

Frequently Asked Questions – Free & Reduced-Price Meals

Who can get free school meals? Children in households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), and foster, homeless, migrant and runaway children can get free school meals without reporting household income. Or children can get free school meals if their household income is within the maximum income shown for their household size on the instructions.

I get WIC or Medical Assistance. Can my children get free school meals? Children in households participating in WIC or Medical Assistance may be eligible for free school meals. Please fill out an application. Participating in these programs does NOT automatically qualify you for free school meals.

When should I apply? As soon as possible! By submitting your application prior to the first day of school, you can be assured that, if approved, you will not incur any charges to your students' meal accounts. Families who incur meal charges prior to being approved for meal benefits are still responsible for paying off those charges.

Do I need to apply this year if I was approved for meal benefits last year? Yes. The application needs to be filled out and submitted every year.

Who should I include as household members? Include yourself and ALL other people living in the household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends), and regardless of their age.

May I apply if someone in my household is not a U.S. citizen? Yes. You or your children do not have to be U.S. citizens for your children to qualify for free or reduced-price school meals.

What if my income is not always the same? List the amount that you normally get. If you normally get overtime, include it, but not if you get overtime only sometimes. For seasonal work, write in the total annual income.

Will the information I give be checked? Yes, and we may also ask you to send written proof.

How will the information be kept? Information you provide on the form, and your child's approval for school meal benefits, will be protected as private data. For more information, see the back page of the Application for Educational Benefits.

If I don't qualify now, may I apply later? Yes. Please complete an application at any time if your income goes down, your household size goes up, or you start getting SNAP, MFIP or FDPIR benefits. Families may apply at any time during the school year.

Can a student who qualifies for free or reduced-price meals receive free milk if they choose to bring a home lunch? No. Free or reduced meal benefits only apply if the student takes an entire lunch or breakfast. Purchasing milk only costs \$0.50. A student MUST have money in their account to buy milk only.