HOW TO APPLY FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL MEALS

Please use these instructions to help you fill out the application for free or reduced-price school meals. You only need to submit one application per household, even if your children attend more than one school in Craven County Schools. The application must be filled out completely to certify your children for free or reduced-price school meals. 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 Chelsea Spradlin; 252-514-6360 or chelsea.spradlin@cravenk12.org

PLEASE USE A PEN (NOT A PENCIL) WHEN FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION AND DO YOUR BEST TO PRINT CLEARLY.

STEP A: LIST ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WHO ARE INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND STUDENTS UP TO AND INCLUDING GRADE 12

Tell us how many infants, children, and school students live in your household. They do NOT have to be related to you to be a part of your household.

Who should I list here? When filling out this section, please include ALL members in your household who are:

- Children age 18 or under AND are supported with the household's income;
- In your care under a foster arrangement, or qualify as homeless, migrant, or runaway youth;
- Students attending Craven County Schools, regardless of age.

1) List each child's name. Print each child's name. Use one line of the application for each child. If there are more children present than lines on the application, attach a second piece of paper with all required information for the additional children. **Is the child a student at Craven County Schools? Circle "S" for Student and "O" for Other children** that are not students to indicate the child's role in the household.	**2) For each student in the household,** enter the **name of the school** and the student's current grade.	**3) If applicable, please circle if a Child/Student is Homeless (H), Migrant (M), Runaway (R) or Foster (F)** Foster children who live with you may count as members of your household and should be listed on your application.	**4) Report all income earned or received by children.** Report the combined gross income for ALL children listed in your household in the box marked "Child Income." Only count foster children's income if you are applying for them together with the rest of your household. ***What is Child Income?*** Child income is money received from outside your household that is paid DIRECTLY to your children. Many households do not have any child income.

STEP B: DO ANY HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE IN FNS, Work First Cash Assistance/TANF, OR FDPIR?

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 school meals:

- Food and Nutrition Services (FNS formerly Food Stamps).
- Work First Cash Assistance (formerly Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF).
- The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).

1) If no one in your household participates in any of the above listed programs: • Leave **STEP B** blank and go to **STEP C.**	**2) If anyone in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:** • Write a case number for FNS, Work First Cash Assistance/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: Craven County Department of Social Services; (252) 636-4900 • Go to **STEP E**.

STEP C: REPORT INCOME FOR ALL ADULT HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

How do I report my income?

- Use the charts titled **"Sources of Income for Adults"** and **"Sources of Income for Children,"** printed on the back side of the application 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
- 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 fields 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 local officials suspect that your household income was reported incorrectly, your application will be investigated.
- Circle how often each type of income is received using the frequency to the right of each field.

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 A.**

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)." Do not list any household members you listed in **STEP A**.	**2) Report earnings from work.** Report 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. ***What if I am self-employed?*** Report income from that work as a net amount. This is calculated by subtracting the total operating expenses of your business from its gross receipts or revenue.	**3) Report income from public assistance/child support/alimony.** Report 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) Report income from pensions/retirement/all other income.** Report all income that applies in the "Pensions/Retirement/ All Other Income" field on the application.

STEP D: REPORT HOUSEHOLD TOTAL AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

1) Report 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 A** and **STEP C**. 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.	**2) 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 "I do not have a Social Security Number."

STEP E: ATTESTATION - 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 promising that all information has been truthfully and completely reported. Before completing this section, please also make sure you have read the privacy and civil rights statements on the back of the application.

1) Provide your contact information. Write your current address on the line provided if this information is available. If you have no permanent address, this does not make your children ineligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Sharing a phone number, email address, or both is optional, but helps us reach you quickly if we need to contact you.	**2) Print and sign your name.** Print the name of the adult signing the application and that person signs in the box "Head of Household Signature."	**3) Write today's date.** In the space provided, write today's date in the box.

STEP F: CHILDREN'S ETHNIC AND RACIAL IDENTITIES (Optional)

Share children's racial and ethnic identities. We ask you to share information about your children's race and ethnicity. This field is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals.