditional matching method. Subsequent matches use the student test number matching method.
Timing of match or data distribution	The initial match is conducted annually prior to the start of school. Program data are updated monthly while student enrollment data is updated in real time during the school year. The State matches these two data sources together monthly, while districts upload the matched data into their local point-of-sale systems at least three times annually. Beginning in SY 2013-2014, monthly matching will be conducted automatically statewide.
Use of program participation data and integration with other agencies	The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration provides monthly data files containing SNAP, TANF, and Foster Care information.
Matching algorithms or guidelines	Indiana directly certifies students with exact matches on first name, last name, date of birth, and county. First and last name matches may be exact matches by spelling or by soundex.
Approach to identifying children from the same household	The State generates a list of unmatched siblings, identified as children in the program data who do not match the enrollment data but who have the same SNAP or TANF case number as a directly certified student. Districts may use this list to extend eligibility.
Transmission procedures for direct certification results or matching data	Districts download the matched list from the State direct certification system as often as monthly. For subsequent matches, districts have the option of downloading the entire district matched list or a list of newly matched students.
History of Direct Certification Process	The direct certification matching algorithm has remained unchanged since it was introduced in the late 1990s.
Plans for Improving Direct Certification Process	Indiana plans to improve the direct certification system so that monthly matches occur automatically. Districts will no longer have to initiate the process manually. The State has also considered introducing probabilistic matching.
Strengths of Process	Direct certification saves staff time. Completing the initial match early and getting notification letters to families quickly can preempt application submissions. Individual student look-up allows districts to certify newly eligible students more quickly and reduce applications.
Challenges of Process	District processes can create a bottleneck in the direct certification system. Even if students are matched efficiently at the State level, they are not certified until districts load the updated information into their point-of-sale systems.

Indiana NSLP Direct Certification Process Flow



Legend

- Automated Process
- Task that sends or makes available a file or list
- Task that creates a file
- A point in the process when tasks can go in only one of two different paths
- An event trigger to indicate frequency or timing.
- An end point of that particular process
- A database or system

APPENDIX B.5

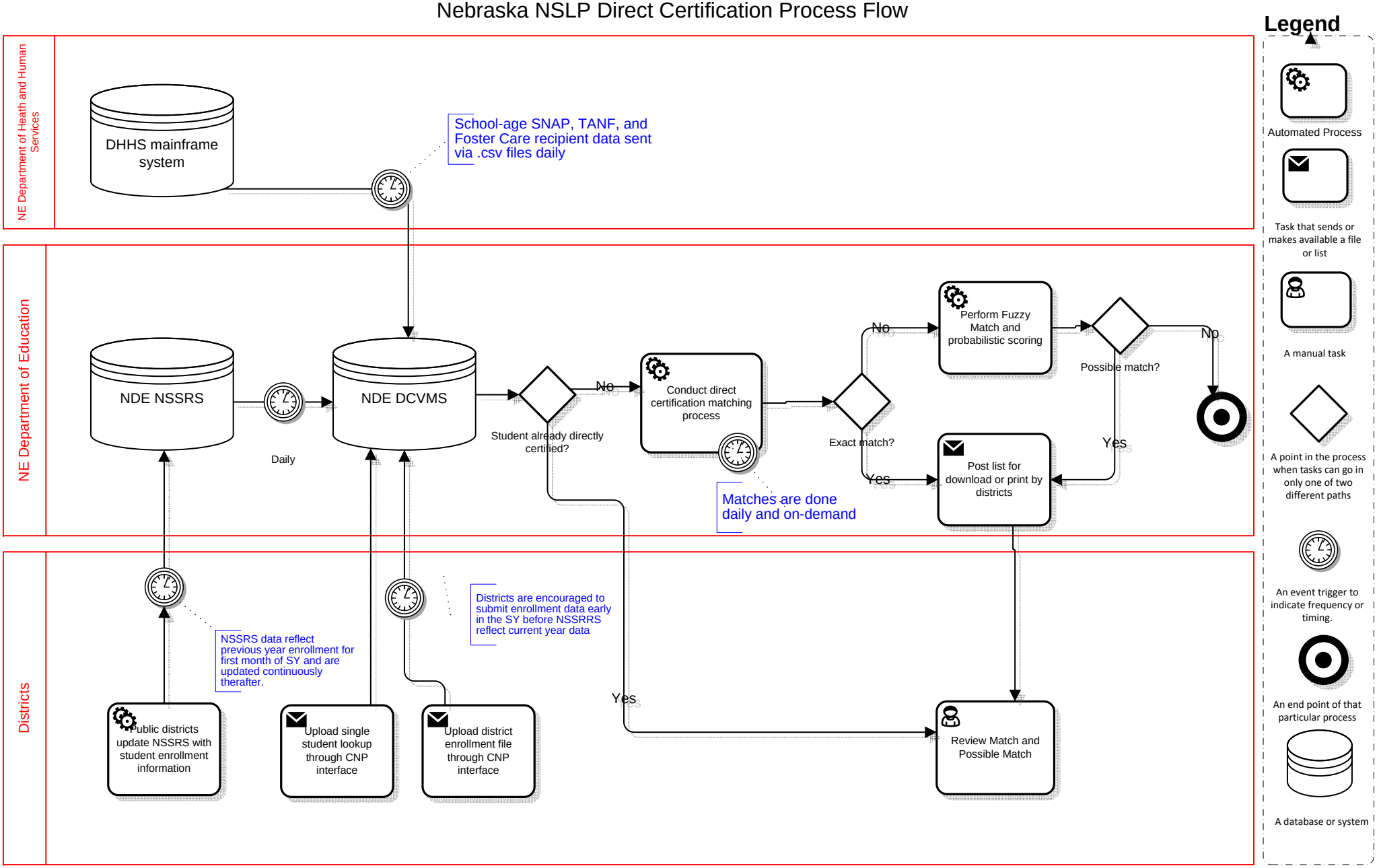
IN- DEPTH CASE STUDY NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILES

