

# Direct Certification User Guide

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Questions or problems with the Direct Certification application should be directed to the  
Child Nutrition Programs:  
Phone: 801-538-7860

Direct Certification policy questions should be directed to your Specialist at the  
Utah Office of Education, Child Nutrition Programs.

Questions regarding a student's eligibility should be directed to your local  
Utah Workforce Services office for FEP or SNAP or Human Services for Foster Children.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of direct certification is to identify children that are categorically eligible for free school meals without the need for a paper application. Categorical eligibility is based on the household in which the child lives participating in the Special Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or Food Stamps), the Family Employment Program (FEP), or because the child is certified as foster child. Before continuing with the Direct Certification process, review the *Eligibility Manual for School Meals* (<http://www.schools.utah.gov/cnp/DOCS/NSLP/EligibilityManual.aspx>) for more information on the policies and the responsibilities for direct certification.

## **This Data Is Confidential**

If data from this system is misused, regulations allow for federal prosecution. If convicted, penalties include a fine, imprisonment or both, for publishing, divulging, disclosing or making known in any manner or extent not authorized by Federal law, any eligibility information. Before disclosing eligibility information to anyone outside of Child Nutrition programs, check the [Eligibility Manual](#), Chapter 5. Disclosure of eligibility information is not a program requirement.

## **Process Overview**

All School Food Authorities (SFAs) must perform Direct Certification matching at least three times each school year (SIS performs automatic matching). Those who use the State Aspire SIS system will use this process only to identify and match possible matches, as the Aspire system automatically identifies identical matches and downloads that information nightly.

There are two options on CNPweb for performing Direct Certification:

1. Certify Students
2. Certify Individuals

The first match between enrolled students and the Direct Certification lists should take place before school starts when the new-year students are entered into the SFA's system. A second match would take place in October, once prior year eligibility has expired. A third match would take place in January.

The matching process begins with the use of either the UTREx enrollment data OR with the creation of a file of enrolled students. The SFA then logs on to the CNPweb, clicks on the "Application" menu and then clicks on "Direct Certification" (DC) and then "Certify Students." DC matches the student file with a database of children whose families are participating in a program eligible for free school meals or who are foster children. Once the match process is complete, the file is available for the SFA to download with the matching records marked with the program by which the child qualifies indicated in the downloaded records.

Possible matches are shown on the screen. SFAs must review the possible matches, click the button on the left side of the screen if they match and press the button at the top of the page to "certify students." That will add the possible matches to the list of identical matches. Then, click the button at the top left of the screen to download all matches to the SFA computer.

If there is a question about the possible match, it is up to the SFA to contact the local Workforce Services (SNAP or FEP) or Human Services (foster children) offices to determine if the possible match

is the enrolled student or not. If the student's eligibility cannot be determined through this process, a paper application can still be completed for the student.

All the matching processes uses the child's first name, last name and date of birth to find a match for the student. Only students that match all three criteria will be identified as eligible by the Direct Certification Program.

The matching process is not 100% accurate. Typographical errors and nicknames make it impossible to achieve complete accuracy in the process. Students who don't match all the criteria will be dropped into a separate screen (Certify Possible Matches). The SFA will need to go into this screen, identify matches, check those which they wish to download. SFAs should be very careful when identifying matches to avoid errors. The student's name, birthdate and address should be compared to the database to assure only those students who match are downloaded.

"Certify Individual" allows for a single child look-up. The SFA can enter more information about the child (address) or the parent's name in order to narrow down the matching process. In addition, the single child look-up uses Soundex software to find names which sound like the name typed into the system, but are not spelled in the same way. Matches found during the single child look-up must always be evaluated to assure the record is accurately matched to the enrolled child.

## Student File Creation

The first step is for food service staff to contact their computer/information technology staff to determine how student information is being uploaded to the Utah State Office of Education's UTREx system. If all current year enrollees, including Head Start, transfer students and new enrollees are included in the UTREx upload, follow the instructions on page 8 of this booklet.

If the UTREx list does not include Head Start, transfer and new enrollees, it is still possible to use the UTREx list for the bulk of students and create a separate list(s) of those not included on the UTREx list for upload.

If the UTREx list is not current, a list of enrolled students will need to be created. Ask the SFA computer personnel to use these instructions and create a list.

Follow the instructions below to create a student file for upload to the direct certification program.

**Note:** If a school software program is used for student management, contact your software representative. Some software has built in functionality for creating a student file for direct certification.

If the student software does not have the functionality for creating the student file, Microsoft Excel is the easiest way to create a file, but virtually any text editing software may be used as long as the file can be saved as plain text (.txt).

The SFA computer support staff should provide assistance in the creation of the enrolled student file, uploading the file and downloading the matches. The computer support staff may also be able to assist with processing the matching students so their eligibility status is updated in the school meals system. It is important that the student list uploaded includes all students who will be enrolled during the school year, including new enrollees (Head Start, kindergarten or transfer students).

