

Public Release for Schools Operating the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program

The Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Nutrition and Health Services, has finalized its policy for free and reduced price meals for children unable to pay the full price of meals served under the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program and the Afterschool Care Snack Program.

State and Local school officials have adopted the following family size and income criteria for determining eligibility:

INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES Effective 7-1-2022

| Household Size | Free Meals | | | | | Reduced Price Meals | | | | |
|--|------------|---------|---------------|-----------------|--------|---------------------|---------|---------------|-----------------|--------|
| | Yearly | Monthly | Twice a Month | Every two weeks | Weekly | Yearly | Monthly | Twice a Month | Every two weeks | Weekly |
| 1 | 17,667 | 1,473 | 737 | 680 | 340 | 25,142 | 2,096 | 1,048 | 967 | 484 |
| 2 | 23,803 | 1,984 | 992 | 916 | 458 | 33,874 | 2,823 | 1,412 | 1,303 | 652 |
| 3 | 29,939 | 2,495 | 1,248 | 1,152 | 576 | 42,606 | 3,551 | 1,776 | 1,639 | 820 |
| 4 | 36,075 | 3,007 | 1,504 | 1,388 | 694 | 51,338 | 4,279 | 2,140 | 1,975 | 988 |
| 5 | 42,211 | 3,518 | 1,759 | 1,624 | 812 | 60,070 | 5,006 | 2,503 | 2,311 | 1,156 |
| 6 | 48,347 | 4,029 | 2,015 | 1,860 | 930 | 68,802 | 5,734 | 2,867 | 2,647 | 1,324 |
| 7 | 54,483 | 4,541 | 2,271 | 2,096 | 1,048 | 77,534 | 6,462 | 3,231 | 2,983 | 1,492 |
| 8 | 60,619 | 5,052 | 2,526 | 2,332 | 1,166 | 86,266 | 7,189 | 3,595 | 3,318 | 1,659 |
| For each additional family member add: | 6,136 | 512 | 256 | 236 | 118 | 8,732 | 728 | 364 | 336 | 168 |

Households may be eligible for free or reduced-price meal benefits one of four ways

- Households whose income is at or below the levels shown are eligible for reduced price meals or free meals, if they complete an application for free and reduced price school meals/milk. Households may complete one application listing all children and return it to your child's school. When completing an application, only the last four digits of the social security number of the household's primary wage earner or another adult household member is needed.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households, children receiving benefits under the Family Investment Program (FIP) and children in a few specific Medicaid programs are eligible for free or reduced price meals. Most children from SNAP and FIP households will be qualified for free meals automatically. These households will receive a letter from their children's schools notifying them of their benefits. Households that receive a letter from the school need to do nothing more for their children to receive free or reduced price meals. No further application is necessary. If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school to have free or reduced price meal benefits extended to them. If you feel you would qualify for free meal benefits and received notification qualifying for reduced price benefits, complete an application for free and reduced price meals. Households must contact the school if they choose to decline meal benefits.
- Some SNAP and FIP households will receive a letter from the Department of Human Services (DHS) which will qualify the children listed on the letter for free meals. Parents must take this letter to the child's school to receive free meals.
- SNAP or FIP households receiving benefits that do not receive a letter from DHS must complete an application with the abbreviated information as indicated on the application and instructions, for their children to receive free meals. When the application lists an assistance program's case number for any household member, eligibility for free benefits is extended to all children in a household.

Eligibility from the previous year will continue within the same school for up to 30 operating days into the new school year. When the carryover period ends, unless the household is notified that their children are directly certified or the household submits an application that is approved, the children must pay full price for school meals and the school will not send a reminder or a notice of expired eligibility. An application cannot be approved unless complete eligibility information is submitted. Applications may be submitted at any time during the year. If a family member becomes unemployed the family should contact the school to complete an application. Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact the school if the household chooses to decline the free meal benefits.

Foster children are eligible for free meal benefits. Some foster children will be qualified for free meals automatically through the state direct certification process. Their host family will receive notification of these benefits. Families that receive this notification from the school need to do nothing more for their foster children to receive free meals. If a family has foster children living with them and does not receive notification and wishes to apply for such meals, instructions for making application for such children are contained on the application form. A foster child may be included as a member of the foster family if the foster family chooses to also apply for benefits for other children. Including children in foster care as household members may help other children in the household qualify for benefits. If the foster family is not eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits, it does not prevent a foster child from receiving benefits. Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) participants may be eligible for free or reduced price meals based on a completed application.

When known by the school, households will be notified of any child eligible for free meals if the children are enrolled in the Head Start/Even Start program or are considered homeless, migrant or runaway. If any children are not listed on the notice of eligibility, contact the school for assistance in receiving benefits. If households are dissatisfied with the application approval done by the officials, they may make a formal appeal either orally or in writing to the school's designated hearing official. The policy statement on file at the school contains an outline of the hearing procedure. School officials may verify the information in the application, and that deliberate misrepresentation of information may subject the applicant to prosecution under applicable state and federal criminal statutes. Households should contact their local school for additional information.

There will be no discrimination against individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in the school meal programs.

Nondiscrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
program.intake@usda.gov

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