

Who can get free or reduced price meals? Children in households participating in Food Stamps, Minnesota Family Investment Plan (MFIP), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) and most foster children can get free meals regardless of your income. Also, your children can get free or reduced-price meals if your household income is within the income shown for your household size on the chart on the next page. An Application for Educational Benefits cannot be approved if any required information is missing.

I get WIC. Can my children get free meals? Children in households participating in WIC *may* be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please fill out an application for Educational Benefits.

Should I fill out an application if I got a letter this school year saying my children were “directly certified” for free meals? Do not fill out an Application for Educational Benefits if all of your children have been directly certified for free school meals. If only some of your children were directly certified, you can fill out an Application for Educational Benefits to apply for you children who were not directly certified.

Will the information I give be checked? Yes, we may ask you to send written proof.

If I don’t qualify now, may I apply later? Yes. You may apply at any time during the school year if your income goes down, household size goes up, or if you start getting Food Support (Stamps), MFIP, or FDPIR benefits.

May I apply if someone in my household is not a U.S. citizen? Yes. You or your children do not have to be U.S. citizens for your children to qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

Do I need to provide my Social Security number? When household income is reported on an application, the National School Lunch Act allows meal benefits to be approved only if the person signing the application provides his/her Social Security number or does not have a Social Security number. A Social Security number is not needed when public assistance case numbers are provided, or when the application is for a foster child. (Social Security numbers are maintained by the school as private data and are not used for any other purpose.)

Who should I include as members of my household? You must include yourself and all other people living in the household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends). Include a household member who is temporarily away such as a college student.

What if my income is not always the same? List the amount that you normally get. If you normally get overtime, include it, but not if you get it only sometimes.

How will the information I provide be kept? Information you provide on the form, and your child’s approval for school meal benefits, will be protected as private data. The back page of the Application for Educational Benefits has details about data privacy.

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.

Do I need to notify school officials if my income increases or my household size decreases after I have qualified for free or reduce-priced meals? No, Approval for free or reduced-price meals is good for the school year.