

Free and Reduced Price Eligibility Applications

As soon as you receive an application from a family, check it and forward it to NDS.

Do not hold onto applications and send us a large number of them at once if you have done this in the past. We want you to send us what you receive as quickly as possible, so if you have a few – send them a few at a time. There are rules that NDS has to follow that address how many days we have to process the application. If you hold onto the applications, we may not meet our deadlines.

Site Number:

Every application should have your school's site number entered on the top left corner.

Student Grade:

It helps us when you write the grade on the application. You can include the Room Number, too if you need it. We prefer to use only grades.

If you want us to group your Scan Sheets or On-Line reports by room numbers, please give us that information as soon as you have it.

Before sending them to us, check all applications for the following:

1. Parent signature
 - We cannot process an application without a parent or guardian signature
2. Every child and adult in the household is listed on the application
 - If anyone is missing, the eligibility status might be different
3. Every child that attends your school should have your schools' name listed next to their name
 - If your school name is not listed next to the child's name, that child may be skipped and not appear on the Student Eligibility List
4. The SNAP/TANF case number has 9 digits
 - If it has more or less than 9 digits, it cannot be processed as free
5. Social Security Number must be recorded on part 4 (unless it is a SNAP/TANF application).
 - Parents only need to list the last four digits of their Social Security Number
 - Applications without a SNAP/TANF number and no Social Security Number are incomplete and cannot be processed

6. Household members specify how often they received their income (for example, weekly, every two weeks, monthly).
 - Applications that do not state how often income is received cannot be processed
7. The date of birth for each child is recorded on the application.
8. Part 5 of the application is optional for parents.
 - It is recommended that the school fills in this information if it is available. Please use a red pen.

Application Reminders and UPDATES:

1. Students **MUST** have a new application at the beginning of each school year.
 - Applications from the previous school year are valid until **October 15**. After this day, all children without a new application will change to full price status.
2. Foster children are now considered automatically eligible for free meals.
 - Currently, a statewide list of foster children does not exist. Several government agencies are working together to make a list accessible through COMPASS.
 - Prior to the change in the law, a separate application was required for each foster child. Parents with foster children can now submit one application for all children in the household indicating which child is a foster child by checking the **Foster Child box** next to the child's name.
 - The foster child on the application will be processed automatically free while the rest of the children will be determined based upon income and household size.
3. Children in the same household:
 - Any children from the same household (siblings or non-related children) new to the school at the beginning of the school year can be free or reduced-price for September and up to October 15th if their brother or sister in that household was approved the previous school year.
 - NDS must be sent a list in September of **ONLY** the free and reduced-price new siblings, **NOT every sibling in your school.**

4. Students approved through Direct Certification:

- If a student is approved for free meals based on Direct Certification, **ALL** children in the household can be considered directly certified for free meals. For example, if you have a new kindergarten student coming into your school and his brother or sister is already directly certified for free meals for the new school year, this student should also receive free meals automatically all year. (But they will only if you tell us they are siblings.)
- Please let us know immediately which students you think may qualify for free meals based on this federal regulation. We will not know who they are until you let us know.

5. Direct Certification

- This school year the state requires us to perform Direct Certification matches three times: in the beginning of the school year, a second round before November 30th and a third round before February 28th. It is important that we have the correct dates of birth for every student in your school to process this information properly. We want to qualify as many children for free meals as possible through Direct Certification.

6. Applications can also be filed through COMPASS

- Encourage families to apply for free or reduced price meals using COMPASS. This is the most efficient and private method for parents to apply. It is also means less paperwork for lunch managers and faster turn-around for parents. **www.COMPASS.STATE.PA.us**