MESA COUNTY VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT 51
2026-2027
Application Benefits – Information Letter to Households

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Mesa County Valley School District 51 continues Healthy School Meals for All in the 2026-2027 school year.

Just like in previous years, it's important for families to still provide their household income information when requested by their district. While meals will be provided for free to all students in participating schools, it's important for districts to continue gathering this information in order to receive full access to federal funding. 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, bus passes, utilities support, Rec Program discounts and more. Providing household income information ensures you and your school receive all available financial support.**

This packet includes an application for benefits, and a set of detailed instructions. You can also find applications at all school locations, at the Nutrition Services office located at 2280 East Main St. Grand Junction or apply online at **www.MySchoolApps.com.**
Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

1. WHO QUALIFIES FOR BENEFITS?
   a. All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF/Colorado Works – Basic Cash Assistance or State Diversion), are eligible for free meals.
   b. Foster children who are 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 districts 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 benefits if their household's income is within the limits of the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify for benefits 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, with another family 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 **HOMELESS (REACH)** at **(970) 254-5528 or MIGRANT** at **(970) 254-5495.**

3. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. *Use one Family Application for Benefits 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: **Connie Barteck, Nutrition Services, Mesa County Valley School District 51, 2280 E. Main St. Grand Junction, CO 81501. (970)254-5181**

4. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR MEAL BENEFITS? 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 **Connie Barteck at Nutrition Services (970)254-5181** or Connie.Barteck@d51schools.org 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 **www.MySchoolApps.com** to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact Connie Barteck at Nutrition Services (970)254-5181 or Connie.Barteck@d51schools.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 valid for that school year and for the first 30 days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless D51 Nutrition Services notified you that your child is eligible for the new school year.

7. I RECEIVE WIC. CAN MY CHILDREN RECEIVE MEAL BENEFITS? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for benefits. Please send in a completed Family Application for Benefits or apply online at **www.MySchoolApps.com**

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

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 benefits if the household income drops below the income limit.

10. WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION? You should talk to D51's Benefit Program Specialist. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: **Dan Sharp, Nutrition Services, 2280 E. Main St. Grand Junction, CO 81501. (970)254-5191.**

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 benefits. Immigration, migrant, citizenship or refugee status is not required to be provided during the application process and families should continue to apply for benefits. 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 Mesa County Valley School District 51.

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. 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 benefit 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 Connie Barteck at Nutrition Services (970)254-5181 or Connie.Barteck@d51schools.org to receive a second application or apply online at **www.MySchoolApps.com**

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 Colorado Peak.

If you have other questions or need help, contact Connie Barteck at Nutrition Services (970)254-5181 or Connie.Barteck@d51schools.org

Sincerely,

Connie Barteck

Eligibility Official
Mesa County Valley S.D. 51

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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: USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form 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
Mail Stop 9410, 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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