

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION LETTER FOR FREE MILK MEAL APPLICATIONS

Frequently Asked Questions About Free and Reduced Price School Meals

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Louisa-Muscatine CSD** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **\$2.15**; lunch costs \$3.15. Your children may qualify for free meals/milk or for reduced price meals. Reduced price is **\$0.30** for breakfast and **\$0.40** for lunch. Please visit our website to complete an application *or request a paper copy.*

Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?

- All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Family Investment Program (FIP) or a few specific Medicaid programs are eligible for free or reduced price 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 at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines below and apply for free and reduced price meals/milk.

FEDERAL INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES for SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027

Household Size	Yearly	Monthly	Twice per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	29,526	2,461	1,231	1,136	568
2	40,034	3,337	1,669	1,540	770
3	50,542	4,212	2,106	1,944	972
4	61,050	5,088	2,544	2,349	1,175
5	71,558	5,964	2,982	2,753	1,377
6	82,066	6,839	3,420	3,157	1,579
7	92,574	7,715	3,858	3,561	1,781
8	103,082	8,591	4,296	3,965	1,983
Each additional family member:	10,508	876	438	405	203

- 2. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?** No, but please read the letter carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your notification, contact: Amanda Wetzel, 14478 170th St. Letts, IA 52754, (319)726-3541 and awetzel@lmcsd.org immediately as eligibility for free or reduced price meals is extended to all school age children in a household. If you did not receive a letter from the school, but received a Free Lunch Notice from the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS), submit this letter to your children's school. You may add any students living in your household who are not listed on the letter. Also, if someone in your household receives SNAP or FIP benefits and you did not receive either of these letters, you may complete an application listing the case number as this will qualify all school age children in your household for free meals. If you were informed that your children will get reduced price meals, see the income guidelines above and if you feel you would qualify for free meal benefits, complete an application for free and reduced price meals.
- 3. WHAT IF WE HAVE FOSTER CHILDREN?** Households with foster and non-foster children may choose to include the foster child as a household member, as this may help other children in the household qualify for benefits. If the foster family is not eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits, that does not prevent a foster child from receiving free meal benefits.
- 4. 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 contact: LMCSO, (319)726-3541

5. **DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD?** No, complete the applications for free and reduced price school meals for all the students in your household. We cannot approve an application unless complete eligibility information is submitted, so be sure to complete all required information.
6. **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, through **October 5, 2026**. You must complete a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. When the carryover period ends, unless you are notified that your children will receive free meals or you submit an application that is approved, the children must pay full price for school meals. The school is not required to send a reminder or a notice of expired eligibility.
7. **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 complete and send in an application.
8. **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.
9. **WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED?** Yes, we may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report. You are not required to provide proof with your application.
10. **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, if your household size goes up, or if you start getting SNAP, FIP or other benefits.
11. **WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION?** You should talk to your school officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: (319) 726-3541 or Tony Ryan, 14478 170th St. Letts, IA 52754
12. **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.
13. **WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT?** Household members may not receive the 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.
14. **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.
15. **DO I NEED TO PROVIDE MY SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER?** Only the last four digits of the Social Security Number of the household's primary wage earner or another adult household member (or an indication of "none") is needed.
16. **WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY?** List any additional household members on a Supplemental Worksheet and attach it to your application. Contact **Amanda Wetzel, 14478 170th St. Letts, IA 52754 (319)726-3541 and awetzel@lmcsd.org** to receive a Supplemental Worksheet.
17. **WHO CAN GET FREE MILK?** If your school participates in the Special Milk Program for half day kindergarteners, your kindergarten child may be eligible for free milk. Children who buy extra milk with a meal or if they eat breakfast or lunch and have an afternoon milk break, are not eligible to receive free milk.
18. **MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR?** To find out how to apply for SNAP or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call **1-877-347-5678**. Your children may be eligible for Hawki (children's health insurance) or a waiver of school fees. Read the information on the back of the Application for Hawki information. A school waiver form is available from your school.

19. **CAN CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES GET FOOD SUBSTITUTIONS?** If a child has a disability, as determined by a licensed medical professional, and the disability prevents the child from eating the regular school meal, the school will make substitutions prescribed by the licensed medical professional. If a substitution is needed, there will be no extra charge for the meal. Please note, however, that the school is not required to make a substitution for a food allergy, unless it meets the definition of disability. Please call the school for further information.
20. **DO I NEED TO REPORT MY RACE AND ETHNICITY?** It is optional to complete the racial/ethnic portion of the application, however, if you do not select race or ethnicity, one will be selected for you based on visual observation.

If you have other questions or need help, call **(319) 726-3541**.

