

CRITICAL INFORMATION FOR THE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM FREE MEALS FAMILY APPLICATION

Residential camps and sponsors, with enrolled sites, are required to use the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Free Meals Family Application.

The Free and Reduced-Price School Meals Family Application materials are available in several languages. The materials are located on the USDA website.

Family Application Approval Process Information

- Refer to the [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#) for guidance when approving the free meals family application.
- Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Bridge Cards are now used throughout Michigan to replace Food Stamp coupons. The EBT Bridge Card number is a 16-digit numerical number, for example: 1234 2345 3456 4567, while the Food Assistance Program (FAP) case number is a 9-digit number. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has determined that the number on a household's EBT Bridge Card CANNOT be accepted as a FAP case number on applications for meal benefits. As you receive and review applications for meal benefits, be sure that households providing a FAP case number, in Step 2 of the application are providing a Food Stamp case number and not an EBT Bridge Card number.
- If anyone in a household has a number for a FAP, Family Independence Program (FIP), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservation (FDPIR), then ALL of the children in the household are categorically eligible for free meals.
- If a household has only one (1) income source, or if all sources are the same frequency (e.g., all weekly), do not use conversion factors. Compare the income or the sum of the incomes to the published Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEG) for the appropriate frequency and household size to make the eligibility determination.
- If a household reports income sources at more than one (1) frequency, the correct method is to annualize all income. Annual Income Conversion:
weekly x 52; every 2 weeks x 26; twice a month x 24; monthly x 12.
- Do not round the values resulting from each conversion. Add all the unrounded converted values and compare the unrounded total to the published IEG for annual income for the appropriate household size.
- All persons must claim some income or indicate that they receive no income. If the person, including any child listed in step 3 on the application, does not have any income, then \$0 needs to be written in the columns.
- Homeless, migrant, and runaway youth are categorically eligible for free meals.

- As stated in the Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual, Section 3-Categorical Eligibility, a child from a household currently certified to receive benefits through the FDPIR is categorically eligible for free benefits in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- When a household submits a complete application that contains: (1) the name of the child, (2) a current FDPIR case number or identifier with program affiliation, e.g., “Sault Ste. Marie Commodity Program,” and (3) an adult signature, the determining official must approve the child for free meals or free milk, as applicable. For [FDPIR Information](#)ⁱⁱⁱ visit the USDA website.
- Previously, a separate application for free and reduced-price meals was submitted for a foster child who was considered a household of one. Now, the foster child is categorically eligible for free meals and may be certified without an application. 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 will streamline the application process and may help the foster family’s non-foster children qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on household size and income.
- In processing the application, the child nutrition program institution would certify the foster child for free meals, and then make an eligibility determination for the remainder of the household based on the household’s income (including personal income earned by the foster child) or other categorical eligibility information reported on the application. As before, foster payments received by the family from the placing agency are not considered income and do not need to be reported. Please note that the presence of a foster child in the household does not convey eligibility for free meals to all children in the household in the same manner as FAP, FIP, and FDPIR participation does.
- Every month, sponsors should print and retain a roster of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. This record serves as a basis for the claim for reimbursement and for audit and review purposes. It must be kept three years after the date of the final claim for reimbursement for the fiscal year to which it pertains or as long as there are unresolved audit findings related to the record.

ⁱ<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/applying-free-and-reduced-price-school-meals>

ⁱⁱhttps://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP36_CACFP15_SFSP11-2017a1.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdpir/food-distribution-program-indian-reservations>