



# WESTPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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## How To Complete the General Eligibility Form To Qualify For Free or Reduced District Fees

Please use these instructions to help you fill out the application for free and reduced district fees. You only need to submit one application per household, **even if your children attend more than one school in Westport Community Schools**. The application must be filled out completely to determine the eligibility of your child(ren) for free or reduced-price district fees. Please follow these instructions in order! Each step of the instructions is the same as the steps on your application. If at any time you are not sure what to do next, please contact Michelle Rapoza at 508-636-1140, ext. 4020 or [mrapoza@westportschools.org](mailto:mrapoza@westportschools.org).

**Please use a pen (not a pencil) when filling out the application and do your best to print clearly.**

### Step 1: List ALL children infants, and students up to and including grade 12

<p>Tell us how many infants/toddlers, children not in school, and elementary/middle/high school students live in your household. They do NOT have to be related to you to be a part of your household.</p> <p><b>Who should I list here?</b> When filling out this section, please include ALL members in your household who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children age 18 or under AND are supported with the household's income;</li> <li>• In your care under a formal foster arrangement through a court or state/local agency, or qualify as homeless, migrant, or runaway youth;</li> <li>• Students attending (regardless of age) Westport Community Schools.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>A) List each child's name.</b> Print each child's name. Use one line of the application for each child. When printing names, write one letter in each box. Stop if you run out of space. If there are more children present than lines on the application, attach a second piece of paper (or a second application if completing electronically) with all required information for the additional children. This also applies to adults in Step 3. "MI" is short for middle initial. Print the first letter of each child's middle name in the box.</p>	<p><b>B) Is the child a student?</b> If "Yes," write the grade level of the student in the "Grade" column to the right</p>	<p><b>C) Do you have any foster children?</b> If any children listed are foster children, mark the "Foster Child" box next to the child's name. If you are ONLY applying for foster children, after finishing <b>Step 1</b>, go to <b>Step 4</b>.</p> <p><u>Foster children who live with you may count as</u> members of your household and <u>should be listed on your application</u>. If you are applying for both foster and non-foster children, go to Step 3. Note: Adopted children are not considered foster children. A foster child is a minor child who has been taken into state custody and placed with a state-licensed adult, who cares for the child in place of their parent or guardian.</p>	<p><b>D) Are any children homeless, migrant, or runaway?</b> If you believe any child listed in this section meets this description, mark the "Homeless, Migrant, Runaway" box next to the child's name and complete all steps of the application. Homeless, Migrant, Runaway status must be confirmed with the appropriate program staff. If the school district cannot confirm your student's homeless, migrant, or runaway status, then the school district will contact you to complete an income-based application. <u>You may choose to provide income information now</u> in order to prevent the school district from potentially needing to contact you later.</p>

### Step 2: Do any household members currently participate in SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR?

<p>If anyone in your household (including you) currently participates in one or more of the assistance programs listed below, your children are eligible for free or reduced price district fees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or [Insert State SNAP here].</li> <li>• Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or [Insert State TANF here].</li> <li>• The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).</li> </ul>	
<p><b>A) If no one in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check "No" in <b>Step 2</b> and go to <b>Step 3</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>B) If anyone in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a case number for SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR. You only need to provide one case number. If you participate in one of these programs and do not know your case number, contact: [Insert State/local agency contacts here].</li> <li>• Go to <b>Step 4</b>.</li> </ul>

### Step 3: List ALL household members and income for each member

#### How do I report my income?

- Use the list in Step 5, titled “**Supporting Documentation**”, on the General Eligibility Form to determine if your household has income to report.
- Report all amounts in GROSS INCOME ONLY. Report all income in whole dollars. Do not include cents.
  - Gross income is the total income received before taxes and deductions.
  - Many people think of income as the amount they “take home” and not the total, “gross” amount. Make sure that the income you report on this application has NOT been reduced to pay for taxes, insurance premiums, or any other amounts taken from your pay.
- Write a “0” in any field where there is no income to report. Any income fields left empty, or blank will also be counted as a zero. If you write “0” or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report. If your household is not able to provide adequate supporting documentation as listed, please complete Step 6.
- Mark how often each type of income is received using the check boxes to the right of each field.