### **Student File Layout**

The direct certification program requires the student file be in a **tab delimited** format. The first row must contain a header line with "Last Name," "First Name," "Date of Birth," and "School Use" as heading titles. No fields can be blank. The required fields are:

**Last Name:** Character data up to 20 characters long

**First Name:** Character data up to 15 characters long

**Date of Birth:** Date. Format (MM/DD/YYYY). (January 1, 2010 should be "01/01/2010" not "1/1/2010").

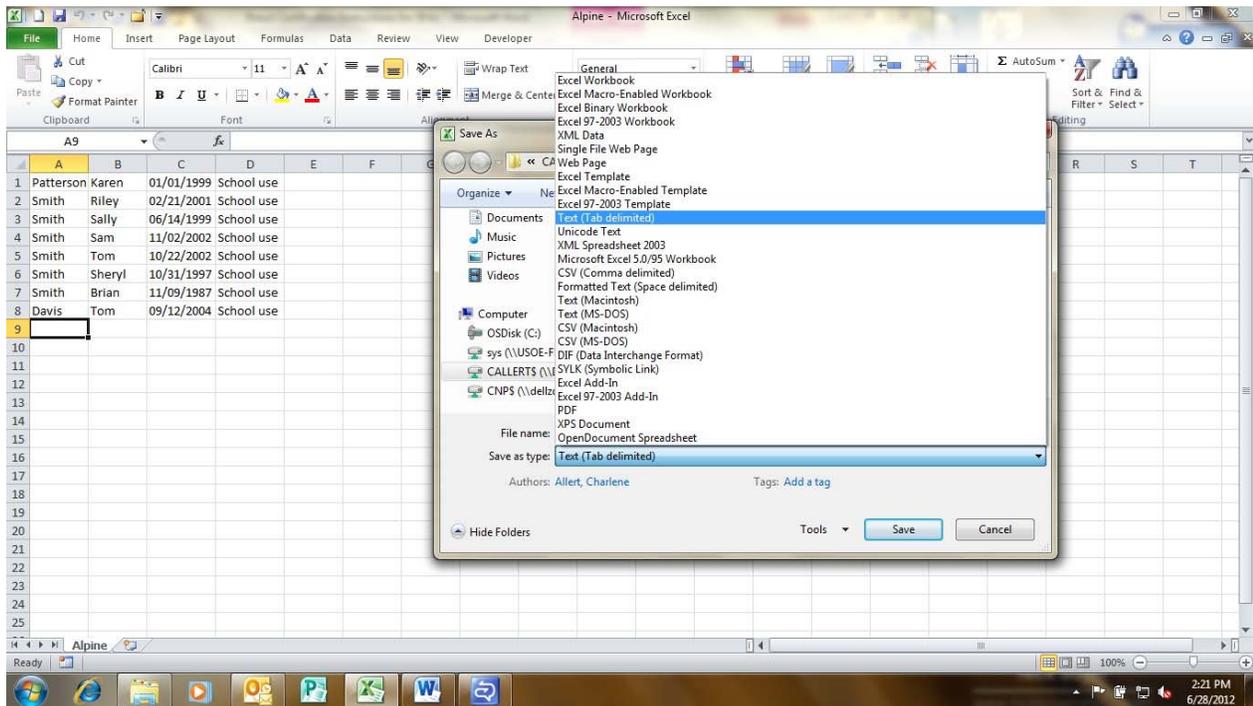
**School Use:** Character data up to 28 characters for school district use. Optional information, such as the student identifier or the school where the child is enrolled.

### **Creating the Student File with Microsoft Excel**

After setting the width of the data field for the birthdate, click on the top of the column so the entire date column is highlighted. Right click the mouse, select "Format cells" and change the entire column to "text." The system will not match the date unless it is in the correct format. If the column is not changed to "text," Excel will drop off any zeros (January 1, 2010 should be "01/01/2010" not "1/1/2010").

Once the data is in Excel, make sure the columns are in the correct order: Last Name, First Name, Date of Birth and School Use (optional). Click on File then **Save As**. In the "Save as type" box select: **Text (Tab delimited) (\*.txt)**

Save the file with any name and location -- be sure to make a note of it can be retrieved when uploading the file. Below is an image of how the file should look when saving in Excel:

