

## **PUBLIC RELEASE**

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POSTED ON: Robertson County Schools Website

### **Public Release**

**Robertson County School Nutrition Program** today announced its policy for free and reduced-price meals for children served in schools under the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program. For School Year 2026-2027. Robertson County Schools will participate partially in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). All children at the following schools will receive breakfast, lunch [and snack, if available] at no charge under this provision:

Bransford Early Learning Center  
Coopertown Elementary School  
Crestview Elementary School  
Jo Byrns High School  
Phoenix Academy  
Watauga Elementary School

Cheatham Pari Elementary School  
Coopertown Middle School  
Jo Byrns Elementary School  
Krisle Elementary School  
Springfield High School  
Westside Elementary School

CEP is a key provision of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, which allows schools in low-income areas to eliminate school meal applications and serve breakfast and lunch at no charge to all enrolled students. Breakfast and lunch meals will follow the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines for healthy school meals, so please encourage students to participate.

Families at the following schools are encouraged to submit a free and reduced-price meal application to determine their eligibility for free and reduced-price meals.

East Robertson Elementary School

East Robertson High School

Greenbrier Elementary School

Greenbrier High School

Greenbrier Middle School  
Robert F. Woodall Elementary School  
White House Heritage High School

Innovation Academy  
White House Heritage Elementary School

Children need healthy meals to learn. Robertson County Schools offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast and lunch meals will follow the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines for healthy school meals, so please encourage students to participate. "In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability."

Breakfast costs \$1.00; lunch costs for K-5 \$2.50; for 6-8 \$2.75; for 9-12 \$3.00. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals. Reduced-price is -0- for breakfast and -0- for lunch. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

Parents or guardians who need further information may contact Amy Castle, Child Nutrition Program Administrative Assistant at [amy.castle@rcstn.net](mailto:amy.castle@rcstn.net) or by calling 615-384-5588.

**FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2026- 2027**

|                         | Federal Poverty Guidelines | Reduced-Price Meals |         |                 |        | Free Meals |         |                 |        |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---------|-----------------|--------|------------|---------|-----------------|--------|
| Household size          | Annual                     | Yearly              | Monthly | Every two weeks | Weekly | Yearly     | Monthly | Every two weeks | Weekly |
| 1                       | 15,960                     | 29,526              | 2,461   | 1,136           | 568    | 20,748     | 1,729   | 798             | 399    |
| 2                       | 21,640                     | 40,034              | 3,337   | 1,540           | 770    | 28,132     | 2,345   | 1,082           | 541    |
| 3                       | 27,320                     | 50,542              | 4,212   | 1,944           | 972    | 35,516     | 2,960   | 1,366           | 683    |
| 4                       | 33,000                     | 61,050              | 5,088   | 2,349           | 1,175  | 42,900     | 3,575   | 1,650           | 825    |
| 5                       | 38,680                     | 71,558              | 5,964   | 2,753           | 1,377  | 50,284     | 4,191   | 1,934           | 967    |
| 6                       | 44,360                     | 82,066              | 6,839   | 3,157           | 1,579  | 57,668     | 4,806   | 2,218           | 1,109  |
| 7                       | 50,040                     | 92,574              | 7,715   | 3,561           | 1,781  | 65,052     | 5,421   | 2,502           | 1,251  |
| 8                       | 55,720                     | 103,082             | 8,591   | 3,965           | 1,983  | 72,436     | 6,037   | 2,786           | 1,393  |
| Each additional person: | 5,680                      | 10,508              | 876     | 405             | 203    | 7,384      | 616     | 284             | 142    |

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE 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 the chart above.
- All children in households receiving benefits from **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**, the **Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)**, or **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**, are eligible for free meals.
- All children in the households receiving benefits from Medicaid may be eligible for free or reduced meals.
- Foster children who 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 who are directly certified are eligible to receive free meals.
- When known to Robertson County Schools, households will be notified of their children's eligibility for free meals based on their participation (or a household member's participation) in the: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR); or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), if the State program meets Federal standards.
- When known to Robertson County Schools, households will be notified of any child's eligibility for free meals based on the individual child's designation as Other Source Categorically Eligible, as defined by law. Children are determined Other Source Categorically Eligible if they are:
  - homeless,
  - migrant,
  - runaway,
  - foster child, or
- enrolled in Head Start or an eligible pre-kindergarten program (see: SP 40-2013: Q&As Regarding the Participation of Head Start Programs in Child Nutrition Programs, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/qas-regarding-participation-head-startprograms-child-nutrition-programs-0>).

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 have not been told your children will get free meals, please call or email Jennifer Dusky at 615-382-8917 or [Jennifer.dusky@rcstn.net](mailto:Jennifer.dusky@rcstn.net).

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 your school cafeteria manager or to Amy Castle as indicated above.

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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 Amy Castle, School Nutrition Program Administrative Assistant at 615-384-5588 or [amy.castle@rcstn.net](mailto:amy.castle@rcstn.net) 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.linkconnect.com](http://www.linkconnect.com) and follow the prompts to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact Amy Castle, School Nutrition Program Administrative Assistant at 615-384-5588 or [amy.castle@rcstn.net](mailto:amy.castle@rcstn.net) 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, through September 15. 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 submit an application.

8. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED?

Yes. In accordance with program regulations, school officials will be verifying the income of some households at some time during the school year. Selected households will be requested to provide income documentation in order to continue receiving free and reduced-price meals.

9. IF I DO NOT 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 Dr. Danny Weeks, Director of Schools at 615-384-5588 or by email at [d.weeks@rcstn.net](mailto:d.weeks@rcstn.net) or at 800 M S Courts Boulevard, Springfield, TN 37172.

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 \$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 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. DO I HAVE TO PROVIDE MY SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER?

Only the last four (4) digits of the social security number of the household's primary wage earner or another adult household member (or an indication of "none") is required.

15. MAY I DECLINE BENEFITS?

Yes. Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact Robertson County Schools if they choose to decline the free meal benefits.

16. WHAT IF ALL CHILDREN ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS ARE NOT ON THE NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY LETTER?

If children or households receive benefits under Assistance Programs or Other Source Categorically Eligible Programs and are not listed on the notice of eligibility and are not notified by the school of their free meal benefits, the parent or guardian should contact the school or submit an income application.

17. 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.

18. WHAT IF THERE IS NOT 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 Amy Castle, School Nutrition Program Administrative Assistant at 615-384-5588 or [amy.castle@rcstn.net](mailto:amy.castle@rcstn.net) to receive a second application.

19. 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, contact your local assistance office or call **(866) 311-4287**.

If you have other questions or need help, call 615-384-5588.

Sincerely,

Patsi Gregory, Supervisor, School Nutrition Program, Robertson County Schools

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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