NEBRASKA

Table B.5. Profile of Direct Certification Procedures for Nebraska, SY 2012–2013

Approach to Matching	Nebraska uses a central matching system that is based on probabilistic matching of school enrollment data to SNAP, TANF and Foster care data. State Department of Education staff access student enrollment data through the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS). They return lists of definite and possible matches to districts. Districts then investigate possible matches and incorporate matched students into their local student information and POS systems. Districts also have access to an individual student lookup feature that allows for inclusion of student information not available in the State enrollment system.
Timing of match or data distribution	Initial match is conducted before the beginning of each school year with nightly matches conducted throughout the year. Initial matches are not conducted with current enrollment data until September unless districts upload their own enrollment data.
Use of program participation data and integration with other agencies	Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services set up an automated process that provides the Department of Education with daily files of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and Foster Care participants. This process requires no staff time unless changes are requested. Although establishing an MOU between the relevant agencies was time consuming, both agencies praise the quality of their relationship.
Matching algorithms or guidelines	The main matching algorithm uses four fields: first name, last name, date of birth, and gender. Additional data fields that are not available in the State student enrollment data (but that are included in the State program data) can be used in the individual student lookup feature. The probabilistic matching algorithm was originally based on an internally developed algorithm but was recently switched to Microsoft fuzzy logic to improve accuracy and efficiency.
Approach to identifying children from the same household	Districts are responsible for extending eligibility to children in households receiving SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR. Most districts use POS systems that include electronic matching for extending eligibility.
Transmission procedures for direct certification results or matching data	Districts may download match lists as often as daily and are encouraged to process lists weekly. The State also recommends that districts use the individual student lookup feature whenever there is a new student or transfer.
History of Direct Certification Process	Nebraska received a direct certification grant from FNS in 2009 that was used to develop their web-based probabilistic matching system.
Plans for Improving Direct Certification Process	Nebraska plans to incorporate data on homeless and migrant students into the direct certification process.
Strengths of Process	System was designed to save time for districts, both in processing applications and conducting direct certification. Using a web-based system increases access and allows for user-friendly features. The State believes that daily matching and use of Foster Care data adds substantially to their match rates. Single student lookup is very effective, especially for Nebraska's many small rural schools. Smooth communication with partner agency and automated program data transfer improve efficiency.
Challenges of Process	District technical skill level is often low, which must be mitigated with multiple modes of effective training. Establishing the initial MOU with the Department of Health and Human Services was time consuming.