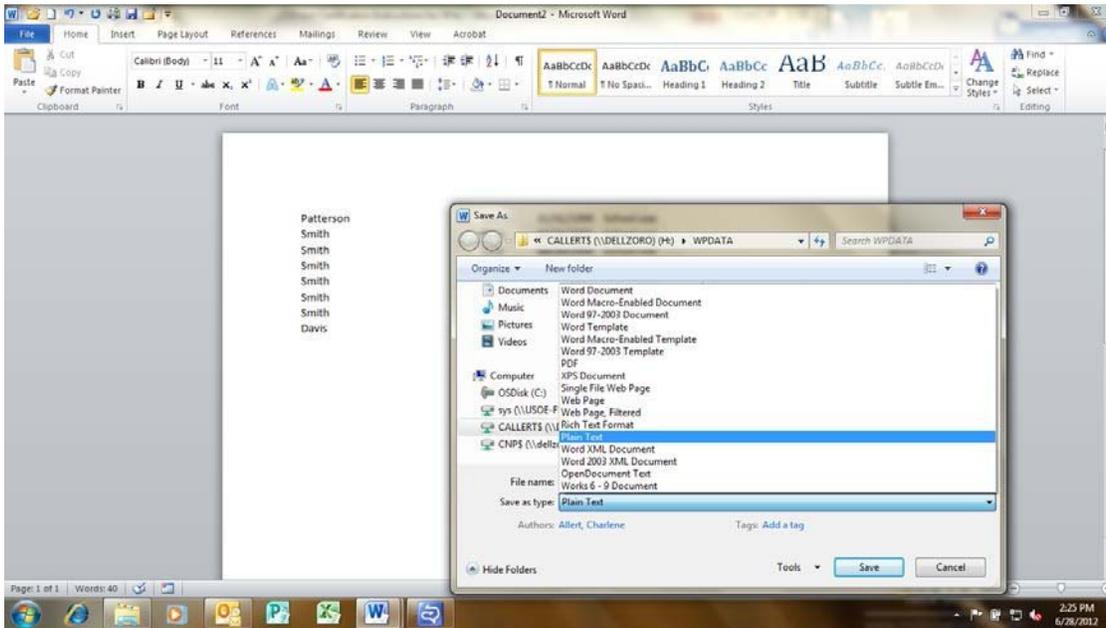


## Creating the Student File with Microsoft Word

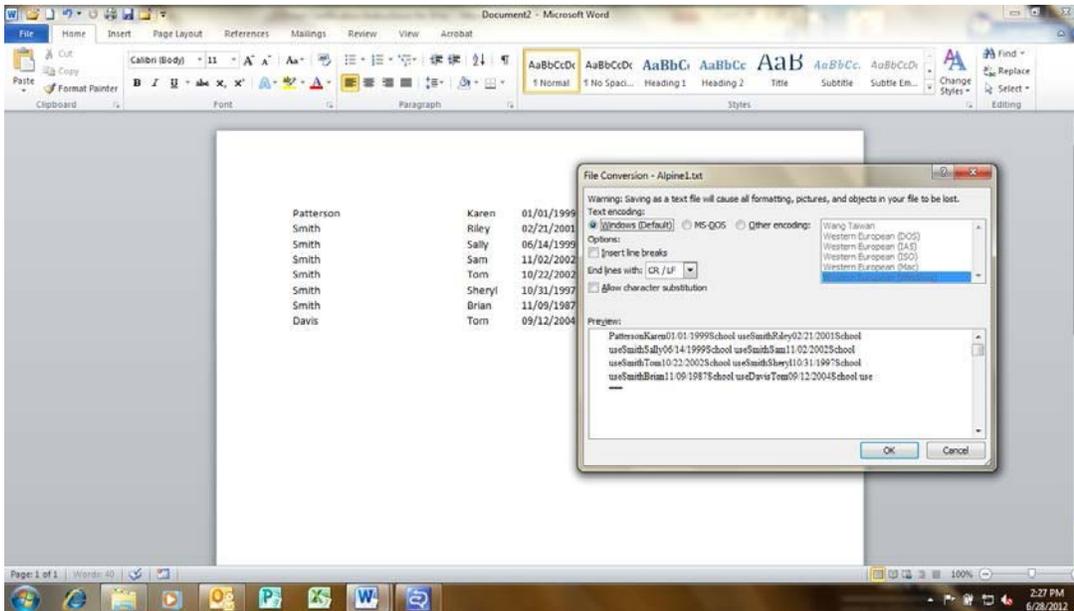
Microsoft Word can be used to create your file but it is not recommended if there are a large number of students. To create the file, do the following for each student:

1. Type the student's last name
2. Press the Tab key
3. Type the student's first name
5. Press the Tab key
6. Type the student's date of birth
7. Press the Tab key
8. Type in any school use information (Skip this step if you do not use this field)
9. Press the enter key and repeat steps for each additional student

Once finished, click File then **Save As**. In the "Save as type" box select: **Plain Text \*.txt**). Save the file with any name and location -- be sure to make a note of it so it can be retrieved when uploading the file.



After clicking save, a conversion dialog box (shown below) will open. Click OK and the file will be saved.



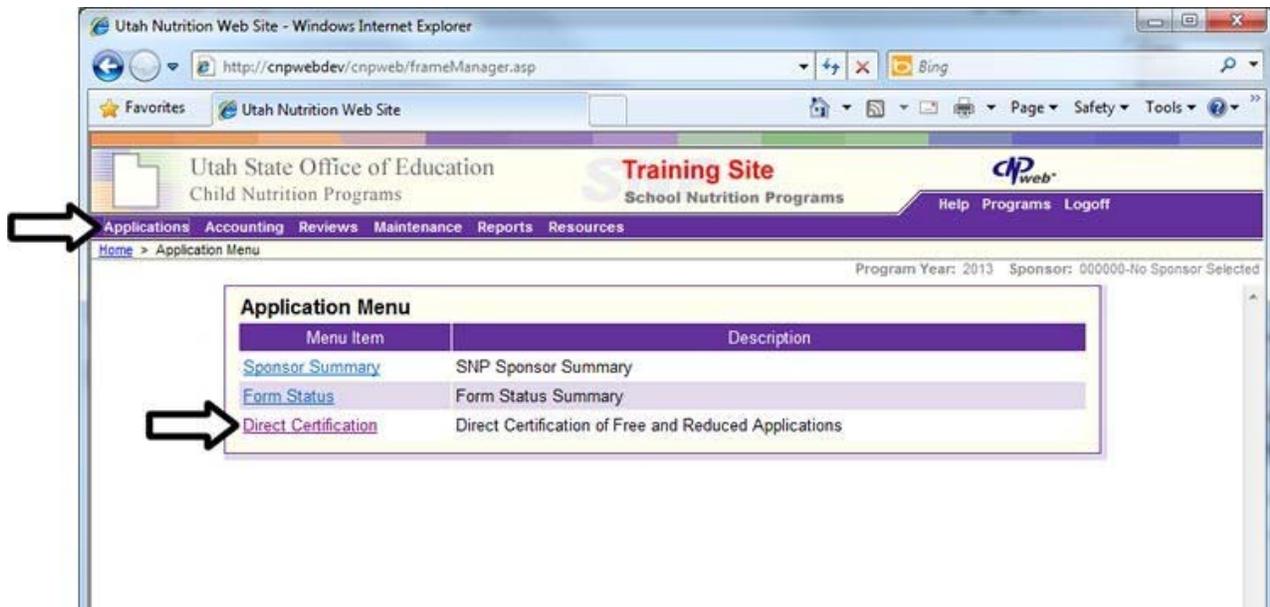
## Creating the Student File with Other Text Software

