

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ED*Facts* Submission System

**FS033 – Free and Reduced Price Lunch File Specifications**

**SY 2021-22**

This technical guide was produced under U.S. Department of Education Contract No. 91990019A0008 with Applied Engineering Management Corporation. Brandon Scott served as the contracting officer’s representative. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned in this publication is intended or should be inferred.

This technical guide is in the public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, the citation should be: *FILE 000 – File Name File Specifications – VXX.X* (SY XXXX-XX), U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC:  ED*Facts*. Retrieved [date] from the [ED*Fact*s Initiative Home Page](https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/index.html).

On request, this publication is available in alternate formats, such as Braille, large print, or CD Rom. For more information, please contact the Department’s Alternate Format Center at (202) 260–0818.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title:** | FS033 – Free and Reduced Price Lunch File Specifications |
| **Security Level:** | Unclassified – For Official Use Only |

DOCUMENT HISTORY

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Version Number** | **Date** | **Summary of Change** |
| 1.0 – 17.0 |  | Versions 1.0 through 17.0 are used to build files for school years prior to SY 2021-22. |
| 18.0 | August 2021 | Updated for SY 2021-22 |

PREFACE

This document provides technical instructions for building files that are submitted through the ED*Facts* Submission System (ESS). The ESS is an electronic system that facilitates the efficient and timely transmission of data from SEAs to the U.S. Department of Education.

This document is to be used in coordination with other documentation posted on the [ED*Facts* Initiative Home Page](https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/index.html) under ED*Facts* System Documentation, including:

* ED*Facts* Workbook – a reference guide to using the ED*Facts*

Submission System (ESS); particularly useful to new users; contains multiple appendices, including one that explains how to use the file specifications

* ESS User Guide – provides assistance to new users of the ED*Facts* Submission System (ESS); it addresses the basic mechanics of system access and data submission
* ED*Facts* Business Rules Single Inventory (BRSI) - a single inventory containing business rules applied to ED*Facts* data throughout the pre- and post-submission lifecycle of that data. The inventory describes each business rule; includes the error number, type, message, definition, edit logic, and the file specifications where the business rules are applied

Please contact the Partner Support Center (PSC) with questions about the documents. You will find contact information for PSC and each State ED*Facts* Coordinator on the [ED*Facts* Contact Page](https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/eden/contacts.html).

Data submitted through the ESS are authorized by an Annual Mandatory Collection of Elementary and Secondary Education Data Through ED*Facts* (OMB 1850-0925, expires 8/31/2022). ED*Facts* is a U.S. Department of Education (ED) initiative to govern, acquire, validate, and use high-quality, pre-kindergarten through grade 12 (pre-K–12) performance data for education planning, policymaking, and management and budget decision-making to improve outcomes for students. ED*Facts* centralizes data provided by SEAs, LEAs and schools, and provides users with the ability to easily analyze and report data. This initiative has significantly reduced the reporting burden for state and local data producers, and has streamlined data collection, analysis and reporting functions at the federal, state and local levels.

**Contents**

[DOCUMENT CONTROL ii](#_Toc79577098)

[PREFACE iii](#_Toc79577099)

[1.0 PURPOSE 1](#_Toc79577100)

[2.0 GUIDANCE FOR SUBMITTING THIS FILE 1](#_Toc79577101)

[2.1 Changes from the SY 2020-21 File Specifications 1](#_Toc79577102)

[2.2 Core Requirements for Submitting this File 1](#_Toc79577103)

[2.3 Required Categories and Totals 3](#_Toc79577104)

[2.4 Categories and Permitted Values 4](#_Toc79577105)

[2.5 Data Reporting Guidelines 4](#_Toc79577106)

[2.6 Definitions 5](#_Toc79577107)

[3.0 FILE NAMING CONVENTION 6](#_Toc79577108)

[4.0 FIXED OR DELIMITED FILES 7](#_Toc79577109)

[4.1 Header Record Definition 7](#_Toc79577110)

[4.2 Data Record Definition 8](#_Toc79577111)

# 

# PURPOSE

This document contains instructions for building files to submit the following ED*Facts* Data Groups:

**Table 1.0-1: ED*Facts* Data Groups**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Data Group Name | DG | Definition |
| Free and reduced-price lunch table | 565 | The unduplicated number of students who are eligible to participate in the Free Lunch and Reduced-Price Lunch Programs under the National School Lunch Act of 1946. |
| Direct certification | 813 | The unduplicated number of students in membership whose National School Lunch Program (NSLP) eligibility has been determined through direct certification. |

The data collected using this file specification are collected under the authority of the Education Sciences Reform Act (PL 107-279) and are used primarily for the Non-Fiscal Survey of the Common Core of Data (CCD).

