

CERTIFICATION AND BENEFIT ISSUANCE: APPLICATION FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS

Office of School Support Services
School Nutrition Programs

Objectives

Family Meals Apps: Processing, Eligibility and Certification

Participants will understand:

- New Meal Application and how to properly process the application
- Changes due to the new meal application
- Where to find other support information

Slide 2

CD(1 Carlson, Daniel (MDE), 7/14/2015

APPLICATION FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL http://michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-43092_50144---,00.htm. The page title is "MDE - School Nutrition Programs". The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with the following items: MDE Programs, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Active Students, Coordinated School Health and Safety Programs, Food Distribution Programs, Mental Health Toolkit, Michiana, Early/Middle College High School Opportunities, School Nutrition Programs (highlighted), Summer Food Service Program, Team Nutrition, News & Publications, Parent Engagement, Student Assessment, and Library of Michigan. The main content area is titled "School Nutrition Programs Calendar of Events" and includes a "Jump to a category..." dropdown menu and a "GO" button. Below this is a "What's New" section with a list of links, including "School Year 2015-2016 Free and Reduced Price Schools Meals Application", which is highlighted by a blue arrow. Other links include "Third Annual June Conference Materials: Guardians of School Nutrition Programs: Defend, Protect, Serve", "Robo Call for Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)", "Third Annual School Nutrition Programs June Conference", "Equipment Approval Request Form", "Whole Grain-Rich Exemption", "School Meals Overview Training - February 2015", "Instructions for Completing SFA-VCR 2014-2015", "FY 2013-2014 Equipment Assistance Grant Awards", "Whole Grain Pasta Waiver Request Form", "USDA Guidance on Whole Grain Paste", "Administrative Review School Year 2014-15", "Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs", "USDA Smart Snacks in School Rule", "Recipes for Healthy Kids Competition Cookbook", "Notice to Discontinue in the School Meals Program", "Menu, Adult and Ala Carte pricing worksheet", "RCCI Exception Request Form", "2015-2016 Paid Lunch Equity Tool", "Quick Guide to Complete a MEGS+ 2014 CNP: National School Lunch Program Application", "Six Cents Certification Materials", and "Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)". The CEP section includes links for "4th Year Participants", "CEP Application Quick Guide 2015", "USDA Guidance", "Current List of Community Eligibility Provision Schools", and "2015-2016 CEP Eligibility By District".

APPLICATION FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS



3_-_2015-2016_Application_490189_7 [Compatibility Mode] - Word

FILE HOME INSERT DESIGN PAGE LAYOUT REFERENCES MAILINGS REVIEW VIEW

Carlson, Daniel (MDE)

2015-2016 Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals
 Complete one application per household. Please use a pen (not a pencil).

Approval Date: _____
 Approved for: F R D

STEP 1 List ALL Household Members who are infants, children, and students up to and including grade 12 (if more spaces are required for additional names attach another sheet of paper)

Definition of Household Member: "Anyone who is living with you and shares income and expenses, even if not related." Children in Foster care and children who meet the definition of Homeless, Migrant or Runaway are eligible for free meals. Read How to Apply for Free and Reduced Price School Meals for more information.	Child's First Name	MI	Child's Last Name	Student? Yes No	Homeless, Foster Care, Migrant, Runaway
					<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

STEP 2 Do any Household Members (including you) currently participate in one or more of the following assistance programs: SNAP, TANF, or FDIPIR? Circle one: Yes / No

If you answered NO > Complete STEP 3. If you answered YES > Write a case number here then go to STEP 4 (Do not complete STEP 3)

Case Number: _____
 Write only one case number in this space.

STEP 3 Report Income for ALL Household Members (Skip this step if you answered 'Yes' to STEP 2)

A. Child Income
 Sometimes children in the household earn income. Please include the TOTAL income earned by all Household Members listed in STEP 1 here.

Child Income: \$ _____
 How often? (Yearly) (Bi-weekly) (2 Weeks) (Monthly)

B. All Adult Household Members (including yourself)
 List all Household Members not listed in STEP 1 (including yourself) even if they do not receive income. For each Household Member listed, if they do receive income, report total income for each source in whole dollars only. If they do not receive income from any source, write '0'. If you enter '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report.