Other text software (such as Notepad or WordPad) can be used to create the file, but it is not recommended if there are a large number of students. To create the file, follow the steps above for creating a file with Microsoft Word. When finished entering the information be sure to save the file as Plain Text (\*.txt), Text Document (\*.txt) or whatever the software uses to designate a .txt file

If unsure if any of these options for creating the student file will work, contact the school or district computer support staff for assistance.

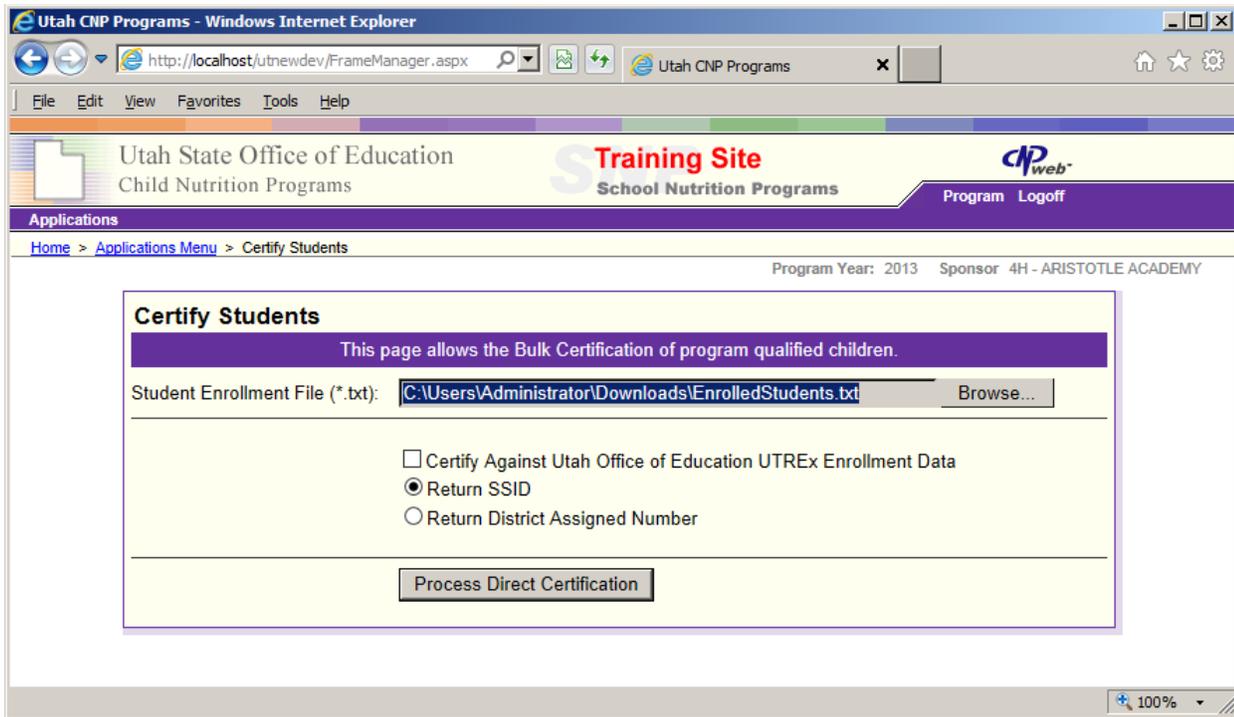
## Using UTREx Lists or Uploading Enrollment Lists

After logging into CNPweb, click on School Nutrition Programs puzzle piece, click “continue,” and select the current program year. Click on “Applications” in the upper left hand corner of the screen. Click on “Direct Certification.”