#### Report income earned by adults

Who should I list here?

- When filling out this section, please include ALL adult members in your household who are living with you and share income and expenses, even if they are not related and even if they do not receive income of their own.
  - **Do NOT include:**
    - People who live with you but are not supported by your household’s income AND do not contribute income to your household.
    - Infants, children, and students already listed in **Step 1**.

**1) List adult household members’ names:** Print the name of each household member in the boxes marked “Names of Adult Household Members (First and Last).” Include college students, unless they are declared independent on taxes (all college students are considered adults). Do not list any household members you listed in **Step 1**.

#### 2) List earnings from work.

List all income from work in the “Earnings from Work” field on the application. This is usually the money received from working at jobs. If you are a self-employed business or farm owner, you will report your net income. Net income is your income after taxes and deductions have been subtracted.

- **What if I have multiple jobs?** List each job separately by entering your name and income from each job on a new line. Add an additional sheet of paper if necessary.
- **What if I am self-employed?** List income from your business as a net amount. This net amount is calculated by subtracting the total operating expenses of your business from its gross receipts (revenue). Gross receipts or revenue are all the income earned from the sale of any products or services offered.

If a child listed in **Step 1** has income, follow the instructions in **Step 3, Part B**.

#### 3) List income from public assistance/child support/alimony.

List all income that applies in the “Public Assistance/Child Support/Alimony” field on the application. Do not report the cash value of any public assistance benefits NOT listed on the chart. If income is received from child support or alimony, only report court-ordered payments. Informal but regular payments should be reported as “other” income in the next part.

#### 4) List income from pensions/retirement/all other income.

List all income that applies in the “Pensions/Retirement/All Other Income” field on the application.

- **What if I receive income from multiple sources in this category?** List each source separately by entering your name and income from each source on a new line. Add an additional sheet of paper if necessary.

**5) List total household size:** Enter the total number of household members in the field “Total Household Members (Children and Adults).” This number **MUST** be equal to the number of household members listed in **Step 1** and **Step 3**. If there are any members of your household that you have not listed on the application, go back and add them. It is very important to list all household members, as the size of your household affects your eligibility for free and reduced-price meals.

**6) Provide the last four digits of your Social Security Number:** An adult household member must enter the last four digits of their Social Security Number in the space provided. You are eligible to apply for benefits even if you do not have a Social Security Number. If no adult household members have a Social Security Number, leave this space blank and mark the box to the right labeled “Check if no Social Security Number.”

#### Step 4: Supporting Documentation

*Please provide one or more documents from the included chart as sources of evidence to verify your household's income. Please submit documents that can be used to calculate one recent month's income, such as a biweekly paycheck stub or a benefits letter from the state of MA from this or last month. Check and provide all sources that apply.*

#### Step 5: Community Contact

If your household is not able to provide adequate supporting documentation as listed in Step 3 above, then a **community contact** \*\* must provide written evidence to support the household's range of combined annual income reported above in Step 1.

A **community contact** is a person outside of your household who knows about your household's circumstances and can attest to your household's income range selected in Step 1. Community contacts include social service agencies, religious organizations, and other community groups.

\*\* Please note that a Community Contact (if provided) cannot be an employee of the student's district/charter school, or any individual receiving payments from the district/charter school to manage or administer the income verification process. This form cannot be certified if the community contact meets either of these criteria.

#### Step 6: Contact information and adult signature

*All applications must be signed by an adult member of the household. By signing the application, that household member is attesting that all information has been truthfully and completely reported. Before completing this section, please also make sure you have read the statements on the back of the application.*

**A) Provide your contact information.** Write your current mailing address in the fields provided if this information is available. If you have no permanent address, that is okay. Sharing a phone number, email address, or both is optional, but helps us reach you quickly if we need to contact you.

**B) Print and sign your name and write today's date.** Print the name of the adult signing the application and that person signs in the box "Signature of adult."

**C) Mail the completed application to:** The school your youngest child attends. Addresses are located on the APS website.

**Please return the application directly to the SCHOOL attended by your YOUNGEST child.**