
FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS APPLICATION

SCHOOL YEAR 2010-2011

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

This packet contains:

Required information that *must* be provided to households:

- Letter to Households
- Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application

**Please note that Income Eligibility Guidelines have not yet been made available for the 2010-11 School Year. USDA has granted a waiver allowing the Income Eligibility Guidelines to be omitted from the Application for the 2010-11 School Year.

Optional application-related materials that *may* be provided to households:

- Sharing Information with Medicaid/SCHIP
- Sharing Information with Other Programs

The following accompanying materials are also available on PEARS Form Download:

- Notification of Selection for Verification of Eligibility (Verification Section, PDE034c)
- Letter of Verification Results (Verification Section, PDE034d)
- Notice to Households of Approval/Denial of Benefits (Free and Reduced Meal Information Section, PDE017a)
- Notice of Direct Certification (Free and Reduced Meal Information Section, PDE017d and COMPASS Section PDE155m)

Changes to this year's application include:

- Added question and answers to the parent letter regarding:
 - Web address for COMPASS as a resource for applying for free or reduced price meals or other assistance benefits (#1)
 - Need to complete a new application annually (#6)
 - Deployed service members (#15)
 - Additional sources of assistance benefits (#16)
- Revised and reformatted the application to reflect the extension of categorical eligibility to all children in the household who participate in one or more of the Child Nutrition Programs
- Reworded the instructions on the application to reflect time period to report/document income

The pages are designed to be printed on 8½" by 11" paper. Some pages may be printed front and back. You will need to identify the benefits that are offered in your school, such as afterschool snacks. **[Bold bracketed fields]** indicate where you need to insert school district specific information. This prototype application package includes information regarding the exclusion of housing allowance for those in the Military Housing Privatization Initiative. If this is not pertinent to your school district, please modify as appropriate.

If you make additional changes, you must submit your application package to your State agency for approval.

[INSERT SCHOOL DISTRICT LETTERHEAD]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **[Name of School]** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **[\$]**; lunch costs **[\$]**. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Reduced price is **[\$]** for breakfast and **[\$]** for lunch.

1. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. Complete the application to apply for free or reduced price meals. *Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals 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: **[name, address, phone number]**. Families can also apply online for free or reduced school meals, and other assistance benefits, at www.compass.state.pa.us.
2. WHO CAN GET FREE MEALS? All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (**SNAP**) or **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** and most foster children can get free meals regardless of your income. Also, your children can get free meals if your household's gross income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Guidelines.
3. CAN HOMELESS, RUNAWAY, AND MIGRANT CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? If you haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail **[school, homeless liaison or migrant coordinator information]** to see if they qualify.
4. WHO CAN GET REDUCED PRICE MEALS? Your children can get low cost meals if your household income is within the reduced price limits on the Federal Income Guidelines.
5. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? Please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. Call the school at **[phone number]** if you have questions.
6. MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT ANOTHER ONE? Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first few days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.
7. I GET WIC. CAN MY CHILD(REN) GET FREE MEALS? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please fill out an application.
8. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes and we may also ask you to send written proof.
9. IF I DON'T QUALIFY NOW, MAY I APPLY LATER? Yes, you may apply at any time during the school year.
10. WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION? You should talk to school officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: **[name, address, phone number, e-mail]**.
11. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? Yes. You or your child(ren) do not have to be U.S. citizens to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
12. WHO SHOULD I INCLUDE AS MEMBERS OF MY HOUSEHOLD? You must include all people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends). You must include yourself and all children living with you.

13. WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME? List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only work overtime sometimes.
14. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE INCLUDE OUR HOUSING ALLOWANCE AS INCOME? If you get an off-base housing allowance, it must be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income.
15. MY SPOUSE IS DEPLOYED TO A COMBAT ZONE. IS HER COMBAT PAY COUNTED AS INCOME? No, if the combat pay is received in addition to her basic pay because of her deployment and it wasn't received before she was deployed, combat pay is not counted as income. Contact your school for more information.
16. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for **SNAP** or other assistance benefits, contact your local county assistance office or call **1-800-692-7462** (1-800-451-5886 TDD number for individuals with hearing impairments).

If you have other questions or need help, call **[phone number]**.