The ED data stewarding office/s for this file: NCES

# GUIDANCE FOR SUBMITTING THIS FILE

This section contains changes from the previous school year, core requirements for submitting this file, required categories and totals, and general guidance.

## Changes from the SY 2020-21 File Specifications

Other than any editorial changes listed in the document history on page ii, there have been no changes to this file specification.

## Core Requirements for Submitting this File

The following tables contain the reporting period, the education units included or excluded, the type of count, and zero count reporting for each data group.

**Note there is a unique table for each data group.**

**Table 2.2-1a: Core Reporting Requirements – DG 565 Free and Reduced-price Lunch Table**

|  | **SEA** | **LEA** | **School** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reporting Period** |  |  | October 1 (or closest school day) – October 1 or the closest school day to October 1 |
| **Education units included** |  |  | Operational schools with membership (FS 052) greater than zero and with NSLP Status that is not “No.” |
| **Education units not reported** |  |  | Inactive, closed or future schools.  Schools with no membership (FS 052).  Schools with NSLP Status that is “No.” |
| **Type of count** |  |  | Students are counted at only one school. |
| **Zero counts** |  |  | Required for true zeros |
| **Zero exceptions and Not applicable** |  |  | If no students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, submit the total of the education unit as zero and leave out the detail records. |
| **Missing** |  |  | Use “-1” to report missing counts, that is, when the value is not known.  Use “MISSING” when students cannot be disaggregated between free and reduced-price lunch |
| **Related metadata survey** |  |  |  |

**Table 2.2-1b: Core Reporting Requirements – DG 813 Direct Certification**

|  | **SEA** | **LEA** | **School** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reporting Period** |  |  | October 1 (or USDA reporting period) – October 1 or the date that aligns with the reporting period for USDA |
| **Education units included** |  |  | Operational schools with membership (FS 052) greater than zero and with NSLP Status that is not “No.” |
| **Education units not reported** |  |  | Inactive, closed or future schools.  Schools with no membership (FS 052).  Schools with NSLP Status that is “No.” |
| **Type of count** |  |  | Students are counted at only one school. |
| **Zero counts** |  |  | Required for true zeros |
| **Zero exceptions and Not applicable** |  |  | None |
| **Missing** |  |  | Use “-1” to report missing counts, that is, when the value is not known |
| **Related metadata survey** |  |  |  |

## Required Categories and Totals

The table below lists the combinations of the categories and totals that are expected to be submitted for each school that should be included in the file.

* An “X” in the column indicates that the category value must be submitted when reporting that aggregation.
* The total indicator must be either “Y” (Yes) or “N” (No).
  + If the record is for a category set, specify an “N” (No).
  + If the record is for a subtotal or education unit total, specify a “Y” (Yes).
* The abbreviations in the “Table Name” column represent the technical name of the data used in the file.

**Table 2.3-1: Required Categories and Totals**

| **Category Set** | **Table Name** | **Lunch Program Status** | **Total Indicator** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Free and reduced-price lunch table (DG 565) Category Set A | **LUNCHFREERED** | X | N | Student Count by Lunch Program Status |
| Free and reduced-price lunch table (DG 565) Total of the Education Unit | **LUNCHFREERED** |  | Y | Total of the Educational Unit for Free and reduced-price lunch |
| Direct Certification (DG 813) Total of the Education Unit | **DIRECTCERT** |  | Y | Total of the Educational Unit for Direct certification |

## Categories and Permitted Values

This section contains the categories and permitted values used for submitting this file.

