



## Free and Reduced-Price School Meals - Questions & Answers

**1. Do I have to fill out the Application for Educational Benefits?**

No. You do not have to fill out this application unless you want to apply for free or reduced-price meals for your children (or to assist the school to qualify for additional educational funds and discounts).

**2. Who can get free or reduced-price meals?**

Children can get free or reduced-price school meals if the total household income is within the limits shown in the letter that is with the Application for Educational Benefits. Children in households receiving MFIP, Food Stamp, and FDPIR benefits and foster children can get free meals regardless of household income. Children in households receiving WIC benefits may qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

**3. Will my children be treated differently if they receive free or reduced-price meals?**

No. Your children will not be identified or treated differently from children who pay full price for meals.

**4. How is the privacy of my information protected?**

The information you provide on the Application for Educational Benefits is private data. Also, the information that a child has been approved for free or reduced-price meals is private data. Your information will be used only as specifically allowed in law – please read the back page of the Application for Educational Benefits for details. Your information will not be used for any other purposes unless you provide written consent.

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

To apply for free or reduced-price meals based on your household income, you must include all adults and children in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, and friends). To apply for children who receive MFIP, Food Stamps, or FDPIR benefits, or for foster children, you do not have to provide information about other household members.

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

Yes. You do not have to be a U.S. citizen to get free or reduced-price school meals.

**7. Do I report my income before deductions (gross income)?**

Yes. The only time that you should not report gross income is for farm or other self-employment income, which should be reported as a net income after business expenses. However, a business loss must be treated as a zero income - a business loss cannot be subtracted from other income.

**8. What if my income last month was more or less than normal?**

List the amount that you normally get.

**9. Will the information be checked?**

Yes, we may ask you to send written proof of the information you give or we may check the information you give - please read the back page of the Application for Educational Benefits for details. Information you provide on the application may be compared against data from state agencies such as the MN Departments of Human Services, Economic Security, and Revenue.



Free and Reduced-Price School Meals



State and Federally Funded Programs for Schools

### APPLICATION for EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

School Year 2005-06

- Check here if this is the first school meal application for any child listed below.
- Check one box:  I have listed below all children in the household, from birth through high school, except foster children. Attach additional information if necessary.  
 I have listed below a foster child in my care (who is the legal responsibility of a social services agency or court). Complete a separate application for each foster child. Do not combine foster children and other household children on the same application. For a foster child, include in the last column any foster care funds that are specifically for the child's personal use. If no foster care funds have been designated for personal use, write in "zero" or "none".

Names of All <u>Children</u> in Household except Foster Children <i>Or Name of One Foster Child</i>		Gender  Circle one	Date of Birth  Month/Day/Year	Social Security Number  Write 'None' if the person does not have a Social Security number.	Grade (PreK - 12 <sup>th</sup> )	School	MFIP Number or Food Stamp Number or FDIPIR Number	SSI or Other Regular Income to Child
First Name	Last Name							
1		M F	/ /	- - - - -				
2		M F	/ /	- - - - -				
3		M F	/ /	- - - - -				
4		M F	/ /	- - - - -				
5		M F	/ /	- - - - -				
6		M F	/ /	- - - - -				

- List all adults in the household and all incomes received last month. Attach additional information if necessary. Skip this section only if all children applying for school meal benefits in the previous section have MFIP or Food Stamp or FDIPIR numbers, or if this application is for a foster child.

Names of All <u>Adults</u> in Household		Gender  Circle one	Date of Birth  Month/Day/Year	Social Security Number  Write 'None' if the person does not have a Social Security number.	<u>Monthly Incomes (last month)</u> Multiply a weekly income by 4.33 or a bi-weekly income by 2.15 to determine the monthly income.					
First Name	Last Name				Gross Monthly Wages and Salaries	Pension, SSI, Retirement, Social Security	Public Assistance, Child Support, Alimony	Unemployment, Worker's Comp, Strike Benefits	Net Farm/Self-Employment	Other Regular Monthly Income
1		M F	/ /	- - - - -						
2		M F	/ /	- - - - -						
3		M F	/ /	- - - - -						

- I certify that the information provided on this application is true and correct. Because federal and state funds may be paid on the basis of this information, I understand that school and state officials may verify the information, and that deliberate misrepresentation may subject me to prosecution under applicable laws.