*Si necesita ayuda, por favor llame al teléfono: **[phone number]**.*

*Si vous voudriez d'aide, contactez nous au numero: **[phone number]**.*

Sincerely,

[signature]

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING

A HOUSEHOLD MEMBER IS ANY CHILD OR ADULT LIVING WITH YOU.

IF YOUR HOUSEHOLD RECEIVES BENEFITS FROM **SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)** OR **TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)**, FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

Part 1: List all household members, the school name for each child, and the case number for any household member (including adults) those receiving **SNAP** or **TANF** benefits.

Part 2: Skip this part.

Part 3: Skip this part.

Part 4: Skip this part.

Part 5: Sign the form. A Social Security Number is not necessary.

Part 6: Answer this question if you choose to.

IF NO ONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD GETS **SNAP** OR **TANF** BENEFITS AND IF ANY CHILD IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD IS HOMELESS, A MIGRANT OR RUNAWAY, FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

Part 1: List all household members and the school name for each child.

Part 2: Check the appropriate box.

Part 3: Skip this part.

Part 4: Complete only if a child in your household isn't eligible under Part 2. See instructions for All Other Households.

Part 5: Sign the form. A Social Security Number is not necessary if you didn't need to fill in Part 4.

Part 6: Answer this question if you choose to.

IF YOU ARE APPLYING FOR A FOSTER CHILD, FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

Part 1: Use a separate application for each foster child. List the child's name, school, and, if the child has no income, check the box "no income."

Part 2: Skip this part.

Part 3: Check the box and list the child's personal use monthly income, if any.

Part 4: Skip this part.

Part 5: Sign the form. A Social Security Number is not necessary.

Part 6: Answer this question if you choose to.

ALL OTHER HOUSEHOLDS, INCLUDING WIC HOUSEHOLDS, FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

Part 1: List all household members and the school name for each child. For any person, including children, with no income, you must check the "No Income Box."

Part 2: Check the appropriate box, if any.

Part 3: Skip this part.

Part 4: Follow these instructions to report total household income from this month or last month.

- **Box 1—Name:** List all household members with income.
- **Box 2—Gross Income and How Often It Was Received:** For each household member, list each type of income received for the month. You must tell us how often the money is received—weekly, every other week, twice a month or monthly. For earnings, be sure to list the **gross income**, not the take-home pay. Gross income is the amount earned *before* taxes and other deductions. You should be able to find it on your pay stub or your boss can tell you. For other income, list the amount each person got for the month from welfare, child support, alimony, pensions, retirement, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veteran's benefits (VA benefits), disability benefits, and *All Other Income* sources. Under *All Other Income*, list Worker's Compensation, unemployment or strike benefits, regular contributions from people who do not live in your household, and any other income. For **ONLY** the self-employed, under *Earnings From Work*, report income after expenses. This is for your business, farm, or rental property. If you are in the Military Privatized Housing Initiative or get combat pay, do not include these allowances as income.

Part 5: Adult household member must sign the form and list Social Security Number (or mark the box if s/he doesn't have one).

Part 6: Answer if you choose.

FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS FAMILY APPLICATION

PART 1. ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS (USE A SEPARATE APPLICATION FOR EACH FOSTER CHILD)

| Names of household members (First, Middle Initial, Last) | School Name for Each Child | SNAP or TANF case number for any member of the household. If you list a case number, skip to Part 5 | CHECK IF NO INCOME |
|---|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PART 2. IF ANY CHILD YOU ARE APPLYING FOR IS HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR A RUNAWAY CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX AND CALL [YOUR SCHOOL, HOMELESS LIAISON, MIGRANT COORDINATOR AT PHONE #] HOMELESS MIGRANT RUNAWAY

PART 3. FOSTER CHILD If this application is for a child who is the legal responsibility of a welfare agency or court, check this box and then list the amount of the child's personal use monthly income: \$_____. Check if no income. Skip to Part 5.

