



Food and Nutrition Services

July 1, 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Washington County Public Schools offer healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs \$1.65; elementary lunch costs \$2.55 and secondary lunch costs \$ 2.80. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals. Below are common questions and answers to assist you with the application process.

**If you have received a NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE MEALS, do NOT complete an application. If any of your children in your household are NOT listed on the NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE MEALS letter you received or if you have questions, call 301-766-2890.**

1. **DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD?** No. Use one Meal Benefit Application for all students in your household. We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. Return the completed application to: Washington County Public Schools, Food & Nutrition Services, 10435 Downsville Pike, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740.
2. **WHO CAN GET FREE MEALS?** All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), foster children, children certified as homeless, runaway, migrant, Head Start, Early Head Start, Even Start, or children who have been Medicaid matched through the Maryland Direct Certification System will receive free meals regardless of your income. Also, your children can get free meals if your household's gross income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Call 301-766-2890 to ask about benefits.
3. **I COMPLETED AN APPLICATION LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT A NEW ONE?** Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first few days of this school year.
4. **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 send in an application.
5. **WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED?** Yes, and we may also ask you to send written proof.
6. **IF I DON'T QUALIFY NOW, MAY I APPLY LATER?** Yes, you may apply at any time during the school year. For example, children with a parent or guardian who becomes unemployed may become eligible for free or reduced-price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.
7. **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 by calling or writing to: Mr. Jeff Proulx, Chief Operating Officer, Washington County Public Schools, 10435 Downsville Pike, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740.
8. **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 to qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

9. **WHO SHOULD I INCLUDE AS MEMBERS OF MY HOUSEHOLD?** You must include all people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, foster children, or friends) who share income and expenses. You must include yourself and all the children living with you. If you live with other people who are economically independent (for example, people who you do not support, who do not share income with you or your children, and who pay a pro-rated share of expenses), do not include them.
10. **WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME?** List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only work overtime sometimes. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.
11. **WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE REPORT OUR INCOME DIFFERENTLY?** Your basic pay and cash bonuses must be reported as income. If you get any cash value allowances for off-base housing, food, or clothing, it must also be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income. Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.
12. **MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR?** To find out how to apply for **SNAP, TCA, and medical assistance programs** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1-800-332-6347.
13. **FEDERAL INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES**

Household Size	Year	Month	Week
1	\$27,861	\$2,322	\$536
2	37,814	3,152	728
3	47,767	3,981	919
4	57,720	4,810	1,110
5	67,673	5,640	1,302
6	77,626	6,469	1,493
7	87,579	7,299	1,685
8	97,532	8,128	1,876
For each additional family member add:	\$9,953	\$830	\$192

**If you have other questions or need help, call 301-766-2890.**

Sincerely,

*Mike Embly*

Mike Embly  
Supervisor of Food & Nutrition







# How To Apply for Free and Reduced Price School Meals

Please use these instructions to help you fill out the application for free and reduced price school meals. You only need to submit one application per household, **even if your children attend more than one school in Washington County Public Schools.**

The application must be filled out completely to determine the eligibility of your child(ren) for free or reduced price school meals. Please follow these instructions in order! Each step of the instructions is the same as the steps on your application. If at any time you are not sure what to do next, please contact 301-766-2890.

**Please use a pen (not a pencil) when filling out the application and do your best to print clearly.**

## Step 1: List ALL children, infants, and students up to and including grade 12

Tell us how many infants/toddlers, children not in school, and elementary/middle/high school students live in your household. They do NOT have to be related to you to be a part of your household.

**Who should I list here?** When filling out this section, please include ALL members in your household who are:

- Children age 18 or under AND are supported with the household's income;
- In your care under a formal foster arrangement through a court or state/local agency, qualify as homeless, migrant, or runaway, or participate in Head Start or Even Start;
- Students attending Washington County Public Schools (regardless of age).

**A) List each child's name.** Print each child's name. Use one line of the application for each child. When printing names, write one letter in each box. Stop if you run out of space. If there are more children present than lines on the application, attach a second piece of paper (or a second application if completing electronically) with all required information for the additional children. This also applies to adults in Step 3. "MI" is short for middle initial. Print the first letter of each child's middle name in the box.

**B) Is the child a student?** If "Yes," write the grade level of the student in the "Grade" column to the right.

**C) Do you have any foster children?** If any children listed are foster children, mark the "Foster Child" box next to the child's name. If you are **ONLY** applying for foster children, after finishing **Step 1**, go to **Step 4**.

Foster children who live with you may count as members of your household and should be listed on your application. If you are applying for both foster and non-foster children, go to Step 3. Note: Adopted children are not considered foster children. A foster child is a minor child who has been taken into state custody and placed with a state-licensed adult, who cares for the child in place of their parent or guardian.

**D) Are any children homeless, migrant, or runaway or participants in Head Start or Even Start?** If you believe any child listed in this section meets this description, mark the box next to the child's name and complete all steps of the application. Homeless, Migrant, Runaway status must be confirmed with the appropriate program staff. If the school district cannot confirm your student's homeless, migrant, or runaway status, then the school district will contact you to complete an income-based application. You may choose to provide income information now in order to prevent the school district from potentially needing to contact you later.