Name of Adult Household Members (First and Last)	Earnings from Work	How often?		Public Assistance/ Child Support/Alimony	How often?		Pensions/Retirement/ All Other Income	How often?	
		Yearly	Bi-weekly		Yearly	Bi-weekly		Yearly	Bi-weekly
	\$			\$			\$		
	\$			\$			\$		
	\$			\$			\$		
	\$			\$			\$		
	\$			\$			\$		

Total Household Members (Children and Adults) _____
 Last Four Digits of Social Security Number (SSN) of Primary Wage Earner or Other Adult Household Member: X X X X _____
 Check if no SSN

STEP 4 Contact information and adult signature

I certify (promise) that all information on this application is true and that all income is reported. I understand that this information is given in connection with the receipt of Federal funds, and that school officials may verify (check) the information. I am aware that if I purposely give false information, my children may lose meal benefits, and I may be prosecuted under applicable State and Federal laws.

Street Address (if available) _____ Apt # _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Daytime Phone and Email (optional) _____
 Printed name of adult completing the form _____ Signature of adult completing the form _____ Today's date _____



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.
- 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.

For more information :

- USDA policy memo SP17-2011, [Child Nutrition Reauthorization 2010: Categorical Eligibility of Foster Children](#)

HOMELESS MIGRANT AND RUNAWAY YOUTH

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

Step 2: Assistance Programs

- DO ANY HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS (INCLUDING YOU) CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE IN ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS: SNAP, TANF, OR FDPIR?

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.

Circle Yes or No and fill in number using 9 boxes

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

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

Step 3: Report income for all Household members

Income applications are required for students who are not:

- Directly certified
- Categorically eligible

Steps:

- A) Report all income earned by children
 - B) List Adult Household member's name
 - C) Report earnings from work
 - D) Report income from Public Assistance/Child Support/Alimony
 - E) Report income from Pensions/Retirement/All other income
 - F) Report total household size
 - G) Provide the last four digits of your Social Security Number
- 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.
 - Only Adult household members should be listed in part 3, **must** indicate the source of the income, the amount of the income, and the frequency of the income.
 - Write a "0" in any fields where there is no income to report. Any income fields left empty or blank will be counted as zeroes. If you write '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report.

TOTAL HOUSEHOLD GROSS INCOME/FREQUENCY AND CONVERSIONS

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.
- Write a "0" in any fields where there is no income to report. Any income fields left empty or blank will be counted as zeroes. If you write '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report.

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).

Step 4: ADULT HOUSEHOLD MEMBER SIGNATURE

All applications must be signed by an adult member of the household. By signing the application, that household member is promising that all information has been truthfully and completely reported.

Steps

- **A) *Provide your contact information.*** Write your current address in the fields provided if this information is available. If you have no permanent address, this does not make your children ineligible for free or reduced price school meals. Sharing a phone number, email address, or both is optional, but helps us reach you quickly if we need to contact you.
- **B) *Sign and print your name.*** Print your name in the box “Printed name of adult completing the form.” And sign your name in the box “Signature of adult completing the form.”
- **C) *Write Today’s Date.*** In the space provided, write today’s date in the box.

2nd PAGE RACIAL/ETHNIC DATA COLLECTION

- This section is **optional**. The data may be used for completing the post award civil rights data collection that is required annually.
- Two categories, each is stand-alone (fill out both for every child):
 - Racial
 - Ethnic

2nd page Continued

- Make sure the privacy and non-discrimination statements are up to date.
 - Check www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition for current version.
- Verification of applications:
 - Must be completed by Nov. 15th each year.
 - Note any reasons for change in eligibility based on verification results.

Page 2, cont'd: Updated Non-Discrimination Statement

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Determination Official Signature on Back Page/Determination On Front Page

- The federally defined School Year is July 1 through June 30.
 - Applications cannot be accepted or processed prior to July 1.
- All applications must be processed within 10 days of receipt (def'n up to SFA).
- All households can reapply at any time during the school year if they believe their benefits may increase.
- Households that have had their benefits terminated can reapply in the same school year but will need to submit proof of income or categorical eligibility.
- Benefits should not be in effect if the application is not completed, dated, and signed by the determining official.

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.

Changes to the new Application

- Adult and non-adult (children/students) household members are cleanly divided into separate reporting sections to prevent household members from being listed twice, as well as to encourage full reporting of all household members.
- Any income fields left empty or blank will be counted as zeroes. If you write '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report.
- As an added accountability measure, a field has been added for reporting the total number of members in the household.
- Information about the Social Security Number is now requested in the same section as the income reporting field (rather than in the signature block), as applicants indicating categorical eligibility through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) are not required to provide this information.