PART 4. TOTAL HOUSEHOLD GROSS INCOME. You must tell us how much and how often

| 1. NAME (List all household members with income) | 2. GROSS INCOME AND HOW OFTEN IT WAS RECEIVED | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|--|------------------|
| | Earnings From Work before deductions | Welfare, child support, alimony | Pensions, retirement, Social Security, SSI, VA benefits | All Other Income |
| <i>(Example) Jane Smith</i> | <u>\$199.99/weekly</u> | <u>\$149.99/every other week</u> | <u>\$99.99/monthly</u> | \$___/___ |
| | \$___/___ | \$___/___ | \$___/___ | \$___/___ |
| | \$___/___ | \$___/___ | \$___/___ | \$___/___ |
| | \$___/___ | \$___/___ | \$___/___ | \$___/___ |
| | \$___/___ | \$___/___ | \$___/___ | \$___/___ |
| | \$___/___ | \$___/___ | \$___/___ | \$___/___ |

PART 5. SIGNATURE AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (ADULT MUST SIGN)

An adult household member must sign the application. **If Part 4 is completed, the adult signing the form also must list his or her Social Security Number or mark the "I do not have a Social Security Number" box.** (See Privacy Act Statement on the back of this page.)

I certify (promise) that all information on this application is true and that all income is reported. I understand that the school will get Federal funds based on the information I give. I understand that school officials may verify (check) the information. I understand that if I purposely give false information, my children may lose meal benefits, and I may be prosecuted.

Sign here: _____ Print name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Social Security Number: X X X - X X - ____ I do not have a Social Security Number

PART 6. CHILDREN'S ETHNIC AND RACIAL IDENTITIES (OPTIONAL)

Choose one ethnicity:

- Hispanic/Latino
 Not Hispanic/Latino

Choose one or more (regardless of ethnicity):

- Asian American Indian or Alaska Native Black or African American
 White Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

DON'T FILL OUT THIS PART. THIS IS FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY.

Annual Income Conversion: Weekly x 52, Every 2 Weeks x 26, Twice A Month x 24 Monthly x 12

Total Income: _____ Per: Week, Every 2 Weeks, Twice A Month, Month, Year Household size: _____

Categorical Eligibility: ___ Date Withdrawn: _____ Eligibility: Free___ Reduced___ Denied___ Reason: _____

Temporary: Free___ Reduced___ Time Period: _____ (expires after ___ days)

Determining Official's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Confirming Official's Signature: _____ Date: _____ Verifying Official's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Privacy Act Statement: This explains how we will use the information you give us.

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the social security number of the adult household member who signs the application. The social security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals, and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs. We MAY share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews, and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules.

Non-discrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly. "In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

SHARING INFORMATION WITH MEDICAID/SCHIP

Dear Parent/Guardian:

If your children get free or reduced price school meals, they may also be able to get free or low-cost health insurance through Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Children with health insurance are more likely to get regular health care and are less likely to miss school because of sickness.

Because health insurance is so important to children's well-being, *the law allows us to tell Medicaid and SCHIP that your children are eligible for free or reduced price meals, **unless you tell us not to.*** Medicaid and SCHIP only use the information to identify children who may be eligible for their programs. Program officials may contact you to offer to enroll your children. Filling out the Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application does not automatically enroll your children in health insurance.

If you do not want us to share your information with Medicaid or SCHIP, fill out the form below and send in (Sending in this form will not change whether your children get free or reduced price meals).



No! I DO NOT want information from my Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application shared with Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

If you checked no, fill out the form below.

Child's Name: _____ School: _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____ Address: _____

For more information, you may call **[name]** at **[phone]** or e-mail at **[e-mail address]**.

Return this form to: **[address]** by **[date]**.

SHARING INFORMATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

To save you time and effort, the information you gave on your Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application may be shared with other programs for which your children may qualify. **For the following programs, we must have your permission to share your information. Sending in this form will not change whether your children get free or reduced price meals.**

No! I **DO NOT** want information from my Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application shared with any of these programs.

Yes! I **DO** want school officials to share information from my Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application with **[name of program specific to your school]**.

Yes! I **DO** want school officials to share information from my Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application with **[name of program specific to your school]**.

Yes! I **DO** want school officials to share information from my Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application with **[name of program specific to your school]**.

If you checked yes to any or all of the boxes above, fill out the form below. Your information will be shared only with the programs you checked.

Child's Name: _____ School: _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____ Address: _____

For more information, you may call **[name]** at **[phone]** or e-mail at **[e-mail address]**.

Return this form to: **[address]** by **[date]**.