

# Free and Reduced Meal Application FAQs

## Application Completion Tips

### What measures can I take to expedite my applications approval?

- Use **BLACK** or **BLUE** ink
- **Print Clearly**
- Use your students name as it appears on their Birth Certificate
- List all Other House Hold Members
- Fill in Social Security Number for the signer or write "NONE"
- **SIGNATURE IS REQUIRED**
- Foster Child must be on separate form

### Do I need to fill out an application for each child?

No. Complete one application for all students in your household. We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. Return the completed application to the Food Services Office, the School Office or the School Cafeteria Manager.

### Who can receive free meals?

Your child can get free meals if your household income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Guidelines.

Also, free meals are available to most foster children and to children in households receiving benefits from Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance to Families (TAF), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).

### Can homeless, runaway and migrant children get free meals?

Yes. If you have or are a homeless, runaway or migrant child and have not been informed that your child will get free meals, please contact the Food and Nutrition Services Department.

### I got a letter saying my children are approved for free meals for this school year. Should I fill out an application?

All applications must be renewed every new school year. Please carefully read the letter you received and follow the instructions. Call the Food & Nutrition Services Dept. if you have questions.

### Who can receive Reduced Price meals?

Your child can receive low cost meals if your household income is within the reduced price limits on the Eligibility Guidelines, please fill out an application.

**I receive WIC (Women, Infants and Children) benefits. Can my child get free meals?**

Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for reduced price or free meals. Please fill out an application.

**Will the information I give be checked?**

Yes, we may ask you to send written proof of the information you give.

**If I don't qualify now, may I apply later?**

You may apply at any time during the school year if your household size goes up, or if your income goes up or down by \$50 or more a month, or if you start getting Food Stamps, TAF or other benefits. If you lose your job, your child may be able to get reduced price or free meals.

**What if I disagree with the school's decision about my application?**

You should talk to a school official. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to Food and Nutrition Services Department.

**May I apply if someone in my household is not a U.S. citizen?**

You or your child do not have to be a U.S. citizen to qualify your child to receive reduced price or free meals.

**Who should I include as members of my household?**

Include yourself, all children who live with you and all other people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends).

**What if my income is not always the same?**

Please contact the Food Service Office for further instructions. Normally you will list the amount that you normally receive BEFORE deductions. For example, if you normally receive \$1,000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only got \$900, put down that you get \$1,000 per month. If you are normally paid for overtime, include it.

**Are applications available in other languages?**

Applications are available in English and Spanish. Applications may also be available in other languages.

**Why is it necessary to use the same name as it appears on the Birth Certificate?**

Since the School District uses the birth date and name information from the Birth Certificate for all school records. The only way the application can be validated is by using the same information. Clearly, nicknames and family abbreviations will slow down the application process.

## **Why do you list All Other House Hold Members?**

The consideration for approval of an application is based income and the number of household members. Therefore, it is advantageous to list all member of the household.

## **Why do I need to fill out Social Security Number and sign the application?**

These two sections are required fields and it is very important that these sections be completed. If this information is not completed, **the application will be returned to the applicant.**

## **If I have more than one student going to school in the School District do I need to fill out more than one application?**

No, only complete one application per family.

## **If I have a student living at home that goes to a private school, charter school, or Pre-K school, should I include them on the application?**

Yes, include them as Other Household Members.

## **Direct Certification**

### **What is Direct Certification?**

Under direct certification, school districts use information from State welfare or food stamp offices to certify children to receive free meals. To qualify, the children's families must receive food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or assistance from the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.

### **How do you know if your Student is Direct Certified?**

Direct Certification Letters are sent to the homes of pre-approved students.

### **If one student is Direct Certified, in a household, are the remaining students also Direct Certified?**

No, not all students are directly certified. If you receive a direct certification letter for one student in the household, please fill out a free and reduced application for the remaining student(s). Remember to include the direct certified student in section #5 of the form entitled All Other House Hold Members.