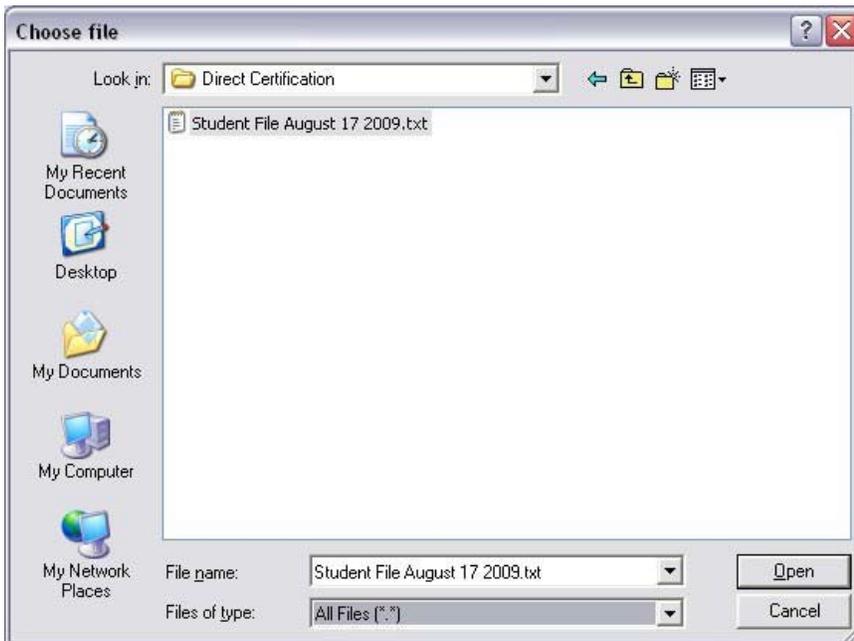
Select the "Certify Students" link to access the student file upload page (pictured below).





To certify against the UTREx list, check the box. Indicate if you would like to have the list returned with the SSID number or a District Assigned Number and press "Process Direct Certification."

To use a file you have created, from the upload page, select the "Browse" button. A file dialog (pictured below) will display to locate the student file to be uploaded and matched for eligibility. Once the file is located, click the "Open" button on the file dialog box.



Once the file is selected, click the "Process Direct Certifications" button and match process will begin.

## Possible Matches

Matching is done by taking the list of enrolled children, either the list that was uploaded or the UTREx data that is on file with USOE, and comparing it against a list of children receiving SNAP or TANF / FEP benefits and of foster children. When a match is found with exactly the same first name, last name, and birth date this is called an *exact match* and the child is automatically added to your results file. When a match is found with two of the three this is a *possible match* and it is added to a list of possible matches. This list must be reviewed by the SFA to determine if any of the possible matches are correct and should be added to the results file.

**Certify Possible Matches**

This page allows the Individual Certification of possible matched children who may be qualified.

Save Results (32) Certify Selected Remove Selected Filter: - All Zip Codes -

32 students have been matched. Review the following 44 possible matches listed below. **A**

If they are a student who is enrolled in your school, click the Certify checkbox. When all students have been checked, click the Certify Selected button above to add them to your Download Results list.

Certify	Remove	Match Type	Student ID	Input / Assistance Student Birthday	Input / Assistance Student Last Name	Input / Assistance Student First Name	Source	Parent Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Addr 1	Addr 2	Addr 3	City	State	Zip	Eligibility Date
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	10100000	9/15/2011	LARSEN	JACOB	FS									84121	7/27/2015
				9/23/2011	LARSEN	JACOB	FS										
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	10100000	9/18/2011	MORGAN	K... N	FS									84037	7/27/2015
				9/16/2011	MORGAN	K... N	FS										
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8	10100000	4/11/2011	ANDERSON	PANTON	FS									84725	7/27/2015
				4/11/2011	ANDERSON	JA...	FS										
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8	10100000	7/13/2011	ANDERSON	G...	FS									84315	7/27/2015
				7/13/2011	ANDERSON	K...	FS										

Once the matching is complete you will see a screen like the one above. On this screen you will review and certify possible matches and download the match file. In the case above, the system found 32 exact matches and 44 possible matches (A). To determine if a possible match is correct and should be certified you must compare the *Enrolled* information (top line of the record) to the *Assistance* information (second line of the record). The *Enrolled* information are the names and birthdates of students enrolled in your SFA that either you uploaded to match or are on-file in the USOE UTREx system.

It is possible to sort the possible matches by zip code (1). In the examples above, there are two student names on the possible list which are very likely to be correct (the birthdates are different, so they didn't match automatically). To certify these matches check the 'Certify' box in the first column (2). The 'Certify' box overrides the 'Remove' box, so you don't have to uncheck 'Remove'.

If there is not a parent or address listed, it is because the child is from the foster child assistance program list, so there is no additional information to determine if the match is correct.

This screen only shows 100 possible matches at a time. Click the Certify check box on all students you want to manually approve. Once you've reviewed the entire page and checked "Certify" on whatever students qualify, click the "Remove Selected" (3) button. That will increase the black "matched" number, and the number you clicked "Certify" on and the red "possible matches" will reduce by 100 if it's a full page. When you get to the last page, there will usually less than 100 possible matches left, and in that case, the red possible matches number will go away (A). Once finished with the list, click "Save Matches" (4)

You can sort the list in other ways to make the reviewing process easier. For example, you can click on the 'City' to sort the list by that column. That way you can review only the addresses that are in cities that the SFA covers. Keep in mind that the foster child list does not include addresses, so review the possible matches with no city or zip code as well.

