



Dear Parent/Guardian:

Our school provides healthy meals each day. Breakfast costs \$1.70 for elementary school and \$1.90 for Columbia Academy and High school; lunch costs \$2.55 for elementary School and \$2.80 for Columbia Academy and High School.

Your children may qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. To apply, complete the enclosed Application for Educational Benefits following the instructions. A new application must be submitted each year. At public schools, your application also helps the school qualify for education funds and discounts.

Your household might be eligible for additional funding through the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT). To qualify for this relief funding your household must have completed and submitted an Educational Benefits Application between July 1, 2022- September 2, 2022. **The latest date for the submission of your application is September 2, 2022 to possibly qualify for this relief funding.** If your household qualifies for **FREE** or **REDUCED** benefits, you should proceed with filling out an application. Students who were approved for free or reduced-price meals and enrolled in the last month of the 2021-22 school year in the P-EBT portal will automatically be eligible for summer 2022 P-EBT benefits.

Return your completed Application for Educational Benefits to:

**1440 49th Ave NE
Attn: Food Service Dept
Columbia Heights, MN 55421**

State funds help to pay for reduced-price school meals, so all students who are approved for either free or reduced-price school meals will receive school meals at no charge. State funds also help to pay for breakfasts for kindergarten students, so all participating kindergarten students receive breakfasts at no charge.

Who can get free school meals? Children in households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), and foster, homeless, migrant and runaway children can get free school meals without reporting household income. Alternatively, children can get free school meals if their household income is within the maximum income shown for their household size on the instructions.

To apply for free school meals, please complete the Application for Educational Benefits form.

COMMON QUESTIONS:

I GET WIC OR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE. CAN MY CHILDREN GET FREE SCHOOL MEALS? CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLDS PARTICIPATING IN WIC OR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY QUALIFY FOR FREE MEALS. CHILDREN MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL MEALS DEPENDING ON OTHER HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL INFORMATION. PLEASE FILL OUT AN APPLICATION.

Who should I include as household members? Include yourself and all other people living in the household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends).

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 school meals.

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 overtime only sometimes. For seasonal work, write in the total annual income.

Will the income information or case number I give be checked? It may be. We may also ask you to send written proof.

How will the information be kept? Information you provide on the form, and your child's approval for meal benefits, will be protected as private data. For more information see the back page of the Application for Educational Benefits.

If I don't qualify now, may I apply later? Yes. Please complete an application at any time if your income goes down, your household size goes up, or you start getting SNAP, MFIP or FDPIR benefits.

Please provide the information requested about children's racial identity and ethnicity, which helps to make sure we are fully serving our community. This information is not required for approval of school meal benefits.

If you have other questions or need help, call 763-528-4520.

Sincerely,

Pam Haupt, Food Service Coordinator

How to Complete the Application for Educational Benefits

Complete the Application for Educational Benefits form for school year 2022-23 if any of the following applies to your household:

- Any household member currently participates in the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) or
- The household includes one or more foster children (a welfare agency or court has legal responsibility for the child) or
- The total income of household members is within the guidelines shown below (**gross earnings before deductions**, not take-home pay). Do not include as income: foster care payments, federal education benefits, MFIP payments, or value of assistance received from SNAP, WIC, or FDPIR. Military: Do not include combat pay or assistance from the Military Privatized Housing Initiative. The income guidelines are effective from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

Maximum Total Income

| Household size | \$ Per Year | \$ Per Month | \$ Twice Per Month | \$ Per 2 Weeks | \$ Per Week |
|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1 | 25,142 | 2,096 | 1,048 | 967 | 484 |
| 2 | 33,874 | 2,823 | 1,412 | 1,303 | 652 |
| 3 | 42,606 | 3,551 | 1,776 | 1,639 | 820 |
| 4 | 51,338 | 4,279 | 2,140 | 1,975 | 988 |
| 5 | 60,070 | 5,006 | 2,503 | 2,311 | 1,156 |
| 6 | 68,802 | 5,734 | 2,867 | 2,647 | 1,324 |
| 7 | 77,534 | 6,462 | 3,231 | 2,983 | 1,492 |
| 8 | 86,266 | 7,189 | 3,595 | 3,318 | 1,659 |
| Add for each additional person | 8,732 | 728 | 364 | 336 | 168 |

Step 1: Children

List all infants and children in the household, their school and grade if applicable, and birthdate. Attach an additional page if needed to list all children. Check the box if a child is in foster care (a welfare agency or court has legal responsibility for the child).

Step 2: Case Number

If any household member currently participates in SNAP, MFIP or FDPIR, write in the case number and then go to Step 4. If you do not participate in any of these programs, leave Step 2 blank and continue on to Step 3.

Step 3: Adult and Child Incomes / Last 4 Digits of Social Security Number

- **Social Security Number/Total Household Members.** An adult household member must provide the last four digits of their Social Security number or check the box if they do not have a Social Security number. Report the total number of household members and ensure all household members are listed individually on the application in the child or adult section as applicable.
- **Child Income.** If any children in the household have regular income, such as SSI or part-time jobs, list the total amount of regular incomes received by all children, and check the box for the frequency: weekly, bi-weekly, twice a month, or monthly. Do not include occasional earnings like babysitting or lawn mowing.
- **Adult income.** Report the names of adult household members and income earned in this section.
 - List all adults living in the household not listed in Step 1, whether related or not, such as grandparents, relatives, or friends.
 - **Gross Earnings from Work.** This is usually the money received from working at jobs where a paycheck is received. For each income, check the box to show how often the income is received: weekly, bi-weekly, twice per month, or monthly.
 - List gross incomes before deductions, not take-home pay. Do not list an hourly wage rate. For adults with no income to report, enter a '0' or leave the section blank. For seasonal work, write in the total annual income.
 - **Are you Self-Employed or a Farmer?** List the net income per month or year after business expenses. Do not list the same income twice on the application. A loss from farm or self-employment must be listed as 0 income and does not reduce other income.
 - **Any Other Gross Income.** List gross incomes before deductions from all other sources, such as SSI, unemployment, child support, public assistance, social security, rental income or annuities.

Step 4: Signature and Contact Information An adult household member must sign the form. If you do not want your information to be shared with Minnesota Health Care Programs, check the "Don't share" box in Step 4.

Optional: Please provide the information on ethnicity and race that is requested on the second page of the form. This information is not required and does not affect approval for school meal benefits. The information helps to ensure we are meeting civil rights requirements and fully serving our community.