

Free & Reduced Price School Meals Family Applications 2014-2015 School Year

Processing, Eligibility
and Certification

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Objectives

*Family Meals Apps:
Processing, Eligibility and Certification*

Participants will understand:

- Recent updates to application processing realm and how they apply to their own districts
- How to process family meals applications and other documentation to determine eligibility status for School Nutrition Programs correctly
- Where to find other support information

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Free & Reduced Price School Meals Family Application

www.Michigan.gov/SchoolNutrition

What's New

- Second Annual School Nutrition Programs June Conference [PDF](#)
- Apples and Spinach and Regulations - Oh My! [PDF](#)
- Equipment Approval Request Form [PDF](#)
- Instructions for completing the School Food Authority Verification Collection Report (SFA-VCR) [PDF](#)
- Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs [PDF](#)
- USDA Smart Snacks in School Rule [PDF](#)
- Administrative Review School Year 2013-2014 Rev. 9/10/13 [PDF](#)
- Recipes for Healthy Kids Competition Cookbook [PDF](#)
- Notice to Discontinue in the School Meals Program [PDF](#)
- Menu, Adult and Ala Carte pricing worksheet [PDF](#)
- RCCI Exception Request Form [PDF](#)
- 2014-2015 Paid Lunch Equity Tool [PDF](#)
- Quick Guide to Complete a MEGS+ 2014 CNP, National School Lunch Program Application [PDF](#)
- Six Cents Certification Materials [PDF](#)
- School Year 2014-2015 Free and Reduced Price Schools Meals Family Application Materials [PDF](#)

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Recent Updates

Application Double-Checks for Some

- **REQUIRED:** Independent review of applications by a second reviewer before households are notified (doesn't need to be district employee) (memos SP 44-2014 and SP 62-2014):
 - **Required when:**
 1. 10% or more of certification/benefit issuance statuses in error – based on an Admin. Review (SFA-2 form); **OR**
 2. State-determined criterion (TBD; USDA recommends 5-10% error rate)
 - **Second reviewer:** Must conduct independent review of initial eligibility determinations for free and reduced apps

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Recent Updates, cont'd

Earlier Effective Dates

- **OPTIONAL:** Districts may choose the date submitted instead of date approved as the "effective date" of free/reduced price determination (memo SP 11-2014)
 - Need a way to document date submitted (e.g., date stamp)
 - Applies to eligibility determinations via applications only
 - May be used when waiting for documentation of homeless, migrant or foster children based on an application
 - Must use the same date decision across all schools and programs

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Recent Updates, cont'd

Earlier Effective Dates

- **OPTIONAL:** For children on the direct certification list, districts may choose the automated matching date or effective date of a letter of benefit, instead of the date the district processes the data match as the "effective date" (memo 51-2014)
 - Must have been received in the current school year
 - Need a way to document date submitted (e.g., date stamp)
 - If this is chosen, must be applied consistently
 - Memo attachment gives more scenarios and guidance

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Part 1: Homeless, Migrant and Runaway Youth

- Homeless, migrant, and runaway youth are categorically eligible (automatically qualify) for free meals.

FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS FAMILY APPLICATION

Part 1 - If the child you are applying for is homeless, migrant, or a runaway, check the appropriate category and verify with the district/school Homeless Liaison or Migrant Coordinator at _____

Homeless Migrant Runaway

Skip Part 2 and list the Child's Name, Grade, and Building in Part 3.

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Regular Year & Summer Migrant Program Directors

Migrant Education Directors

- Go to: www.michigan.gov/ofs
1. Scroll to Programs
 2. Click Title I, Part C - Migrant

Programs

- [Title Program Overview](#)
- [Section 31a At-Risk](#)
- [Title I, Part A](#)
- [Title I, Part C - Migrant](#)
- [Title I, Part D - Neglected & Delinquent](#)
- [Title II, Part A - Teacher & Principal Training & Recruiting](#)
- [Title III - English Learner & Immigrant Education Programs](#)
- [Title X - McKinney Vento Homeless](#)

Contact:
Special Populations Unit, Office of Field Services
P: 517-373-6066

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Homeless Liaisons

Homeless Liaisons

- Go to: www.michigan.gov/ofs
1. Scroll to Programs
 2. Click Title X - McKinney Vento Homeless

Programs

- [Title Program Overview](#)
- [Section 31a At-Risk](#)
- [Title I, Part A](#)
- [Title I, Part C - Migrant](#)
- [Title I, Part D - Neglected & Delinquent](#)
- [Title II, Part A - Teacher & Principal Training & Recruiting](#)
- [Title III - English Learner & Immigrant Education Programs](#)
- [Title X - McKinney Vento Homeless](#)

State of Michigan - Homeless Education Programs Contacts

Pam Kies-Lowe	Linda A. Forward
P: 517-373-8691	P: 517-373-8480
E: kies-lowep@michigan.gov	E: forwardl@michigan.gov

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Part 2: Categorical Eligibility

- Only one case number is required to make all students in the household categorically eligible (automatically free) for free meals.
 - Case numbers need to have **nine digits and start with the number 1** (e.g., #123456789)
- List the name of the person receiving FAP or FIP benefits and the case number.
- If a case number is provided, only students need to be listed in Part 3.

