

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is wrapping up its Verification Response Rate Challenge for school meals. There are only a **few more days** for school food authority (SFA) and State agency staff to **share success stories** and innovative ideas on increasing household response rates in the annual verification process for school meals.

**Submissions will only be accepted through 2:00 p.m. ET, June 15, 2017.**

Anyone can **vote(!)** for their favorite solution between 10 a.m. on June 16, 2017 and 2:00 p.m. ET on June 22, 2017 on the Challenge website (same link as below!).

***Winning ideas will be featured at SNA's Annual National Conference (ANC) in July.*** We've heard from some small, rural districts and from some large, urban districts. **Now we're hoping to hear from your SFAs!** The Verification Response Rate Challenge is designed as a contest to make it fun and to encourage participation. Judges include School Nutrition Association (SNA) President Becky Domokos-Bays, and FNS Deputy Administrator for Child Nutrition Programs Cindy Long.

***Participation is easy and takes just a few minutes.*** Contestants can simply describe their ideas or proven strategies in a few sentences. These **insights matter!** What works in one district may help other districts across the country.

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

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

## BACKGROUND

Every year, SFAs process free and reduced-price meal applications for about 9 million children. Of those applicants, thousands of notices are sent to their households to verify their eligibility. In school year 2015-2016, 40 percent of households nationwide that were contacted for verification did not respond to requests for documentation. Fortunately, some SFAs have identified strategies that reduced their non-response rates to well below the national average. We would like to hear from those SFAs, and all other SFA and State agency staff who have solutions for increasing the household response rate!