Recent Updates *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

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

Recent Updates, cont'd

Optional Drop of “Reduced” Charges

- **OPTIONAL:** Districts allowed to partially say “**Goodbye**” to the “Reduced” category (memo 17-2014)
 - Districts are allowed to offer meals at no cost or lower cost to students who qualify for reduced price meals
 - Applies to both breakfast (SBP) and lunch (NSLP)
 - Schools can exercise this option selectively
 - These students must still be claimed and reimbursed as reduced price students
 - Reduced charge can be covered by funds from the nonprofit school food service account or other sources
 - Universal Breakfast can use nonprofit food service account money to cover reduced kids, but not paid

ONLINE OR SCANNABLE APPLICATIONS

- Free and reduced price family applications and supporting materials may be made available online.
 - ✓ Electronic signatures permitted
 - ✓ Paper applications may be scanned
- USDA/FNS does not evaluate, approve or endorse any software for application processing.
- The LEA must make sure requirements are met for certification and verification.

REGULAR YEAR AND 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](#) **BOOK**
- [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

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](#) **BOG**
- [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

P: 517-373-8691

E: kies-lowep@michigan.gov

Linda A. Forward

P: 517-373-8480

E: forwardl@michigan.gov

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)
Thus the 9 boxes on the application
- List the name of the person receiving FAP or FIP benefits and the case number.
- If a case number is provided in step 2, then step 1, 2, and 4 need to be completed

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.*

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.

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.

SHARING INFORMATION, RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATIONS

- 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

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.

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE IN OTHER LANGUAGES



Child Nutrition Programs

- > School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- > Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
- > Special Milk Program (SMP)
- > Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- > Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- > National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

Browse By Subject

- > Federal Register Documents
- > Legislation
- > Policy
- > Press Releases
- > Regulations
- > CN Labeling

School Meals

[Print](#)

Translated Applications

There is an updated [application prototype for School Year 2015-16](#), which is currently available only in English. Below, though, are translated 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 that 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)

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/translated-applications>



Eligibility Manual

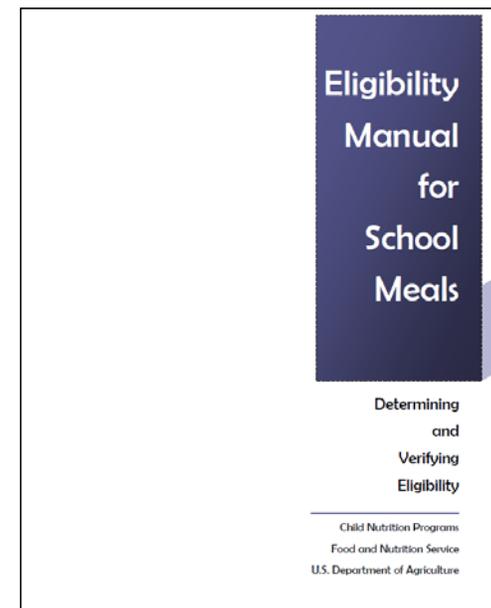
For more information, please refer to the *Eligibility Manual for School Meals* Manual at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/guidance/default.htm>

The MDE website link:

www.Michigan.gov/SchoolNutrition

- Scroll to “Guidance”
- Click on [Eligibility Certification and Verification](#)



Questions?

- School Nutrition Programs
 - 517-373-3347
 - MDE-schoolnutrition@michigan.gov
- Website: www.Michigan.gov/SchoolNutrition

The screenshot displays the Michigan Department of Education website. At the top left is the Michigan Department of Education logo. The main header reads "Michigan Department of Education". Below the header is a navigation bar with links for "Michigan.gov Home", "MDE Home", "Site Map", "FAQ", "Contact MDE", and "Online Services", along with a search box. A "Programs" sidebar on the left lists various categories, with "Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)" selected. The main content area is titled "School Nutrition Programs" and includes a paragraph describing the unit's role in administering USDA programs. Below the text are three links: "School Nutrition Programs Contact List", "School Lunch, Breakfast, AfterSchool Snack Meals Served/Payments Fact Sheet", and "School Nutrition Programs Calendar of Events". Social media sharing buttons for "Like", "Tweet", and "Share" are also visible.