Sincerely,

Linsey Reimers, Food Service Director

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement: In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Iowa Nondiscrimination Statement (Revised 7-1-25) It is the policy of this CNP provider not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, or religion in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code section 216.6, 216.7, and 216.9. If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by this CNP Provider, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, 6200 Park Ave Suite 100, Des Moines, IA 50321-1270; phone number 515-281-4121 or 1-800-457-4416; website: <https://icrc.iowa.gov/>.

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires that we use information from this application to see who qualifies for free or reduced price meals. We can only approve complete forms. We may share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them deliver program benefits to your household. Inspectors and law enforcement may also use your information to make sure that program rules are met. Please be sure to provide the last four numbers of the Social Security number of the adult household member who signs the application. If the adult does not have one, 'Check if no Social Security Number.' Applications for a foster child do not need to list a Social Security number. Applications for children in households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) do not need to list a Social Security number. Some children qualify for free meals without an application. Please contact your school to get free meals for a foster child, and children who are homeless, migrant, or runaway.

2026-2027 Iowa Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Milk Complete one application per household. Use a pen (not a pencil). Please read "How to Apply for Free and Reduced Price School Meals" for more information on completing this application

STEP 1

List ALL Household Members who are infants, children, and students up grade 12 (if more spaces are required for additional names, attach the supplemental worksheet)

Definition of Household Member: "Anyone who is living with you and shares income and expenses, even if not related." Children in Foster care and children who meet the definition of Homeless, Migrant or Runaway are eligible for free meals. We are required to ask for information about your children's race and ethnicity. This information is important and helps to make sure we are fully serving our community.

Child's First Name

MI

Child's Last Name

Date of Birth

Student

Child's School and Grade

Foster Child

Homeless Migrant Runaway

Ethnicity

Race

Responding to this section is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility for free/reduced price meals.

OPTIONAL

A=Asian W=White
I=American Indian/Alaskan Native
B=Black/African American
P=Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

Hispanic or Latino

Non-Hispanic/Latino

STEP 2

Do any Household Members (including you) currently participate in one or more of the following assistance programs: SNAP, FIP or FDIPIR? If No, go to STEP 3. If you answered Yes, write a case number here then go to STEP 4 (Do not complete STEP 3). Write only one case number in this space. Medicaid and EBT card numbers are NOT acceptable

Case Number: - - - - -

STEP 3

Report Income for ALL Household Members (Skip this step if you answered 'Yes' to STEP 2)

Apply online: With your School Cafe Account

A. Total Number of All Household Members (Children + Adults)

B. Last Four Digits of Social Security Number (SSN) of Adult Household Member (last 4 digits)

C. Check No SSN (adult):

D. All Adult Household Members (include yourself): List all Household Members not listed in STEP 1 even if they do not receive income. If they do not receive income from any source, write '0'. If you enter '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report. Applications with blank income fields will be processed as complete. If more spaces are required for additional names, attach the supplemental worksheet. The sources of income for section will help you with the adult income on the next page. Report each income separately and in whole dollar amounts before deductions or taxes. For a household with income from wages and self-employment, each amount must be listed separately.

Names of All Adult Household Members

Gross Earnings from Work/All Other Income

Gross Public Assistance/Child Support/Alimony

Gross Pension/Retirement

First and Last Names. Include children who are temporarily away at school or in college.

Weekly

Every 2 Weeks

2x Month

Monthly

Annual

Weekly

Every 2 Weeks

2x Month

Monthly

Weekly

Every 2 Weeks

2x Month

Monthly

Annual

E. Child Income: Sometimes children in the household earn or receive income. Please include the TOTAL gross earned income by all Children listed in STEP 1 here. The sources of income for children section on the next page will help you with the Child Income.

Total Income Received by All Children

Weekly

Every 2 Weeks

2x Month

Monthly

Annual

STEP 4

Contact Information and Adult Signature

Return completed form to: LMCSD

"I certify (promise) that all information on this application is true and that all income is reported. I understand that this information is given in connection with the receipt of Federal funds, and that school officials may verify (check) the information. I am aware that if I purposely give false information, my children may lose meal benefits, and I may be prosecuted under applicable State and Federal laws."

Signature of adult completing the form

Printed name of adult completing the form

Today's Date

Street Address (if available)

Apt. #

City

State

Zip

Daytime Phone (optional)

Email (optional)

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE. FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

PAGE TWO CONTAINS MORE INFORMATION

Weekly (x52)

Annual Income Conversion (if needed)

Every 2 Weeks (x26)

2x Month (x24)

Monthly (x12)

Household Size:

Total Income:

Application #:

Date Received:

Signature and Effective Date of Determining Official

Signature and Date of Confirming Official

Signature and Date of Verification Follow-Up

Eligibility Determination

Application

Income

Foster Child

FIP/SNAP

Head Start (confirmation required)