Nebraska NSLP Direct Certification Process Flow



APPENDIX B.6

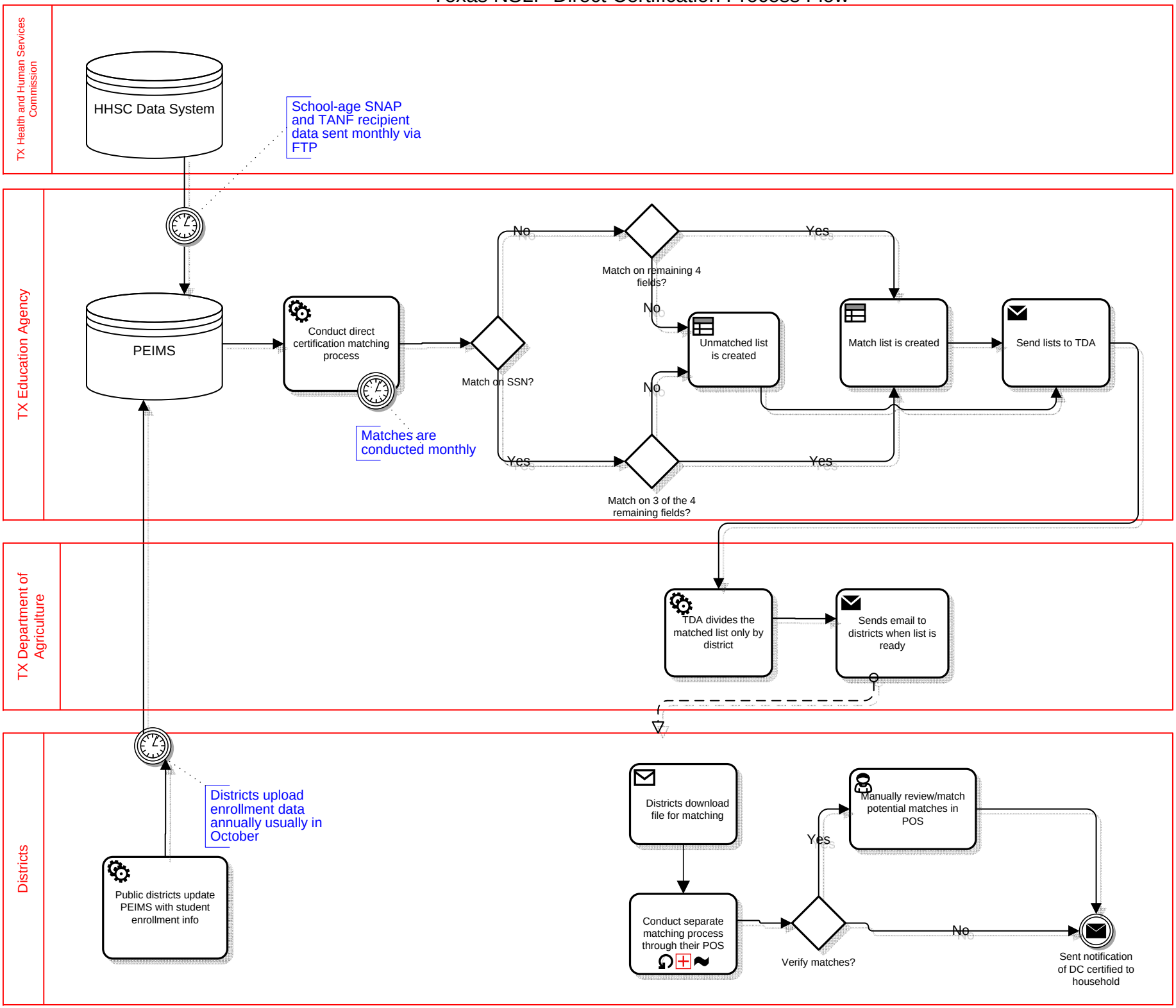
IN- DEPTH CASE STUDY NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILES

TEXAS

Table B.6. Profile of Direct Certification Procedures for Texas, SY 2012–2013

Approach to Matching	Texas is a central matching State with a fairly limited scope for district activities. State staff match the State enrollment file with SNAP and TANF program data. They then split the resulting matched list by district using the address information in the SNAP and TANF data. Each district receives a list containing only the students that appear to attend schools in that district. District staff then match the state list with their local enrollment files in their point-of-sale systems. Students assigned to the incorrect district's list are not directly certified.
Timing of match or data distribution	The State matches the enrollment data with the SNAP and TANF program data monthly. The SNAP and TANF data are updated monthly; the enrollment data is updated annually each spring and presents a snapshot of enrollment from the previous October.
Use of program participation data and integration with other agencies	The Texas Human Services Commission (HSSC) provides the SNAP and TANF program data for direct certification. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) conducts the matching using statewide enrollment data. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) splits the State list into district-specific lists and makes them available to the districts.
Matching algorithms or guidelines	The Texas Education Agency conducts the matching in two phases. In the first phase, they directly certify students who exactly match on Social Security Number and three of the four other elements: date of birth, first name, last name, or gender. In the second pass, they directly certify students who do not match on Social Security Number but match on all four of the other elements.
Approach to identifying children from the same household	Districts are responsible for identifying children from the same household. They either do this through the statewide student information system (PEIMS) or through their local point-of-sale system.
Transmission procedures for direct certification results or matching data	Districts download the matched lists each month from the TDA secure web portal.
History of Direct Certification Process	Texas has conducted direct certification since the early 1990s. Though the algorithm has remained constant for most of that time, the organizational structure, the matching frequency, and the matching systems have changed. In the beginning, TEA conducted matching annually with assistance from private contractors. Contractors initially used SAS programs in the matching process. In 2004, legislative changes required that TDA assume responsibility for matching. Over time, the matching frequency increased to quarterly and then monthly, and the State transitioned from a SAS-based system to an automated matching system.
Plans for Improving Direct Certification Process	Beginning in SY 2013-2014, TDA will make the entire unmatched list available to districts.
Strengths of Process	• A strong partnership between the State agencies facilitates effective data sharing and problem solving. • High quality IT support keeps systems operating effectively. • Automation improves efficiency of matching process.
Challenges of Process	• Some students end up on the wrong district's list and therefore do not get directly certified. • The statewide student enrollment data is updated only annually and made available on a six-month delay. Therefore, the data are 6 to 17 months out-of-date when used for matching.

Texas NSLP Direct Certification Process Flow



Legend

- Automated Process
- Task that sends or makes available a file or list
- A manual task
- Task that creates a file
- A task that involves an ad-hoc or non-automated subprocess
- A point in the process when tasks can go in only one of two different paths
- An event trigger to indicate frequency or timing.
- An end point of a process where the task ends in a file, list, or notification sent out
- A database or system