**DG565 – Free and reduced-price lunch table:**

**Lunch Program Status**

An indication of students’ qualification for free or reduced-price lunch.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Permitted Value Abbreviation** | **Permitted Value Description** | **Comments** |
| FL | Free lunch qualified | Students who are eligible to participate in the Free Lunch Program under the National School Lunch Act of 1946. This definition **EXCLUDES** students eligible only for reduced-price lunch. |
| RPL | Reduced-price lunch qualified | Students who are eligible to participate in the Reduced-Price Lunch Program under the National Schools Lunch Act of 1946. |
| MISSING | Missing | FL and RPL counts are unknown |

## Data Reporting Guidelines

This section contains guidance for submitting this file in the format of questions and answers.

**What is the relationship between DG565 (Free and reduced-price lunch) and DG813 (Direct certification)?**

Free and reduced-price lunch (DG565) includes students who are directly certified plus students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch by completing an application. As such, the number of students reported for Direct certification (DG813) should always be lower than the number of students reported for Free and reduced-price lunch (DG565). Additional information can be found in the NCES blog post titled [Understanding School Lunch Eligibility in the Common Core of Data.](https://nces.ed.gov/blogs/nces/post/understanding-school-lunch-eligibility-in-the-common-core-of-data)

**Are both DGs required?**

No. States are required to submit either DG565 (Free and reduced-price lunch) or DG813 (direct certification) data for all operational schools.

**If we have both DGs, does ED prefer that we submit both?**

If both data elements are available, ED prefers that the state provide data for both. Both values are useful for data quality checks and provide valuable information for data users to understand the difference between free and reduced-price lunch and direct certification data.

**How are schools that certify for the NSLP participation without collecting eligibility data or certifying students each year reported?**

Schools participating in the NSLP under Provisions 2 or 3 or the Community Eligibility Option (CEO) are not required to collect eligibility data and certify students each year.  Report current headcounts of free and reduced-price lunch students, when possible.  If the data are not available due to schools implementing the NSLP provisions, estimate the count of students by multiplying current year membership by the percentage of eligible students in the most recent year for which the school collected that information.

**Are records required for both free and reduced-price lunch?**

If detailed records are submitted for category set A, records must be submitted for each school for both free and reduced-price lunch. Submission errors will be triggered if records are submitted for one but not the other.

## Definitions

See the [ED*Facts* Workbook](https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/eden-workbook.html) for the standard definitions.

# FILE NAMING CONVENTION

The following file naming convention is to help identify files to provide technical assistance.

A maximum of 25 characters (including the file extension) is allowed for the file name.

The following is the naming convention for file submissions:

sslev**filename**vvvvvvv.ext

**Table 3.0-1: File Naming Convention**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Where** | **Means** | **Limit in characters** |
| ss | USPS State Abbreviation | 2 |
| lev | Abbreviation for level:   * SCH for a school level | 3 |
| filename | **PRICELNCH** | 9 |
| vvvvvvv | Alphanumeric string designated by the SEA to uniquely identify the individual submission (*e.g.,* ver0001, v010803) | 7 |
| .ext | Extension identifying the file format:  .txt – fixed  .csv – comma delimited  .tab – tab delimited | 4 |

# FIXED OR DELIMITED FILES

This section describes the fixed file and delimited file specifications. The fixed file and delimited files contain a header record followed by data records. The file type is specified in the header record.

The “Pop” column in the header and data records is coded as follows:

M - Mandatory, this field must always be populated

A - This field is populated in accordance with table 2.3-1 “Required Categories and Totals”

O - Optional, data in this field are optional

## Header Record Definition

The header record is required and is the first record in every file submitted to the ESS. The purpose of the header record is to provide information as to the file type, number of data records in the file, file name, file identifier, and file reporting period.