Homeless/Migrant/Runaway-Local Official confirmation Required

Free

Reduced

Free Milk

Application Denied

Incomplete

Over Income Limits

Low-Cost Health Insurance for Children

If your children do not have health insurance, many families getting free or reduced price meals can also get free or low-cost health insurance for their children. The law requires public schools to share your free and reduced price meal eligibility information with Medicaid and Hawki, the State's medical insurance program for children. Private schools, RCCIs and childcare organizations may choose to share this information. Specifically, we will give them your child's name, your name and address. Medicaid and Hawki can only use the information to identify children who may be eligible for free or low-cost health insurance and contact you. They are not allowed to use the information from your free and reduced meal application for any other purpose or to share it with any other entity or program. You are not required to allow us to share this information, it will not affect your child's eligibility for free or reduced price meals. **If you do NOT want your information shared with Medicaid or Hawki, you must tell us by completing the information below.** If you want further information, you may call Hawki at 1-800-257-8563. Also, if you are already receiving Medicaid or Hawki, please sign below. This will avoid another contact.

My signature below indicates I DO NOT want school officials to share information from my free and reduced price meal application with Medicaid or Hawki.

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

Signature

Date

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. ***Do not mail free and reduced price meal applications to this address, only complaints of discrimination.**

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Return completed form to: LMCSD 14478 170th St. Letts, IA 52754
Waiver Information

Sources and Examples of Income		For additional information on income, please refer to the instructions that accompany this application	
Earning from Work	Public Assistance/Alimony/Child Support	Pensions/Retirement/All other sources of income	Examples of Income for Children
• Salary, wages, cash bonuses, tips or commissions	• Unemployment benefits	• Social Security/Disability (including railroad retirement and black lung benefits)	• A child has full or part-time job where a salary/wages are earned
• Net income from self-employment (farm or business)	• Workers' compensation	• Private Pensions or disability benefits	• A child received income from a private pension fund, annuity or trust
If you are in the U.S. Military	• Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	• Income from trusts or estates	• A parent is disabled, retired or deceased and their child receives Social Security benefits
	• Cash assistance from state or local government	• Annuities	• A friend or extended family member regularly gives a child spending money
	• Alimony payments	• Investment Income	• A child is disabled and receives Social Security benefits
• Allowances for off-based housing, food and clothing	• Child support payments	• Earned Interest	
	• Veterans benefits	• Rental Income	
	• Strike benefits	• Regular cash payments from outside the household	

Additional Children in Your Household (not listed on page 1)

Child's First Name	MI	Child's Last Name	Date of Birth	Student		Child's School	Grade	Foster Child	Homeless, Migrant, Runaway	OPTIONAL	
				YES	NO					Responding to this section is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility for free/reduced price meals.	
										Ethnicity	Race
				☐	☐					H=Hispanic or Latino N=Non-Hispanic/Latino	A=Asian W=White I=American Indian/Alaskan Native B=Black/African American P=Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
				☐	☐			☐			
				☐	☐			☐			
				☐	☐			☐			
				☐	☐			☐			
				☐	☐			☐			

Any income earned by the above listed children should be included under Step 3 E on the first page of the application.

Additional Adults in Your Household (Not listed on page 1)

[illegible]

Self-Employment Income Calculations

This guidance will assist you in calculating the amount to report if you engage in farming, are self-employed or have income from other sources.

Self-employed persons may use income tax records for the preceding calendar year as a base to project the current year's net income, unless the current monthly income provides a more accurate measure. Report income derived from the business venture less the operating costs incurred in the generation of that income. Deductions for personal expenses such as interest on home payments, medical expenses, and other similar non-business deductions are not allowed in reducing gross business income. Additional income from other kinds of employment must be treated as separate and apart from the income generated or lost from your business venture. For example, if you operated a business at a net loss, but held additional employment for which a salary was received, the income for purposes of applying for reduced price or free meals would be the income from the salary only. The loss from the business cannot be deducted from a positive income earned in other employment. For purposes of this application, it is not possible to report a negative income from any

business venture. The least income possible is zero (no income). The necessary information for arriving at allowable income from private business operation may be taken from your most recent U.S. Individual Income Tax Return - Form 1040 or 1040-SR and Schedule 1. Add together the amounts reported on the following lines:

Capital Gain or (Loss) Form 1040 or 1040-SR, LINE 7

Business Income or (Loss) Schedule 1 Part 1, LINE 3

Other Gains or (Losses) Schedule 1 Part 1, LINE 4

Rental real estate, royalties, partnerships, S corporations, trusts, etc. Schedule 1 Part 1, LINE 5 \$

Farm Income or (Loss) Schedule 1 Part 1, LINE 6

TOTAL \$ Gross Annual Income Before Any Deductions. Report in Step 3 under All Other Income (Computed Monthly Income \$ Gross Annual Income + 12)

For a household with income wages and self-employment, each amount must be listed separately