## Step 2: Do any household members currently participate in SNAP or TCA?

**If anyone in your household (including you) currently participates in one or more of the assistance programs listed below, your children are eligible for free school meals:**

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)

**A) If no one in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:**

- Check "No" in **Step 2** and go to **Step 3**.

**B) If anyone in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:**

- Write a case number for SNAP or TCA. You only need to provide one case number. If you participate in one of these programs and do not know your case number, contact: Maryland Department of Human Services at <https://mymdthink.maryland.gov/home/##>
- Go to **Step 4**.

## Step 3: List ALL household members and income for each member

**How do I report my income?**

- Use the lists titled "**Sources of Income**" & "**Examples of Income for Children**," on the back side of the application form to determine if your household has income to report.
- Report all amounts in GROSS INCOME ONLY. Report all income in whole dollars. Do not include cents.
  - Gross income is the total income received **before** taxes and deductions.
  - Many people think of income as the amount they "take home" and not the total, "gross" amount. Make sure that the income you report on this application has NOT been reduced to pay for taxes, insurance premiums, or any other amounts taken from your pay.
- Write a "0" in any fields where there is no income to report. Any income fields left empty or blank will also be counted as a zero. If you write "0" or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report. If local officials suspect that your household income was reported incorrectly, your application will be investigated.
- Mark how often each type of income is received using the check boxes to the right of each field.

### 3.A. Report income earned by adults

**Who should I list here?**

- When filling out this section, please include ALL adult members in your household who are living with you and share income and expenses, even if they are not related and even if they do not receive income of their own.
- **Do NOT include:**
  - People who live with you but are not supported by your household's income AND do not contribute income to your household.
  - Infants, children and students already listed in **Step 1**.



### Step 3: List ALL household members and income for each member

**1) List adult household members' names.**

Print the name of each household member in the boxes marked "Names of Adult Household Members (First and Last)." Include college students, unless they are declared independently on taxes (all college students are considered adults). Do not list any household members you listed in Step 1.

**2) List earnings from work.**

List all income from work in the "Earnings from Work" field on the application. This is usually the money received from working at jobs. If you are a self-employed business or farm owner, you will report your net income. Net income is your income after taxes and deductions have been subtracted.

- **What if I have multiple jobs?** List each job separately by entering your name and income from each job on a new line. Add an additional sheet of paper if necessary.
- **What if I am self-employed?** List income from your business as a net amount. This net amount is calculated by subtracting the total operating expenses of your business from its gross receipts (revenue). Gross receipts or revenue are all the income earned from the sale of any products or services offered.

If a child listed in **Step 1** has income, follow the instructions in **Step 3, Part B.**

**3) List income from public assistance/child support/alimony.**

List all income that applies in the "Public Assistance/Child Support/Alimony" field on the application. Do not report the cash value of any public assistance benefits NOT listed on the chart. If income is received from child support or alimony, only report court-ordered payments. Informal but regular payments should be reported as "other" income in the next part.

**4) List income from pensions/retirement/all other income.**

List all income that applies in the "Pensions/Retirement/All Other Income" field on the application.

- **What if I receive income from multiple sources in this category?** List each source separately by entering your name and income from each source on a new line. Add an additional sheet of paper if necessary.

**5) List total household size.**

Enter the total number of household members in the field "Total Household Members (Children and Adults)." This number **MUST** be equal to the number of household members listed in **Step 1** and **Step 3**. If there are any members of your household that you have not listed on the application, go back and add them. It is very important to list all household members, as the size of your household affects your eligibility for free and reduced price meals.

**6) Provide the last four digits of your Social Security Number.**

An adult household member must enter the last four digits of their Social Security Number in the space provided. You are eligible to apply for benefits even if you do not have a Social Security Number. If no adult household members have a Social Security Number, leave this space blank and mark the box to the right labeled "Check if no Social Security Number."

### 3.B. List income earned by children

**List all income earned or received by children.**

List the combined gross income for ALL children listed in **Step 1** in your household in the box marked "Child Income." Only count foster children's income if you are applying for them together with the rest of your household.

- **What is Child Income?** Child income is money received from outside your household that is paid **DIRECTLY** to your children. Many households do not have any child income.

### Step 4: Contact information and adult 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. Before completing this section, please also make sure you have read the statements on the back of the application.**

**A) Provide your contact information.** Write your current mailing address in the fields provided, if this information is available. If you have no permanent address, that is okay. Sharing a phone number, email address, or both is optional, but helps us reach you quickly if we need to contact you.

**B) Print and sign your name and write today's date.** Print the name of the adult signing the application and that person signs in the box "Signature of adult."

**C) Mail completed application to:**

**WCPS  
Food & Nutrition Services  
10435 Downsville Pike  
Hagerstown, MD 21740**

### Optional

**Share children's racial and ethnic identities (optional).** On the back of the application, we ask you to share information about your children's race and ethnicity. This field is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility for free or reduced price school meals. This information is requested solely for the purpose of determining the State's compliance with Federal civil rights laws, and your response will not affect consideration of your application, and may be protected by the Privacy Act. By providing this information, you will assist us in assuring that this program is administered in a nondiscriminatory manner.

Please return the completed application to **WCPS, 10435 Downsville Pike, Hagerstown, MD 21740**

Apply on-line: [www.schoollunchapp.com](http://www.schoollunchapp.com)

**DO NOT** mail, fax, or email completed applications or questions about applications to the **USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights** or your child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals will be delayed.