Part 2 - If any member of your household received Food Assistance Program (FAP), Family Independence Program (FIP), or FOPIC, provide the name and case number for the person who receives benefits.
Name _____ Case Number _____ Bridge Card Numbers and Medicaid Numbers are NOT ACCEPTABLE case numbers.
If a case number is provided, only students need to be listed in Part 3.

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Part 2: Categorical Eligibility

- **Qualify as categorically eligible (automatically free):**
 - Directly certified
 - Foster children
 - Homeless
 - Migrant
 - Head Start
 - SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)
 - FDPIR
 - FAP
 - FIP (TANF)
- **Eligibility is extended to rest of household:** Most cases on this slide
 - **Exceptions:** Families hosting foster and homeless children, Families with child in Head Start. These families must submit applications for other household members.

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Direct Certification

Students on the Direct Certification Report = Automatically eligible for free school meals, as are other members of their household.

- Direct certification takes precedence over an application.
- If a paper application is submitted for directly certified children, the LEA must disregard the paper application.
- Access to the direct certification report is through the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS).
- Must be checked 3 times during school year, though recommend checking monthly.

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Categorical Eligibility

Categorical Eligibility for free meals is extended to all children in the household if any member of the household gets benefits from one of these assistance programs.

Assistance Program Households – Entire Household is Free:

- **Food Assistance Program (SNAP)**
 - Direct Certification
 - Application
- **Family Independence Program (TANF)**
 - Direct Certification
 - Application
- **Food Dist. Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)**
 - Application

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Other Source Categorical Eligibility

Eligibility for free meals is NOT extended to all children in the household.

Only the Child is Free:

- **Foster Children**
 - Direct Certification
 - Application
- **Homeless, Runaway and Migrant**
 - Signed list from coordinator/liaison
 - Application
- **Head Start/Even Start**
 - Enrollment list from program coordinator

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Foster Child Eligibility

Foster children are automatically eligible for free meals and may be certified without an application.

- A foster child in a household does **not** give eligibility for free meals to all children in the household.
- Households with foster and non-foster children may choose to include the foster child as a household member, as well as any personal income earned by the foster child, on the same household application that includes their non-foster children.
 - This may help the other children in the household qualify for free/reduced price meals based on household size and income.

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Foster Child Eligibility

- Eligibility determination for the rest of the household is based on the household's income (including personal income earned by the foster child) or other eligibility information reported on the application.
- Foster payments received by the family from the placing agency are not considered income and do not need to be reported.
- Legal guardianship is **not** an automatic qualifier for free meals.

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Foster Child Eligibility

For more information :



- USDA policy memo SP17-2011, [Child Nutrition Reauthorization 2010: Categorical Eligibility of Foster Children](#)
 - Electronic copy in jump drive
 - Provides more detail on requirements

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Part 3: Household Names

- **First and last names of all** people living in the household must be included:
 - ✓ Students
 - ✓ Non-students
 - ✓ Foster children related and unrelated
 - ✓ Exchange students
 - ✓ Grandparents
 - ✓ Other relatives
 - ✓ Friends
 - ✓ The adult signing the application
- **All students should have the grade and name of the school/building** they will be attending listed on the application.
- An additional sheet may be attached if necessary.

Part 3 - Household Names - List below all people living in your household, students and non-students, foster children, related or unrelated. For example, grandparents, other relatives, and/or friends, including yourself and children who live with you, must be listed.				Part 4 - Total Household Gross Income - If the person does not receive any income "0" or substitute 0000 number on Part 4, refer to Part 5.			
Names	Circle Yes if Foster Child	Grade or equivalent	Building Name (optional)	Circle if \$0 Income	Amount from Part 3 (before any deductions and taxes)	Wife	
Example: Jane Doe	Yes			\$0	\$600		
1. Include EVERYONE living in household	Yes			50			Include Income for ALL; circle zero if none.
2.	Yes			50			

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Income Eligible Applications

Income applications are required for students who are not:

- Directly certified
- Categorically eligible

- Households must submit an application with current income information in order for benefits to be determined by household income.
- Income is the gross income received by a household before deductions.
- Every household member, listed in part 3, **must** indicate the source of the income, the amount of the income, even if it is zero and the frequency of the income.

