

ANNUAL NEWS RELEASE - PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

_____ (Local School Food Authority) today announced a free and reduced price meal (Free Milk) policy for _____ area school children. Local school officials have adopted the following family eligibility criteria to assist them in determining eligibility:

**2024-2025 INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES
FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS OR FREE MILK**

Free Eligibility Scale						Reduced Price Eligibility Scale					
Free Lunch, Breakfast, Milk						Reduced Price Lunch, Breakfast					
Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly	Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$ 19,578	\$ 1,632	\$ 816	\$ 753	\$ 377	1	\$ 27,861	\$ 2,322	\$ 1,161	\$ 1,072	\$ 536
2	\$ 26,572	\$ 2,215	\$ 1,108	\$ 1,022	\$ 511	2	\$ 37,814	\$ 3,152	\$ 1,576	\$ 1,455	\$ 728
3	\$ 33,566	\$ 2,798	\$ 1,399	\$ 1,291	\$ 646	3	\$ 47,767	\$ 3,981	\$ 1,991	\$ 1,838	\$ 919
4	\$ 40,560	\$ 3,380	\$ 1,690	\$ 1,560	\$ 780	4	\$ 57,720	\$ 4,810	\$ 2,405	\$ 2,220	\$ 1,110
5	\$ 47,554	\$ 3,963	\$ 1,982	\$ 1,829	\$ 915	5	\$ 67,673	\$ 5,640	\$ 2,820	\$ 2,603	\$ 1,302
6	\$ 54,548	\$ 4,546	\$ 2,273	\$ 2,098	\$ 1,049	6	\$ 77,626	\$ 6,469	\$ 3,235	\$ 2,986	\$ 1,493
7	\$ 61,542	\$ 5,129	\$ 2,565	\$ 2,367	\$ 1,184	7	\$ 87,579	\$ 7,299	\$ 3,650	\$ 3,369	\$ 1,685
8	\$ 68,536	\$ 5,712	\$ 2,856	\$ 2,636	\$ 1,318	8	\$ 97,532	\$ 8,128	\$ 4,064	\$ 3,752	\$ 1,876
Each Add'l person, add	\$ 6,994	\$ 583	\$ 292	\$ 269	\$ 135	Each Add'l person, add	\$ 9,953	\$ 830	\$ 415	\$ 383	\$ 192

***Students in New York State that are approved for reduced price meals will receive breakfast and lunch meals and snacks served through the Afterschool Snack Program at no charge.**

SNAP/TANF/FDPIR Households: Households that currently include children who receive the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) but who are not found during the Direct Certification Matching Process (DCMP), or households that currently receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) must complete an Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Milk, listing the child's name, a valid SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR case number and the signature of an adult household member. Eligibility for free meal benefits based on participation in SNAP, TANF or FDPIR is extended to all children in the household. When known to the School Food Authority, households will be notified of their children's eligibility for free meals based on their participation in the SNAP, TANF or the FDPIR programs. No application is necessary if the household was notified by the SFA their children have been directly certified. If the household is not sure if their children have been directly certified, the household should contact the school.

Other Source Categorical Eligibility: When known to the School Food Authority, households will be notified of any child's eligibility for free meals based on the individual child's designation as Other Source Categorically Eligible, as defined by law. Children are determined Other Source Categorically Eligible if they are Homeless, Migrant, Runaway, a foster child, or Enrolled in Head Start or an eligible pre-kindergarten program.

Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court, are eligible for free meals. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free meals regardless of income. A separate application for a foster child is no longer necessary. Foster children may also be included as a member of the foster family if the foster family chooses to also apply for benefits for other children. Including children in foster care as household members may help other children in the household qualify for benefits. If non-foster children in a foster family are not eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits, an eligible foster child will still receive free benefits

If children or households receive benefits under Assistance Programs or Other Source Categorically Eligible Programs and are not listed on the notice of eligibility and are not notified by the School Food Authority of their free meal benefits, the parent or guardian should contact the school or should submit an income application.

Other Households: Households with income the same or below the amounts listed above for family size may be eligible for and are urged to apply for free and/or reduced price meals (or free milk). They may do so by completing the Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Milk sent home with the letter to parents. One application for all children in the household should be submitted. Additional copies are available at the principal's office in each school. **Applications may be submitted any time during the school year to _____ (Title of Reviewing Official). Please contact _____ at _____ with any questions regarding the application process.**

Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact the School Food Authority if they choose to decline the free meal benefits. Households may apply for benefits at any time throughout the school year. Children of parents or guardians who become unemployed or experience a financial hardship mid-year may become eligible for free and reduced price meals or free milk at any point during the school year.

Children in households receiving Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits may be eligible for free or reduced price meals through the application process.

For up to 30 operating days into the new school year (or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first) an individual child's free or reduced price eligibility status from the previous year will continue within the same School Food Authority. When the carryover period ends, unless the household is notified that their children are directly certified or the household submits an application that is approved, the children's meals must be claimed at the paid rate. Though encouraged to do so, the School Food Authority is not required to send a reminder or a notice of expired eligibility.

The information provided on the application will be confidential and will be used for determining eligibility. The names and eligibility status of participants may also be used for the allocation of funds to federal education programs such as Title I and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), State health or State education programs, provided the State agency or local education agency administers the programs, and for federal, State or local means-tested nutrition programs with eligibility standards comparable to the NSLP. Eligibility information may also be released to programs authorized under the National School Lunch Act (NSLA) or the Child Nutrition Act (CNA). The release of information to any program or entity not specifically authorized by the NSLA will require a written consent statement from the parent or guardian.

The School Food Authority does, however, have the right to verify at any time during the school year the information on the application. If a parent does not give the school this information, the child/children will no longer be able to receive free or reduced price meals (free milk).

Under the provisions of the policy, the designated official will review applications and determine eligibility. If a parent is dissatisfied with the ruling of the designated official, he/she may make a request either orally or in writing for a hearing to appeal the decision. _____ (Name, Title), whose address is _____ has been designated as the Hearing Official. Hearing procedures are outlined in the policy. However, prior to initiating the hearing procedure, the parent or School Food Authority may request a conference to provide an opportunity for the parent and official to discuss the situation, present information, and obtain an explanation of the data submitted in the application or the decisions rendered. The request for a conference shall not in any way prejudice or diminish the right to a fair hearing.

Only complete applications can be approved. This includes complete and accurate information regarding: the SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR case number; the names of all household members; on an income application, the last four digits of the social security number of the person who signs the form or an indication that the adult does not have one, and the amount and source of income received by each household member. In addition, the parent or guardian must sign the application form, certifying the information is true and correct.

In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, disability or limited English proficiency.

Nondiscrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. **email:**
program.intake@usda.gov

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