Wichita Public Schools
Nutrition Services

3850 N. Hydraulic • Wichita, KS 67219
P: (316)973-2160 • **F:** (316)973-2162

WICHITA PUBLIC SCHOOLS®

Online Free and Reduced Meal Benefits Application opens July 7th

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Children need healthy meals to learn. Wichita Public Schools offers healthy meals every school day. **Your child(ren) may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals. Your household is expected to pay full price for meals for your student(s) until your Free and Reduced Meal Benefits Application is processed; you will be notified when your application is approved or denied.** Please verify that your email and mailing address is correct at your child's school so you can be notified. If you do not receive notification within ten business days, contact Nutrition Services at 316.973.2160 or KidsEat@usd259.net.

The Wichita Public School meal prices for 2026-27 are as follows:

Meal Charges	**Elementary School**		**Middle School**		**High School**	
	Full Price	Reduced Price	Full Price	Reduced Price	Full Price	Reduced Price
Lunch	$ 2.85	$ .40	$ 3.00	$ .40	$ 3.15	$ .40
Breakfast	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE

Applications and detailed instructions are available online (at linqconnect.com) or your child's school. You may also contact Nutrition Services at 316.973.2160 or KidsEat@usd259.net to ask questions or to request an application. Detailed information is also available on our website www.usd259.org/KidsEat.

Common questions and answers to help you with the application process:

1. **Who can get free or reduced-price meals?**
   - Students in households receiving benefits from **Food Assistance (FA)**, **Temporary Assistance for Families (TAF)**, or **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.
   - Students who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible* for free meals.
   - Students may receive free or reduced-priced meals based on certain Medicaid benefits or if your household's income is within the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your students may qualify for free or reduced-priced meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

Further Action

*In most instances, some action is required, please see the QR code above for details

Federal Eligibility Income Chart for School Year 2026-27			
Household Size	**Annual**	**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 these descriptions and haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call Denise Fuoco (homeless liaison) at 316.973.4670 or Kristina Bowyer (migrant liaison) at 316.866.8187. You may also contact your child's school.

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. Please either complete and submit an application online by going to **LINQ Connect** at linqconnect.com or obtain and complete a paper application at your child's school. If you have already been notified by Nutrition Services that ALL your students qualify for free meals in 2026-27, do not complete an application. It is important to note, if you do not receive an eligibility notification for ALL students in your household by August 5th, and you were expecting to, please contact Nutrition Services at 316.973.2160 or KidsEat@usd259.net.

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 you do not receive an eligibility notification for ALL students in your household, or if you have any questions, please contact Nutrition Services at 316.973.2160 or KidsEat@usd259.net. Even though you may not need to complete an application, if you want to share your information to receive reduced school fees, refer to question 22 below.

5. **Can I apply online?** Yes! You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application. Starting July 7th, you may apply for meal benefits by going to **LINQ Connect** at linqconnect.com on your computer or phone (make sure you are using Google Chrome as your browser). You can also download the **LINQ Connect App** from your app store to complete and submit an online application. Make sure you enter "Wichita Public Schools" for your district. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application, but it will be processed **much quicker**. If you are planning to go to a school to enroll, you can submit the online application when you complete online enrollment at your child's school. You could elect to complete a paper meal application (which are available at all USD 259 schools) and turn it in at the school. All completed paper applications will be sent to Nutrition Services by the school, where it will be processed within 10 business days (for active students). If you have any questions, please contact Nutrition Services at 316.973.2160 or KidsEat@usd259.net.

6. **My child's application was approved last year or was Directly Certified last year. Do I need to fill out an application this year?** Yes. Your child's application/direct certification benefits are only good for that school year and for the first few days of this new school year, through 9/25/26. *Unless you are notified that your child is eligible by receiving a Nutrition Services Eligibility Notification Letter or you submit a new application that is approved for the new school year, you must pay full price for school meals for that child*.

7. **I get WIC. Can my children get free meals?** Students in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Please complete 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 or 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?** Contact Nutrition Services at 316.973.2160 or KidsEat@usd259.net. You may also ask for a hearing by calling or writing the Hearing Official: Amanda Sharshel, Executive Director Instructional Support, 903 E. Edgemoor, Wichita, KS 67218, 316.973.2160, asharshel@wichitapublicschools.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 (gross income) 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.

