

Providing Income Information Ensures Student Access to School Meals

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Families are encouraged to provide income information to their school districts to ensure that their students have access to much-needed school meals.

This information helps determine students' eligibility for meals, and it is also used to identify other student benefits such as reduced fees and additional funding for schools. Information provided may also be used to qualify eligible children for Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) programs.

Families will be asked to fill out one of two documents, a free and reduced-price meals application, or a family income survey. Both forms are simple to fill out and confidential. There are no citizenship requirements for participation in the federal child nutrition programs that Washington's schools operate, and immigration status is not requested or disclosed.

All households with students in grades K-12 receive application packets from their child's school at the beginning of the school year. The application packet provides instructions and directions on where to send the materials. In addition, many schools make meal applications or family income surveys available electronically.

After families submit their Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications, determinations are made



A student sits at a lunch table talking to a friend.

Income Guidelines for Free Meals

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$17,667	\$1,473	\$737	\$680	\$340
2	\$23,803	\$1,984	\$992	\$916	\$458
3	\$29,939	\$2,495	\$1,248	\$1,152	\$576
4	\$36,075	\$3,007	\$1,504	\$1,388	\$694
5	\$42,211	\$3,518	\$1,759	\$1,624	\$812
6	\$48,347	\$4,029	\$2,015	\$1,860	\$930
7	\$54,483	\$4,541	\$2,271	\$2,096	\$1,048
8	\$60,619	\$5,052	\$2,526	\$2,332	\$1,166
For each additional family member, add:	\$6,136	\$512	\$256	\$236	\$118

Income Guidelines for Free Meals

within 10 operating days of receipt. Households denied eligibility can appeal the decision by contacting their school.

Family Income Surveys are offered to families whose schools participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). CEP provides free meals for all students in a school, but income surveys provide crucial eligibility information for other student benefits.

Income Guidelines for Reduced-Price Meals

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$25,142	\$2,096	\$1,048	\$967	\$484
2	\$33,874	\$2,823	\$1,412	\$1,303	\$652
3	\$42,606	\$3,551	\$1,776	\$1,639	\$820
4	\$51,338	\$4,279	\$2,140	\$1,975	\$988
5	\$60,070	\$5,006	\$2,503	\$2,311	\$1,156
6	\$68,802	\$5,734	\$2,867	\$2,647	\$1,324
7	\$77,534	\$6,462	\$3,231	\$2,983	\$1,492
8	\$86,266	\$7,189	\$3,595	\$3,318	\$1,659
For each additional family member, add:	\$8,732	\$728	\$364	\$336	\$168

Income Guidelines for Reduced-Price Meals

Meal applications can be submitted at any time during the school year. Households that experience a change in income due to job loss or other circumstances are encouraged to apply.

Family income information supports the continued operation of meal programs in Washington state. In Washington, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) administers three federal U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs: the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Special Milk Program.

Schools with more than 25% of enrolled K-4 students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals are required to operate the National School Lunch Program. In addition, schools with more than 40% of enrolled students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals are required to operate the School Breakfast Program.

USDA Child Nutrition Program Income Guidelines

Income eligibility guidelines are used to determine eligibility to receive free or reduced-price meals or free milk.

Income guidelines for eligibility for free meals and reduced-price meals apply from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023.

NOTE: The state of Washington pays the copay for public school students who are eligible for reduced-price meals in grades pre-K-12.

Additional Eligibility

There are several additional programs and circumstances that provide automatic eligibility for free and reduced-price meals.

To facilitate automatic eligibility and make the process more efficient for families, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) provides a list of children who receive the following services. Households are notified of the eligibility and must contact the school if they choose to decline the benefits.

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program/Basic Food (SNAP)
- Specific Medicaid programs
- Children placed in foster care

In foster households, all other students in the household may be eligible based on household size and income. In these situations, households may submit an application.

Students in the following programs or circumstances are also eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Families should contact their schools for more information.

- Students experiencing homelessness
- Students enrolled in Migrant Education Programs
- Households taking part in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- Students in Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program

Eligibility lasts from the date of approval up to the first 30 operating days of the next school year or until the family contact the school or district.

Households needing assistance with application materials in languages other than English should contact their school for assistance.

If you have questions about eligibility, please contact your child's school.

For More Information

[Child Nutrition Programs in Washington state](#), including applications for free and reduced-price meals

[USDA National School Lunch Program](#)

[USDA School Breakfast Program](#)

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