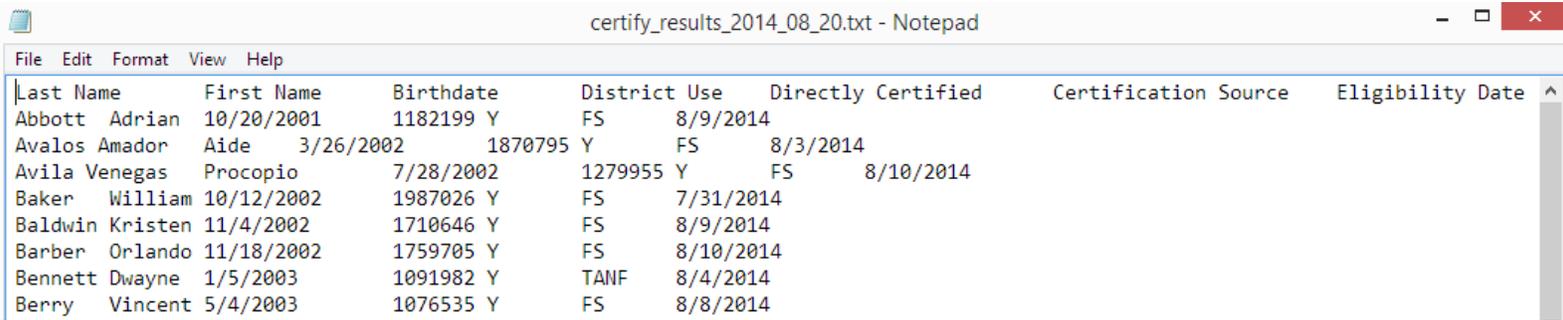
The match type (B) is shown below and on the bottom of the possible matches page. In this example, there were no possible matches with type 2, 5 or 6. There were 2 records which matched the last and first names and a partial birth date. There were 16 matches of last name and birthdate and 26 matches of first name and birthdate.

#### Match Type Key

Total Matched	Match Type	Description
0	2	Possible Match (Original)
0	5	Possible Match - Double Metaphone
0	6	Possible Match - Metaphone
2	7	Possible Match - Last and First Name and Partial Date (Month and Year or Month and Day)
16	8	Possible Match - Last Name and Birthday Only
26	9	Possible Match - First Name and Birthday Only

## The Results File

When you click the 'Save Results' (4) button, you will be prompted to download a text file containing all names that were automatically matched along with any possible matches you certified. The file will look like this.



Last Name	First Name	Birthdate	District Use	Directly Certified	Certification Source	Eligibility Date
Abbott	Adrian	10/20/2001	1182199 Y	FS	8/9/2014	
Avalos	Amador	Aide 3/26/2002	1870795 Y	FS	8/3/2014	
Avila	Venegas	Procopio	7/28/2002	1279955 Y	FS	8/10/2014
Baker	William	10/12/2002	1987026 Y	FS	7/31/2014	
Baldwin	Kristen	11/4/2002	1710646 Y	FS	8/9/2014	
Barber	Orlando	11/18/2002	1759705 Y	FS	8/10/2014	
Bennett	Dwayne	1/5/2003	1091982 Y	TANF	8/4/2014	
Berry	Vincent	5/4/2003	1076535 Y	FS	8/8/2014	

The file contains the Last Name, First Name, and Birthdate of all certified students. Note that this information comes from the Assistance Program Data, so when Willie Baker was certified as William Baker on the Possible Matches screen the results file contains the name William Baker. The District Use column either comes from the data that was uploaded into the system or the SSID or District Assigned Number from the UTREx system. The Directly Certified column shows a 'Y' to indicate that yes, the child was directly certified. The Certification Source shows what Assistance Program the student a part of. The options are 'FS' for Food Stamp / SNAP, 'TANF' for the TANF / FEP program, and 'FO' for the foster child program. This must be recorded in your system because you are required to report the number of directly certified students based on assistance program. The Eligibility Date column is the date the student first appeared in the assistance program data and is used for back-dating of eligibility.

**Note:** Documentation for direct certification must be kept for a minimum of three (3) years plus the current year after the submission of the final claim for reimbursement for the fiscal year to which they apply.

**You must download and save match files to your computer. Files are deleted from our system after the match.**

## Certify Individual

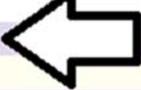
Certify individual uses the student address and the way the name sounds to give more information about possible matches. The child's address or parent name can also be entered. It is up to the school to determine if the advanced match is actually the enrolled student.

The 'Certify Individual' process is designed to process a list of single students. Enter all the students individually. When you have determined if they're eligible (or not), click on 'Save Results' to save the entire list of students eligible (it will save all the results that were returned which were shown in green text). Remember to save the results as proof of the matches.

