

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Cambridge Public Schools is providing **free meals to all students** under the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs (Seamless Summer Option or Summer Food Service Program). Children enrolled in the district (or in the community) are eligible for these **free meals regardless of eligibility** through June 30, 2022. Even though meals are free, it is recommended that school districts still collect applications and notify households of the results.

If you are not receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and have been approved for free school meals, you may be eligible for SNAP which provides monthly financial assistance to purchase groceries to Massachusetts residents who qualify. Find out if you are eligible for SNAP today by calling Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333 and a counselor can help you apply over the phone. You can also apply on your own online at DTA Connect: <https://dtacconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/apply>

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS):

WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?

- All children in households receiving benefits from **MA SNAP or MA TANFDC, FDPIR, or specific categories of Medicaid** are eligible for free meals.
- **Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.**
- **Children participating in their school’s Head Start program are eligible for free meals.**
- Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
- Children may receive free or reduced price meals if your household’s income is within the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2021-2022			
Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$23,828	\$1,986	\$459
2	\$32,227	\$2,686	\$620
3	\$40,626	\$3,386	\$782
4	\$49,025	\$4,086	\$943
5	\$57,424	\$4,786	\$1,105
6	\$65,823	\$5,486	\$1,266
7	\$74,222	\$6,186	\$1,428
8	\$82,621	\$6,886	\$1,589
Each additional person:	+8,399	+700	+162

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN QUALIFY AS HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY? Do the members of your household lack a permanent address? Are you staying together in a shelter, hotel, or other temporary housing arrangement? Does your family relocate on a seasonal basis? Are any children living with you who have chosen to leave their prior family or household? If you believe children in your household meet these descriptions and haven’t been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail Title I Coordinator Mary Grassi at 617-349-6490 or mgrassi@cpsd.us.

DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? **NO.** Use one *Free and Reduced Price School Meals 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: Anthony Grein, Food Service Office, Kennedy Longfellow School, 158 Spring St, Cambridge MA 02141.

SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? **NO**, but please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact Anthony Grein at 617-349-6858 immediately.

CAN I APPLY ONLINE? **YES!** The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. Please visit bit.ly/schoolmealsapp to begin or to learn more about the process. Please contact Anthony Grein at 617-349-6858 or agrein@cpsd.us if you have any questions about the online application.

MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED 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. You must send in a new application unless you received a letter stating that your child is eligible for the new school year.

I GET WIC BENEFITS. CAN MY CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Children in households participating in WIC **may** be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please submit a completed application.

WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? **YES.** We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.

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 and reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.

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: Mellissa Honeywood at 617-349-6858 or Food Service Office, Kennedy Longfellow School, 158 Spring St, Cambridge MA 02301

MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? **YES.** You, your children, or other household members do not have to be U.S. citizens to apply for free or reduced price meals.

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.

WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT? Household members may not receive some types of income we ask you to report on the application, or may not receive income at all. Whenever this happens, please write a '0' in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zeroes. Please be careful when leaving income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.

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, or receive Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance payments, 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.

WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? List any additional household members on a separate piece of paper, and attach it to your application.

MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for **MA SNAP** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call the **MA SNAP Hotline at 1-866-950-3663**.

If you have other questions or need help, call 617-349-6858.