



Jul 9, 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Ralston Public Schools** offers healthy meals every school day. **Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals.** Reduced price is **.30** for breakfast and **.40** for lunch. If your child(ren) qualified for free or reduced price meals at the end of last school year, you must submit a new application by **September 25th, 2024** in order to avoid an interruption in meal benefits.

This packet includes an application for free or reduced price meal benefits and a set of detailed instructions. Applicants who qualify for free or reduced price meals also qualify to receive Summer EBT, which provides \$120 in grocery funds on an EBT card mailed to the household during summer break. 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), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) are eligible for free 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 within the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

2. 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 call or email **Steve Snodgrass at Steve_Snodgrass@ralstonschools.org or 402-898-3446.**

3. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. *Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application for all students in your household.* We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. Return the completed application to: **Nicole Riccobon, 8545 Park Drive, Ralston, NE, 68127. Phone number: 402-898-3430**

4. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? No, but please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact **Nicole Riccobon: 402-898-3430, Email: Nicole.Riccobon@ralstonschools.org or Judy Kyle: 402-898-2450 Email: Judy_Kyle@ralstonschools.org** immediately.

5. CAN I APPLY ONLINE? You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application *if* your school district makes this option available. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. Visit <https://www.myschoolapps.com/Home/PickDistrict> to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact **Nicole Riccobon, 402-898-3430, Nicole.Riccobon@ralstonschools.org**

or **Judy Kyle: 402-898-2450, Email: Judy.Kyle@ralstonschools.org** if you have any questions about the online application.

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. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. If you do not send in a new application that is approved by the school or you have not been notified that your child is eligible for free meals, your child will be charged the full price for meals.
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 send in an application.
8. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
9. 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 and reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.
10. WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION? You should talk to school officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: **Judy Kyle, 402-898-3450, Judy.Kyle@ralstonschools.org**.
11. 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.
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 some 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, 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. WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? List any additional household members on a separate piece of paper, and attach it to your application. Contact **Nicole Riccobon, 402-898-3430, Nicole.Riccobon@ralstonschools.org** to receive a second application.
16. 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, please go online to ACCESSNebraska.ne.gov or call 1-800-383-4278.
17. If you do not qualify for free or reduced meals, the prices of breakfast and lunch are as follows. Elementary Breakfast \$1.70, Elementary Lunch \$2.75 - RMS Breakfast \$1.95, RMS Lunch \$3.10 - RHS Breakfast \$2.50, RHS Lunch \$3.25

If you have other questions or need help, call or email - **Nicole Riccobon, 402-898-3430, Nicole.Riccobon@ralstonschools.org**.

Sincerely,

Nicole Riccobon

Instructions for Completing the Free & Reduced Price School Meals Family Application

For households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), follow these instructions:

- Part 1:** List each child's name, the school they attend and their grade.
Part 2: Enter household's Master Case Number if the household qualifies for SNAP, TANF or FDPIR.
Part 3: Skip this part.
Part 4: Complete this part. An adult must sign the form.
Part 5: This part is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility for free or reduced price meals. If you do not select race or ethnicity, one may be selected based on visual observation.

For households with FOSTER, HOMELESS, MIGRANT or RUNAWAY CHILDREN, follow these instructions:

If all children in the household are foster children:

- Part 1:** List all foster children, the school they attend and their grade. Check the box indicating the child is a foster child.
Part 2: Skip this part.
Part 3: Skip this part.
Part 4: Complete this part. An adult must sign the form.
Part 5: This part is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility for free or reduced price meals. If you do not select race or ethnicity, one may be selected based on visual observation.

If some of the children in the household are foster children or are homeless, migrant or runaway children:

- Part 1:** List all children, the school they attend and their grade. Check the appropriate box.
Part 2: If the household does not have a Master Case Number, skip this part.
Part 3: Follow these instructions to report total household income from last month.
Column 1 – Household Members: List the first and last name of **each** person living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives or friends) who share income and expenses. Attach another sheet of paper if necessary.
Column 2 - Gross Income and How Often it was Received: Gross income is the amount earned **before taxes and other deductions**; it is not your take-home pay. For each household member, list each type of income received for the month. You must also report how often the money is received – weekly, every other week, twice a month, or monthly.

Earnings from Work includes the following:

- Salary, wages, cash bonuses
- Net income from self-employment (farm or business)

If you are in the U.S. Military, include:

- Basic pay and cash bonuses (do not include combat pay, Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance (FSSA) payments or privatized housing allowances)
- Allowances for off-base housing, food and clothing

Do not include income from SNAP, FDPIR, WIC, Federal education benefits and foster care payments.

Public Assistance/Child Support/Alimony includes the following:

- Unemployment benefits, Worker's compensation
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Cash assistance from state or local government
- Veteran's benefits (VA benefits), Strike benefits
- Child support payments, Alimony payments

Pensions/Retirement/All Other Income includes the following:

- Social Security payments (including railroad retirement and black lung benefits)
- Private pensions or Disability benefits
- Regular income from trusts or estates, Annuities, Investment income, Earned interest, Rental income and *Regular* cash payments received from outside the household.

If you have no income, write "0" or leave the income field blank. By doing this, you are certifying there is no income to report.

