

News Release

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Income eligibility guidelines announced for school and daycare meals

MADISON – The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service updated the income eligibility guidelines for meals served at schools and day care programs based on federal poverty levels.

The income guidelines, updated annually, are effective July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020. The guidelines apply to student eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals offered through the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs and milk offered through the Special Milk Program along with reimbursement for meals served in day care centers and family child care homes participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

The guidelines establish that students in a household of four, with income of \$33,475 per year or less, qualify for free school meals. If that family's yearly income is between \$33,475.01 and \$47,638, children can receive reduced-price meals. The state's participating public and private schools and day cares typically provide applications for free and reduced-price school meals during registration and in the beginning weeks of the school year. However, applications may be submitted at any time. Only one application is required per household.

"Throughout the state, nutrition professionals in schools and facilities are working hard to ensure all children have equitable access to nutritious meals," State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor said. "Providing healthy meals and snacks helps support meaningful learning opportunities and experiences."

Based on family circumstances, certain groups are automatically eligible to receive meal benefits, with eligibility based on program specifics. Those groups include children and adults who participate in or receive benefits from the following programs: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or FoodShare in Wisconsin, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Wisconsin Works (W-2) Cash Assistance in Wisconsin, some programs under Medicaid, and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). Foster, homeless, migrant, or runaway children; children who are enrolled in Head Start, an At-Risk after-

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school center, or an emergency shelter; and adults who are Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Medicaid participants also are eligible.

All students are eligible to eat school meals in public and private schools that participate in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast programs. To receive the meals for free or reduced-price, parents or guardians complete a form, providing the names and income from all sources for all household members. All information is kept confidential. Most day care centers and all family child care homes that participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program provide meals to all enrolled participants without any separate charge. Reimbursement to the center or child care home for meals is based on household incomes of those enrolled for care. A list of the day care centers in Wisconsin that participate in the [Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) is available online.

The goal of both school-based and child care food programs is to improve the health of students and young children and increase the opportunity for them to eat a variety of nutritious foods. The meals and snacks served meet nutrition standards set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

As an agency administering USDA programs, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. <https://dpi.wi.gov/nutrition#discrimination>

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NOTES: More information on eligibility for free and reduced-price meals can be found on the Department of Public Instruction's [Free and Reduced Meal Applications and Eligibility webpage](#). Click on Income Eligibility Guidelines. This news release is available electronically at <https://dpi.wi.gov/news/releases/2019/income-eligibility-guidelines-announced-school-and-daycare-meals>.