

Free and Reduced Meal Application FAQs

Application Completion Tips

- Use BLACK or BLUE ink.
- Print clearly.
- Use your student's name as it appears on their birth certificate.
- List all "Other Household Members", their income, frequency of income or check the "No Income" box.
- Fill in the last 4 digits of the Social Security number for the signer or check the "I do not have a SSN" box.
- Signature is required.
- Foster children may now be included on the household application as part of the household size.
- If you receive welfare benefits, list the Case# (located on the lower left-hand corner of your EBT card under your name).

I have children that attend different schools within the San Juan Unified School District, do I need to fill out an application for each child?

No. Complete one application for all students in your household. Any child that does not attend San Juan Unified School District must be listed in the "Other Household Members" section of the application. We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. Return completed application to:

- The Nutrition Services Department located at 3738 Walnut Avenue, Carmichael CA 95608.
- San Juan Central Enrollment Center located at 3700 Garfield Avenue in Carmichael.
- Any school cafeteria.

The meal applications are available on the Nutrition Services webpage at:
<http://nutrition.sanjuan.edu>.

If my children change schools within the San Juan Unified School District, do I need to complete another meal application?

No, you do not need to complete another meal application when your child changes schools. Once your child is eligible for Free or Reduced-price meals, that status follows them to any school in our district.

Who can receive free meals?

There are several ways that your children may be eligible for meals free of charge. Your child can get free meals if your household income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Guidelines.

- "Categorical eligibility": If one member of your household is currently receiving assistance (benefits) from one of the following Programs: CalFresh, FDPIR, CalWORKs, or Kin-Gap, all children in the household are eligible for free meals. (Remember, a household is defined as "...a group of related or non-related individuals, who are not residents of an institution or boarding house, but who are living as one economic unit.")

- Foster children are categorically eligible for free meal benefits. A change in the 2011-12 regulations states that Foster children may now be included in the household application as part of the household size.
- Those students whose household income falls within the Income Eligibility Guidelines for the current school year.

Can homeless, runaway and migrant children get free meals?

Yes. Other categorically eligible children are those who meet the definition of:

- Migrant
- Homeless (McKinney-Vento)
- Runaway
- Those enrolled in a federally funded Head Start Center.

If you are a homeless, runaway or migrant child, please contact the SJUSD Homeless Liaison at (916) 971-8879 or the Nutrition Services Department at (916) 971-7035 for assistance in completing an application.

What are the Income Eligibility Guidelines for the current school year? Have the eligibility guidelines changed from last school year?

Yes, the eligibility guidelines have changed from last year. You do need to fill out a new application each year, beginning July 1st.

The Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs) are used in determining eligibility for free and reduced price meals or free milk. They are effective from July 1st through June 30th every year. Schools and institutions will use the Income Eligibility Guidelines, published by the Food and Nutrition Department of the USDA, in making eligibility determinations for Free and Reduced-price meals for each school year.

My child was on the program last year; will my child be able to get free or reduced meals at the start of the new school year?

Yes, your child will be able to eat at the same eligibility they were at the end of the last school year, up to 30 days into the new school year. However, you will need to reapply for the current school year as soon as possible. New applications are available every July 1st. Once the new application has been processed, the new eligibility will be effective immediately. If a new application is not processed within the first 30 days of the new school year, your child will become full pay.

I got a letter saying my children are approved for free meals for this school year. Should I still complete an application?

If you received a letter of eligibility stating they will receive free or reduced price meals for the **current** school year, then no, you do not have to complete a new application. Just make sure that all of your children are listed on the letter as being eligible to receive free meals. If any of your children are not listed on the letter, please contact the Nutrition Services Department at (916) 971-7035.

Who can receive Reduced-price meals?

Your child can receive Reduced-price meals if your household income is within the Reduced-price limits on the current year Eligibility Guidelines. Please complete an application and send it in to the school cafeteria or the Nutrition Services Department located at 3738 Walnut Avenue, Carmichael CA 95608 or complete an on-line application which you can find on the Nutrition Services webpage at: <http://nutrition.sanjuan.edu>.

Will the information I give be checked?

Yes, we may ask you to send written proof of the information you give.

If I don't qualify now, may I apply later?

You may apply at any time during the school year.

What if I disagree with the school's decision about my application?

You may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to the Nutrition Services Department at (916) 971-7035, P.O. Box 477, Carmichael, CA 95609-0477.

May I apply if someone in my household is not a U.S. citizen?

You or your child does not have to be a U.S. citizen to qualify your child to receive Free or Reduced-price meals.

Who should I include as members of my household?

Include yourself, all children who live with you and all other people living in your financial household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives or friends) who share living expenses.

What if my income is not always the same?

Please contact the Nutrition Services department for further instructions. You should list the gross amount that you normally receive – the amount BEFORE deductions – or the average gross amount. For example, if you normally receive \$1,000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only got \$900, put down that you get \$1,000 per month. If you are normally paid for overtime, include it. If your amount changes monthly, add the total of all the months, then divide it by the number of months added and you will receive your average. Example: September \$900, October \$780, November \$1,000. Add them together \$900 + \$780 + \$1,000 = \$2,680. Now divide \$2,680 by three months $\$2,680 \div 3 = \$893.33333...$ \$893 dollars is your average monthly earning.

Are applications available in other languages?

Applications are available in English, Russian and Spanish. You will find on-line English and Spanish applications at the Nutrition Services webpage at: <http://nutrition.sanjuan.edu>.

Why is it necessary to use the same name as it appears on the birth certificate?

San Juan Unified School District uses the birth date and name information from the birth certificate for all school records. The only way the application can be validated is by using the same information. Nick names and family abbreviations will slow down the application process.

Why do I have to list “All Other Household Members”?

The consideration for approval of an application is based upon gross income and the number of household members. Therefore, it is required to list all members of the household. Otherwise you may not be eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) due to lack of information.

Why do I need to complete the last four digits of the Social Security number and sign the application?

These two sections are required fields and it is very important that these sections be completed. If this information is not complete, **the application will be returned to the applicant.**

If I have a student living at home that goes to a private school, charter school, or Pre-K school, should I include them on the application?

Yes, list each of them on the “Other Household Members” section of the application, write their income, and how frequently they receive it, or check the “No Income” box.

What is Direct Certification?

Under Direct Certification, school districts use information from the State Social Service Department to certify children to receive free meals. To qualify, the child’s family must receive assistance from:

- Food Stamps/SNAP/CalFresh
- Welfare/TANF/CalWORKS
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations/FDPIR
- Kin-GAP Programs/Special circumstances Foster

How do I know if my student is Direct Certified?

Direct Certification letters are sent to the homes of pre-approved students.

If one student is Direct Certified in a household, are the remaining students also Direct Certified?

Yes. If you have other students in your household that are not listed on the Direct Certified letter, call Nutrition Services at (916) 971-7035.

May I fax a meal application to the Nutrition Services department or the school?

No. We must have the original application in order for it to be processed. You may go online to complete an application on the Nutrition Services webpage at: <http://nutrition.sanjuan.edu>.