Signature of Adult Household Member (required) \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security number (required if Section 3 is completed): \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ OR  I don't have a Social Security number

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Household Size: ____ Total Household Income: _____ Or Household Receives: MFIP / Food Stamps / FDIPIR Approved: Free ____ Reduced-Price ____ Temporary until _____, _____, _____ Denied: Incomplete ____ Income Too High ____ Other: _____ Signature of Determining Official: _____ Date: _____ Withdrawn: _____ Change Status To: _____ Reason: _____	<b>Office Use Only</b> Date Verification Sent: _____ Response Due: _____ 2 <sup>nd</sup> Notice Sent: _____ Result: No Change ____ Free to Reduced-Price ____ Free to Paid ____ Reduced-Price to Free ____ Reduced-Price to Paid ____ Reason for Change: Income ____ Household Size ____ Change in Benefits ____ Refused Cooperation ____ Other: _____ Date 'Notice of Change' Sent: _____ Signature of Verifying Official: _____ Date: _____
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### **Social Security Number / Complete Application**

The National School Lunch Act requires that unless an MFIP, Food Stamp or FDPIR assistance number is supplied for your child or you are applying for a foster child, the household member signing the application must provide their Social Security number or indicate that they do not have a Social Security number. Provision of a Social Security number is not mandatory, but if a Social Security number is not given, or an indication is not made that the signer does not have such a number, the application cannot be approved. A Social Security number is not required for other adults and children listed on the application.

To be complete, an application based on public assistance must include the child/ren's names, assistance numbers, and signature of an adult household member. A complete application based on household income must include the names of all household members, the amounts of income received by all adult household members, the signature of an adult household member, and the Social Security number of the household member completing the application. A complete application for a foster child must include the child's name, the amount of any income received for the child's personal use, and the signature of an adult household member.

### **Privacy of Information That You Provide on This Form / Verification**

Information that you provide on this form is private data. The information is used to determine and verify whether children in your household qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. The information you provide on this application is not released for any other purpose unless a parent or guardian requests the release in writing.

The school and the MN Department of Education may use the information provided on this form in carrying out efforts to verify the correctness of household size and income and public assistance information stated on the application. These verification efforts may be carried out through program reviews, audits, and investigations and may include contacting state agencies such as the MN Departments of Economic Security, Human Services, or Revenue to verify income or current approval for public assistance. These efforts may result in a loss or reduction of benefits, administrative claims or legal actions if incorrect information is reported.

### **Privacy of Your Child's Eligibility Status**

Your child's eligibility status for school meals (qualified for "free," "reduced-price," or "paid" meals) is private data used by the school to provide the correct school meal benefit to your child. At public school districts, each child's eligibility status is recorded on a statewide computer system used to report student data to the MN Department of Education as required by state law. The MN Department of Education uses this information to (1) administer state and federal programs, (2) calculate compensatory revenue for public schools, and (3) judge the quality of the state's educational program.

Federal law allows a school to release a child's meal eligibility status to officials of the following types of programs without household consent: (1) federal education program, (2) state health or education program administered by the school or a state agency, and (3) federal, state, or local nutrition program that has participation requirements similar to the National School Lunch Program. School officials may send information about other programs or benefits that may be of interest to households that have qualified for free or reduced-price school meals. School meal eligibility information is also used for statistical reports, without individual identification.

A child's eligibility status will not be released for any other purpose unless a parent or guardian requests the release in writing.

### **Civil Rights Survey (voluntary)**

**1. Ethnicity** (check one):  Hispanic or Latino  Not Hispanic or Latino

**2. Race** (check one or more):  American Indian or Alaskan Native  Asian  Black or African American  Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  White

*No Child Will Be Discriminated Against Because of Race, Color, National Origin, Age, Gender, or Disability*