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 place 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, 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 paper application for my family?** You could use the online app or simply use a second application, fill in the additional household members and attach it to your application. Paper applications are available at your child's school. If you have any questions, please contact Nutrition Services at 316.973.2160 or KidsEat@usd259.net.

16. **My family needs more help. Are there other programs we might apply for?** To find out how to apply for Food Assistance (FA) or other assistance benefits, contact the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) 1-888-369-4777 or visit www.dcf.ks.gov.

17. **How will I be notified when my student's application has been processed?**
    - If you submitted your Free and Reduced Meal Benefits Application through your registered **LINQ Connect** account, then you will be able to see where your application is in the approval process, as well as view your status letter once approved in your **LINQ Connect** account.
    - If you supplied your email address on your Free and Reduced Meal Benefits Online Application, you will receive an email from LINQ with a status letter for your student when your application is processed.
    - If you didn't provide an email address on an application or ParentVue, and you didn't fill out an Online Meal Benefits Application through **LINQ Connect**, you will receive a status letter from Nutrition Services via US mail.

18. **What if I receive a status letter from Nutrition Services and not all of my children are listed?** If you do not receive a letter for all your children that will attend Wichita Public Schools, ***DO NOT** complete an application, please contact us at KidsEat@usd259.net or 973-2160 for further instruction*. If you have not received any letters and wish to apply for free or reduced-price meals, please complete an online or paper meal application.

19. **How do I pay for meals?** You can pay for meals by going to **LINQ Connect** at linqconnect.com on your computer or phone (make sure you are using Google Chrome as your browser) or you can download the **LINQ Connect App** from your app store. On the **LINQ Connect App**, you can apply for free and reduced meal benefits, pay for meals, track student purchases, check balances, receive low balance alerts, set spending limits, set no buy items, and transfer money between your linked students.

20. **Where do I pay for school fees?** You will still go to www.MyPaymentsPlus.com for school fees and activities, including Latchkey.

21. **Please refer to the School Board Policy - P7410 Collection of Nutrition Services Monies and Unpaid Meal Charges. Here are ways:**
    - You can view the policy on Wichita Public School's website (www.usd259.org)
    - You can view the policy on our Nutrition Services webpage www.usd259.org/KidsEat.
    - You can contact your school or the Nutrition Services Department to receive a paper copy of the policy.

22. **How do I Get Reduced-Priced Fees?** Complete information is available online at our website www.usd259.org/KidsEat. A parent can voluntarily present one of the following options to the bookkeeper to have their textbook fees waived:

- **LETTER OF ELIGIBILITY -** You can show the 2026-27 eligibility letter from your phone (in **LINQ Connect**), from your email, or bring a physical copy to the school.
- **LINQ CONNECT STUDENT STATUS -** You can show your student's eligibility status (with a Sept. 2026 expiration date) from your **LINQ Connect** account from your phone.
- **ONLINE APPLICATION CONFIRMATION -** You can show the online application confirmation (with Academic Year as 2026/2027) from your phone on your **LINQ Connect** account, as a screenshot, or bring a physical copy to the school.
- **NO PROOF AVAILABLE -** If you don't have any of the above readily available, the bookkeeper will look to see if you have completed a Consent for Disclosure and marked "yes" to share for reduction of fees. They will also look to see if your free and reduced meal benefits application was processed, and your status is available for viewing. If both of those have occurred, the bookkeeper can use your status to determine your reduced fees. This information is not available to the bookkeeper the day you apply. Otherwise, you will need to either pay full fees or use the "agreement to pay".

Free Breakfast for Students, Everyday! Every student at Wichita Public Schools can enjoy breakfast every day for free! School breakfast not only helps fuel learning, but it also saves time in the morning for families. Menus & Nutrition Information are available online, for breakfast and lunch, at **https://www.schoolcafe.com/WICHITAPUBLICSCHOOLS** or download the School Café app today.

If you have other questions or need help, please contact Nutrition Services at 316.973.2160 or KidsEat@usd259.net. Detailed information is also available on our website www.usd259.org/KidsEat.

Sincerely,

David Paul, Director
Nutrition Services

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

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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