**Table 4.1–1: Header Record**

| **Data Element Name** | **Start Position** | **Length** | **Type** | **Pop** | **Definition / Comments** | **Permitted Values**  **Abbreviations** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| File Type | 1 | 50 | String | M | Identifies the type of file being submitted. | **SCHOOL FREE AND REDUCED PRICE LUNCH** |
| Total Records In File | 51 | 10 | Number | M | The total number of data records contained in the file. The header record is NOT included in this count. |  |
| File Name | 61 | 25 | String | M | The file name including extension, the same as the external file name. | See section 3.0 |
| File Identifier | 86 | 32 | String | M | Any combination of standard characters to further identify the file as specified by the SEA (e.g., a date, person’s name, and version number). |  |
| File Reporting Period | 118 | 9 | String | M | The school year for which data are being reported. The required format is "CCYY–CCYY" or "CCYY CCYY", where either a hyphen or a space separates the beginning and ending years. | **2021-2022**  OR  **2021-2022** |
| Filler | 127 | 168 | String | M | Leave filler field blank. |  |
| Carriage Return / Line Feed (CRLF) | 295 | 1 |  | M |  |  |

Below is an example of a header record.

**Table 4.1–2: Header Record Example**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Format | File Type,Total Records in File,File Name,File Identifier,File Reporting Period,Filler,Carriage Return / Line Feed (CRLF) |
| Example | SCHOOL FREE AND REDUCED PRICE LUNCH,15,EUSCHPRICELNCHver0007.CSV,characters to identify file,2021-2022,¶ |

## Data Record Definition

Data records are required and immediately follow the header record in every file submitted to the ESS. Data records provide counts for the specified category sets, subtotals and education unit totals.

**Table 4.2–1: Data Records**

| **Data Element Name** | **Start Position** | **Length** | **Type** | **Pop** | **Definition / Comments** | **Permitted Values**  **Abbreviations** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| File Record Number | 1 | 10 | Number | M | A sequential number assigned by the State that is unique to each row entry within the file. |  |
| **DG559** State Code | 11 | 2 | String | M | The two–digit American National Standards Institute (ANSI) code for the state, District of Columbia, and the outlying areasand freely associated areas of the United States. | For a list of valid State Codes, refer to the ED*Facts* Workbook. |
| **DG570** State Agency Number | 13 | 2 | String | M | A number used to uniquely identify state agencies. This ID cannot be updated through this file. | **01** – State Education Agency |
| **DG4** LEA Identifier (state) | 15 | 14 | String | M | The identifier assigned to a local education agency (LEA) by the state education agency (SEA). Also known as State LEA Identification Number (ID). This data element cannot be updated through this file. |  |
| **DG5** School Identifier (state) | 29 | 20 | String | M | The identifier assigned to a school by the state education agency (SEA).  Also known as the State School Identification Number (ID).  This ID cannot be updated through this file. |  |
| Table Name | 49 | 20 | String | M | See table 2.3-1 | **LUNCHFREERED**  **DIRECTCERT** |
| Lunch Program Status | 69 | 15 | String | A | An indication of students' qualification for free or reduced-price lunch. | **FL –** Free lunch qualified **RPL –** Reduced-price lunch qualified **MISSING** |
| Total Indicator | 84 | 1 | String | M | An indicator that defines the count level – see table 2.3-1 “Required Categories and Totals” | **N** – Specifies category set  **Y** – Specifies subtotal or total of the education unit |
| Explanation | 85 | 200 | String | O | Text field for state use. |  |
| Student Count | 285 | 10 | Number | M |  |  |
| Carriage Return / Line Feed (CRLF) | 295 | 1 |  | M |  |  |

Below is an example of a data record, this is the set of data that should be submitted for each education unit. See table 2.3-1.

**Table 4.2–2: Data Record Example – School level**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Aggregation** | **Example** |
| Format | File Record Number,State Code,State Agency Number,LEA Identifier (state),School Identifier (state),Table Name,Lunch Program Status,Total Indicator,Explanation,Student Count,Carriage Return / Line Feed (CRLF) |
| DG 565  Category Set A  Reduced Price Lunch | 1,99,01,LEA001,SCH001,LUNCHFREERED,RPL,N,,150¶ |
| DG 565  Category Set A  Free Lunch | 2,99,01,LEA001,SCH001,LUNCHFREERED,FL,N,,250¶ |
| DG 565  Total of education unit | 3,99,01,LEA001,SCH001,LUNCHFREERED,,Y,,400¶ |
| DG 813  Total of education unit | 1,99,01,LEA001,SCH001,DIRECTCERT,,Y,,75¶ |



The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

www.ed.gov