For the 2026-2027 School Year Fountain-Fort Carson District 8 will provide no-cost breakfast and lunch for all students.

Research shows students perform better at school when they are not hungry. By providing breakfast and lunch to all students at no cost, we better support their learning.

Although all students will receive no-cost meals, it's still important for households to provide their income information when requested. Gathering this information allows Fountain-Fort Carson District 8 to receive the state and federal funding we qualify for. These funds go directly to schools to help cover the cost of meals and support after-school activities and other nutritional programs for students. Plus, qualifying households may be eligible for Summer EBT benefits, receive discounted school fees, class materials, bus passes, utilities support, and more. **Providing household income information ensures you and your school receive all available financial support.**

This packet contains more information and the form to provide your household income information. While the following pages may reference eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals, breakfast and lunch will be provided free to all students regardless of household income.

Our school meals follow U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines for healthy school meals. You can be confident your children are getting quality school meals while saving your family time and money.

For information on how to apply, please read the attached letter.

Information about Applying for Free or Reduced-Price School Meals

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Fountain-Fort Carson District 8 will offer breakfast and lunch to all students at no cost.

This packet includes an application for free or reduced-price meal benefits and instructions. You can also find applications at 425 W. Alabama Ave, Fountain, CO 80817, or apply online at **https://linqconnect.com/6ZG8ZT**. **Regardless of the determination, all students will receive these no-cost meals. However, this information is important to help ensure that eligible schools and families receive state and federal support.**

Below are common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

1. WHO QUALIFIES FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS UNDER FEDERAL GUIDELINES?
   a. All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), Medicaid or Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF/Colorado Works – Basic Cash Assistance or State Diversion), are eligible for free meals.
   b. Foster children under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals. Foster children may be added as a household member of the foster family if the foster family chooses to apply. Including foster children as household members may help other children qualify for benefits. If the foster family is not eligible, it does not prevent a foster child from receiving benefits.
   c. Children who qualify for their district's Head Start program are eligible for free meals.
   d. Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
   e. Children may receive free or reduced-price meals if their household's income is within the limits of 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.

FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2026 – 2027			
Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	$29,526	$2,461	$568
2	$40,034	$3,337	$770
3	$50,542	$4,212	$972
4	$61,050	$5,088	$1,175
5	$71,558	$5,964	$1,377
6	$82,066	$6,839	$1,579
7	$92,574	$7,715	$1,781
8	$103,082	$8,591	$1,983
Each additional person:	$10,508	$876	$203

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 any of these descriptions and have not already been notified that your children will receive free meals, please call or e-mail **Barbara Smith at bsmith@ffc8.org or (719) 382-1300.**

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: **Nutrition Services, 425 W. Alabama Ave Fountain, CO 80817, (719) 382-1334**

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 received carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household are missing from your eligibility notification, contact **Nutrition Services at (719) 382-1334** immediately.

5. CAN I APPLY ONLINE? Yes! You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application if you are able. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. Visit https://linqconnect.com/6ZG8ZT to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact **Nutrition Services at (719) 382-1334** 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 valid for that school year and for the first 30 days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school notified you that your child is eligible for the new school year.

7. I RECEIVE WIC. CAN MY CHILDREN RECEIVE FREE MEALS? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Please send in a completed free and reduced-price school meal application to determine free or reduced-price eligibility.

8. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? You may be selected to provide written proof of the household income you report on the application.

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: **Laura Hronik at (719) 382-1300 or 10665 Jimmy Camp Road Fountain, Colorado 80817**.

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. Immigration, migrant, citizenship or refugee status is not required to be provided during the application process, and families should continue to apply for free or reduced-price school meals. The application does require the last four numbers of a Social Security number or an indication that there is no Social Security number. Social Security number information is not reported to any organization outside of Fountain-Fort Carson District 8.

12. WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME? List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make $1,000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made $900, put down that you made $1,000 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. The last four digits of the Social Security Number of an adult household member (or an indication of "none") is required to process a complete income application.

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. The last four digits of the Social Security Number of an adult household member (or an indication of "none") is required to process a complete income application.

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, or receive Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance payments, 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 **Nutrition Services at (719) 382-1334 or fport@ffc8.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 other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office. Colorado PEAK is an online service to screen and apply for medical, food and cash assistance programs. It can be accessed at https://co.colorado.gov/colorado-peak.

If you have other questions or need help, contact **Nutrition Services at (719) 382-1334 or fport@ffc8.org.**

Sincerely,
Lauren Stuart
Director of Nutrition Service

Non-discrimination Statement:

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; or
2. **fax:**
   (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
   program.intake@usda.gov

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