Household Size: Enter the total number of people in your household.

Social Security Number: The adult signing the form must list the last four digits of their Social Security Number (SSN) or check the box to the right labeled "Check if no SSN."

Part 4: Complete this part. An adult must sign the form.

Part 5: This part is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility for free or reduced price meals. If you do not select race or ethnicity, one may be selected based on visual observation.

Please note: Children who meet the definition of homeless, migrant or runaway, are eligible for free meals. However, the school district must have documentation on file from a migrant coordinator, homeless/runaway liaison or the district's Direct Certification list to approve the child for free meals.

For ALL other households, follow these instructions:

Part 1: List all children, the school they attend and their grade.

Part 2: If the household does not have a Master Case Number, skip this part.

Part 3: Follow these instructions to report total household income from last month.

Column 1 – Household Members: List the first and last name of **each** person living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives or friends) who share income and expenses. Attach another sheet of paper if necessary.

Column 2 - Gross Income and How Often it was Received: Gross income is the amount earned **before taxes and other deductions**; it is not your take-home pay. For each household member, list each type of income received for the month. You must also report how often the money is received – weekly, every other week, twice a month, or monthly.

Earnings from Work includes the following:

- Salary, wages, cash bonuses
- Net income from self-employment (farm or business)

If you are in the U.S. Military, include:

- Basic pay and cash bonuses (do not include combat pay, Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance (FSSA) payments or privatized housing allowances)
- Allowances for off-base housing, food and clothing

Do not include income from SNAP, FDPIR, WIC, Federal education benefits and foster care payments.

Public Assistance/Child Support/Alimony includes the following:

- Unemployment benefits, Worker's compensation
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Pensions/Retirement/All Other Income includes the following:

- Social Security payments (including railroad retirement and black lung benefits)
- Private pensions or Disability benefits
- Regular income from trusts or estates, Annuities, Investment income, Earned interest, Rental income and *Regular* cash payments received from outside the household.

If you have no income, write "0" or leave the income field blank. By doing this, you are certifying there is no income to report.

Household Size: Enter the total number of people in your household.

Social Security Number: The adult signing the form must list the last four digits of their Social Security Number (SSN) or check the box to the right labeled "Check if no SSN."

Part 4: Complete this part. An adult must sign the form.

Part 5: This part is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility for free or reduced price meals. If you do not select race or ethnicity, one may be selected based on visual observation.

Do Not Fill Out the Section Below - For School Use Only

Annual Income Conversion:	Weekly X 52;	Every 2 weeks X 26;	Twice a month X 24;	Monthly X 12
Total Household Size: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Free <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced <input type="checkbox"/> Denied <input type="checkbox"/> Income <input type="checkbox"/> Income Reason for denial: <input type="checkbox"/> Categorically eligible: <input type="checkbox"/> Income too high <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP/TANF/FDPIR <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete application <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Child <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless/Migrant/Runaway: <i>(Official Documentation Required at School)</i>			
Total Income: _____ per				
<input type="checkbox"/> Year <input type="checkbox"/> Month <input type="checkbox"/> 2 X Mo <input type="checkbox"/> Every 2 Wks <input type="checkbox"/> Week				
Signature of Determining Official: _____		Date Approved: _____		
FOR THE VERIFICATION PROCESS ONLY:				Date Withdrawn From School: _____
Signature of Confirming Official: _____		Date Confirmed: _____		
Signature of Verifying Official: _____		Date Verified: _____		

Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

FEDERAL INCOME CHART for School Year 2024-25					
Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Twice per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	27,861	2,322	1,161	1,072	536
2	37,814	3,152	1,576	1,455	728
3	47,767	3,981	1,991	1,838	919
4	57,720	4,810	2,405	2,220	1,110
5	67,673	5,640	2,820	2,603	1,302
6	77,626	6,469	3,235	2,986	1,493
7	87,579	7,299	3,650	3,369	1,685
8	97,532	8,128	4,064	3,752	1,876
Each additional person:	9,509	830	415	383	192

The **Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act** requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the last four digits of the social security number of the adult household member who signs the application. The last four digits of the social security number are not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs. We may share your eligibility information with education, health and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules.

Non-Discrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online

at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 0-7442; or

Email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Sharing Information with Other Programs - Optional

Dear Parent/Guardian:

To save you time and effort, the information you gave on your Free and Reduced-Price School Meals Application may be shared with other programs for which your children may qualify.

For the following programs, we must have your permission to share your information. Sending in this form will not change whether your children get free or reduced price meals.

Yes! I **DO** want school officials to share information from my Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application with **All available programs**.

***This includes Scholastic, Academic and Athletic programs including the Activity Pass.**

If you checked "yes" to the box above, complete the following form to ensure that your information is shared for the child(ren) listed below. Your information will be shared only with the programs you checked.

Child's Name:	_____	School:	_____
Child's Name:	_____	School:	_____
Child's Name:	_____	School:	_____
Child's Name:	_____	School:	_____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

For more information, you may call **Nicole Riccobon** at **402-898-3430** or email at nicole.riccobon@ralstonschools.org

Return this form to: **Ralston Public Schools, 8545 Park Drive, Ralston, NE, 68127.**