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Part 4: Total Household Gross Income

Include the amount of money earned by **all** members of the household and circle how often it is received.

- Must be gross income.
- Other income includes, but is not limited to, social security, pensions, retirement, welfare, child support, alimony, adoption subsidy, worker's compensation, unemployment, VA, and SSI.

If a legitimate case number is listed in Part 2, skip to Part 5.

Part 3 - Household Names - List below all people living in your household, students and non-students, foster children, related or unrelated. For example, grandparents, other relatives, and/or friends, including yourself and children who live with you, must be listed.				Part 4 - Total Household Gross Incomes If the person does not receive any income "00" or "000" or "0000" number in Part 2, skip to Part 5.		
Names	Circle Yes if Foster Child	Grade of applicant	Building Name # (range)	Circle if NO Income	Earnings from Work (before any deductions and taxes)	Welfare
Example: Jane Doe	Yes			\$0	\$500	
1	Yes			00		
2	Yes			00		

Include EVERYONE living in household

Include incomes for ALL; circle zero if none.

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Income Frequency and Conversions

- **Income eligibility guidelines (IEGs)** are the household size and income levels determined annually by USDA.
- If there are multiple income sources with more than one frequency, the LEA must **annualize** income by multiplying:
 - Weekly income x 52
 - Bi-weekly income (received every two weeks) x 26
 - Semi-monthly income (received twice a month) x 24
 - Monthly income x 12
- LEAs *cannot* use conversion factors such as 4.33 to convert weekly income to monthly amounts.
- **If income frequency is the same, there is no need for annualizing.**
- Double check all software (SFA has liability).

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Administrative Approval

- If a household fails to apply and the child is known to be eligible, local officials may complete an application on behalf of the child. The completed application should be:
 - Based on the best household size and income information available.
 - **Limited use** in individual situations and must not be used to make eligibility determinations for categories or groups of children.
 - Excluded from verification.
- The household must be notified that the child has been certified to receive free or reduced price benefits.

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Benefit Issuance List



Every school district needs to compile a list with the names of students who are eligible for free and reduced price meals. This list should be:

- Updated/ revised monthly.
- Used as documentation to support the monthly claim for reimbursement.
- Available at the point of service for a back-up system in case of a power outage or technical difficulty.
- Based on a system that hides free/reduced/paid status of students.

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Sharing Information, Records and Documentation

- Keep records for 3 years plus the current year.
 - Keep an "inactive" file for those students no longer attending school.
- Eligibility information **must never** be shown in a way that students' eligibility categories may be recognized by other students.
- The numbers of eligible students, **not names**, can be shared with all programs (parental consent is needed for all other purposes).
 - For specific questions and answers regarding disclosure of eligibility, refer to section 7 of the *Eligibility Manual*.

Recipient of Information	What May be Disclosed	Requirements
Programs under the National School Lunch Act or Child Nutrition Act	All eligibility information	Prior notice and consent not required
Federal State or local means tested nutrition programs with eligibility standards	Eligibility status only	Prior notice and consent not required

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Verification

- **What it is:** A required yearly process of checking eligibility information for a sample of approved free and reduced price applications under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).
- *To be covered in next section of training.*

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Language Assistance

- Households with limited English proficiency (LEP) need to have access to information in other languages.
- LEAs must make a reasonable effort to the maximum extent practicable. This includes:
 - Application materials
 - Communications with households concerning eligibility determinations
- Volunteers may be used, but make sure they understand interpreter ethics – particularly confidentiality.
- Children should not be used as interpreters.

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Prototype Applications Available in 33 Languages

Prototype Applications

Below are application and verification form prototypes for State agency consideration, all of which were updated in July 2011.

You may also want to use the "I Speak" document to help identify the primary language of non-English speakers. It uses short phrases in 33 languages so an applicant can check to indicate the language they speak. "I Speak" can help Local Educational Agencies select the appropriate translation as well as ensure consistent and effective interaction with applicants who have limited English proficiency.

English	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Arabic	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Armenian	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Cambodian	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Chinese (Traditional)	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Chinese (Simplified)	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Cristian	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Farsi	(.doc)	(.pdf)
French	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Greek	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Gujarati	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Haitian Creole	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Hindi	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Hmong	(.doc)	(.pdf)
Tamil	(.doc)	(.pdf)

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/frp/frp.process.htm>

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