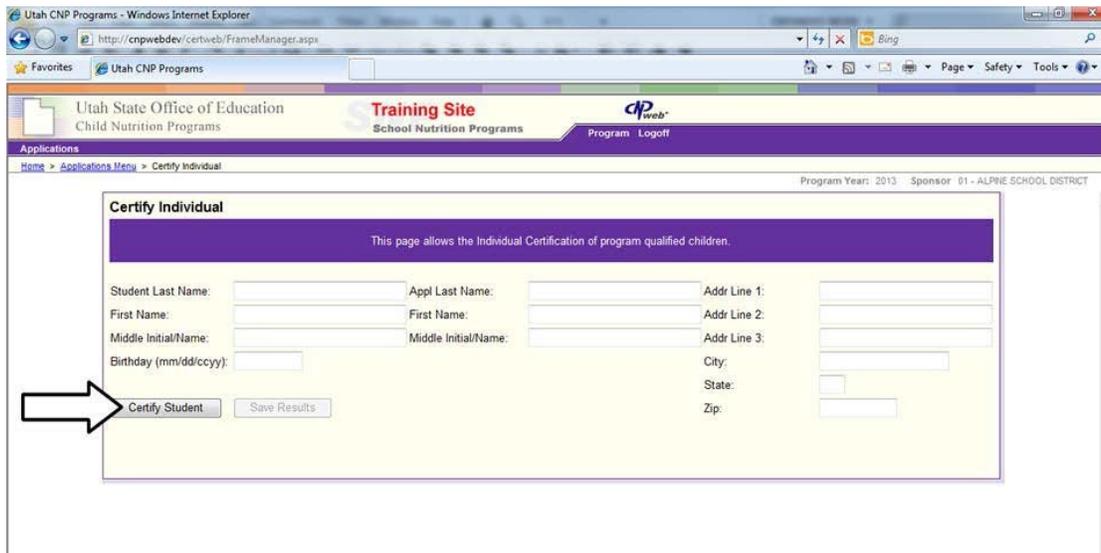
After logging into CNPweb, click on School Nutrition Programs puzzle piece, click "continue," and select the current program year. Click on "Applications" in the upper left hand corner of the screen. Click on "Direct Certification."

Click on the current school year, then, click on the "Certify Individual" link to access the student file page (pictured below).

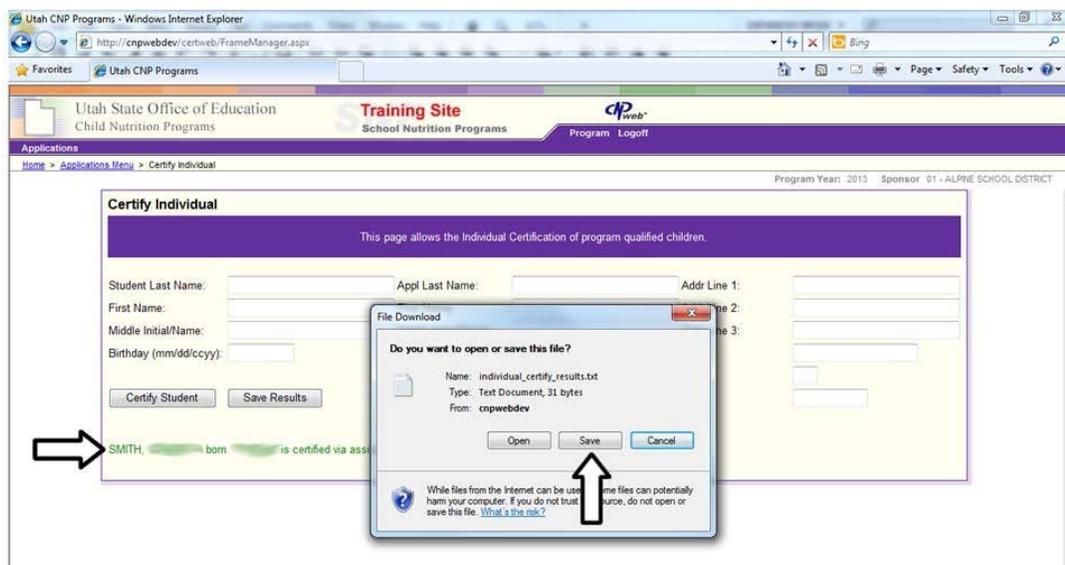
Applications Menu	
Menu Item	Description
<a href="#">Certify Students</a>	Upload Student File for Certification
<a href="#">Certify Individual</a>	Lookup Individual for Certification



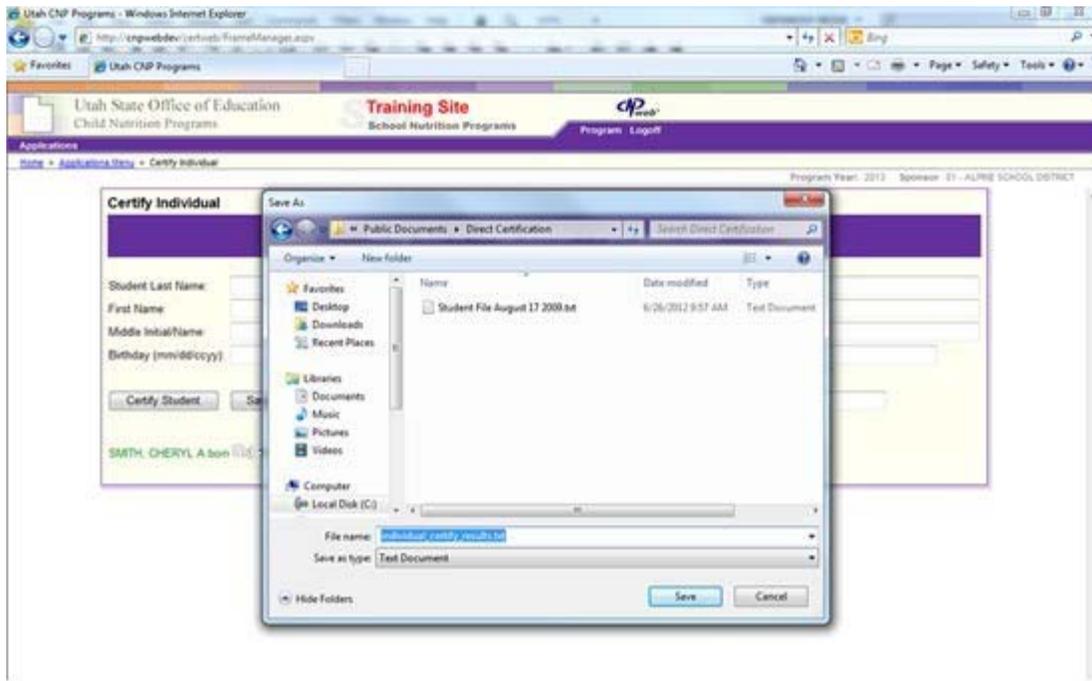
Enter as much information as you can for the student, then click the "Certify Student" button.



