

News Release

Education Information Services ■ 125 South Webster Street ■ P.O. Box 7841 ■ Madison, WI 53707-7841 ■ (608) 266-3559

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Contact: DPI Media Line, (608) 266-3559, media.inquiries@dpi.wi.gov

Annual income guidelines set for school and day care meals

MADISON –The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service recently 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, 2020, through June 30, 2021, and apply to student eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals offered through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, and milk offered through the Special Milk Program. The programs are administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Reimbursement for meals served in day care centers and family child care homes participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program are also applicable to the updated income guidelines.

“Having equitable access to these programs is essential,” State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor said. “Our children cannot learn on an empty stomach. Proper nourishment is important to help our students learn, grow, and achieve in Wisconsin schools.”

The guidelines establish that students in a household of four, with income of \$34,060 per year or less, qualify for free school meals. If that family’s yearly income is between \$34,060.01 and \$48,470, children are eligible for 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.

Based on family circumstances, certain groups are automatically eligible to receive meal benefits, with eligibility based on program specifics. Those groups include children who participate in, or receive benefits from the following programs: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or FoodShare in Wisconsin, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or Wisconsin Works 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 Afterschool

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program, or an emergency shelter; and adults who receive SNAP or FoodShare, FDPIR, Supplemental Security Income or Medicaid participants also are eligible.

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. For additional information on Wisconsin's Child Nutrition Programs and the USDA's full nondiscrimination statement, [visit the DPI's website](#).

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NOTE: This news release is available electronically at <https://dpi.wi.gov/news/releases/2020/annual-income-guidelines-set-school-and-day-care-meals>.