APPENDIX B.7

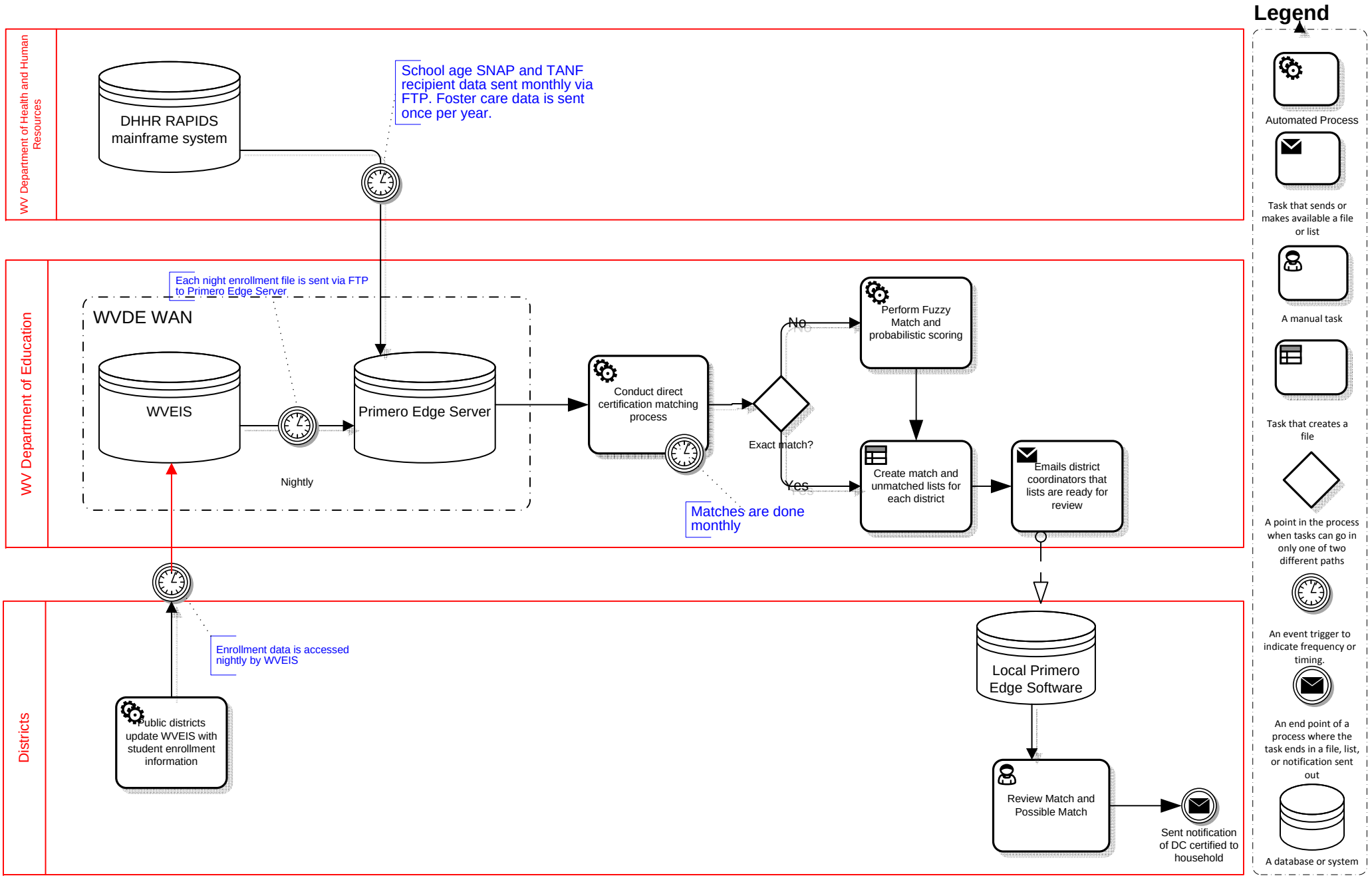
IN- DEPTH CASE STUDY NSLP DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROFILES

WEST VIRGINIA

Table B.7. Profile of Direct Certification Procedures for West Virginia, SY 2012–2013

Approach to Matching	West Virginia is a central matching state in which the State Department of Education (WVDE) matches SNAP and TANF program data against the statewide school enrollment data monthly and makes matched, unmatched, and partially matched lists available to each district once per month. The State incorporates Foster Care data into the process once per year.
Timing of match or data distribution	Matching with SNAP and TANF data occurs monthly, following the second Saturday in each month. Matching with Foster Care data occurs annually.
Use of program participation data and integration with other agencies	The Department of Health and Human Resources provides SNAP and TANF data monthly and Foster Care data annually to the WVDE for direct certification matching.
Matching algorithms or guidelines	WVDE directly certifies students who exactly match on Social Security Number or an exact match on first name, last name, and date of birth. Name matches can be by spelling or phonetically through soundex algorithms.
Approach to identifying children from the same household	Districts identify other members of direct certification households by matching on home address. Districts can also identify these individuals by referencing applications from previous years.
Transmission procedures for direct certification results or matching data	Each month through Primero Edge system, districts can view matched and partially/unmatched listing of students.
History of Direct Certification Process	West Virginia began using SNAP and TANF data for direct certification in 2004. Each district initially operated different point-of-sale systems. However, around 2007, the State hired a private vendor to operate a central point-of-sale system (Primero Edge) for the entire state. Now all public schools—and most private schools—use the same system statewide. The State initially conducted direct certification matching annually. In 2010, they increased to three times per year. In 2011 they increased to quarterly. In 2012, they increased to monthly matching.
Plans for Improving Direct Certification Process	West Virginia plans to transition to semi-monthly or even weekly matching. The State also plans to introduce a continuous direct certification training program and to incorporate private schools into the system more fully. The State also plans to invest additional resources to improve its system infrastructure to make the system more reliable and faster and to expand its bandwidth.
Strengths of Process	The primary advantage of West Virginia's central model is that State staff have access to data from all districts. System automation allows accurate and timely matching. Strong interdepartmental relationships help the system run smoothly.
Challenges of Process	Bandwidth limitations impede system performance during peak times.

West Virginia NSLP Direct Certification Process Flow



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