If the system has a match, it will give the information in green font, showing by what program the child qualifies. Process all the individuals. The last step is to save the records. Click on “Save Results.” A dialogue box will open. Click ‘Save.’ The default file name can be changed. Be sure to keep careful track of where and how files are saved so they can be located when needed.



The name or location of the file can be changed. Remember where the electronic files are being saved. SFAs are responsible for saving lists of certified students. The CNPweb system does not retain a list of downloaded students.



## Assistance Type

Each student record will have one of three eligibility codes. The following describes each code:

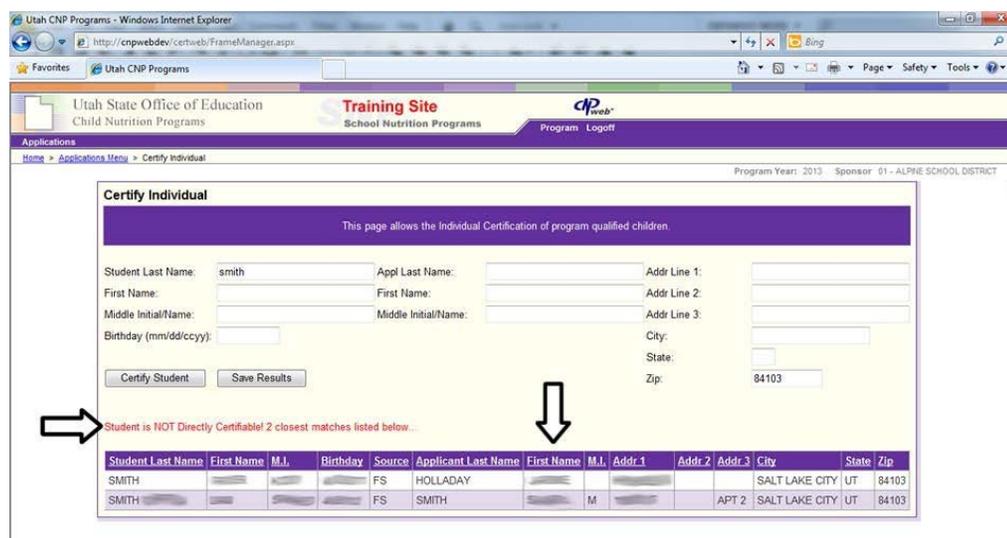
Code	Description
FO	Department of Human Services – this child is a foster child
FS	Department of Workforce Services – this child and their family are eligible for food stamps (Special Assistance Nutrition Program, SNAP)
TANF	Department of Workforce Services – this child and their family are receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (named the Family Employment Program in Utah)

## Ineligible Students

The database is updated nightly, so it is possible that the student has become eligible since the last update. If there is a free or reduced price application with a case number for a student, but the student doesn't match, follow the instructions in the [Eligibility Manual](#), (page 38). Those individuals who do not have a valid case number may apply for benefits using their income.

The screen below shows a student who is not eligible using the “Certify Individual” process. The system will return the closest matches. The SFA will need to determine if any of the close matches are the student in question. The default is to return results in by the student’s last name in alphabetical order. Be careful to read the last name of the student – it may be that another last name sounds similar and the system has returned that result in addition to the student in question. To sort the names differently, click on one of the headings (first name of the parent, in the example below).

If one of the students on the list is an exact match, enter their name and press “certify student” so the system will return the name in green font. When all the students have been processed, save the results and the system will produce a list of all those names which returned positive results (all those with the green font saying the student can be certified).



## Undetermined Students

If there is a student that is undetermined and the school is unable to directly certify them, the school can have the household complete a paper application using their income or contact the local Workforce Services office. Document any conversations with Workforce Services and save your records to show the steps which were taken to establish eligibility.

## Newly Enrolled Students

Once the entire list has been reviewed, it may be useful if the SFAs IT department can supply a list of only newly enrolled students on a weekly or monthly basis. The list of newly enrolled students can easily be uploaded to check for exact and possible matches without sorting through the entire SFA list of enrollees.