

# School Meals and Summer EBT Application Explainer

## What are free and reduced-price school meals?

The federal National School Lunch Program provides the ability for schools to offer meals at no cost or at a reduced-price. In New Jersey, the co-pay for reduced-price eligible students is covered by state funding. This allows those meals to be provided at no cost to students eligible for reduced-price meals.

## Who qualifies for free meals in New Jersey?

- All children in households receiving benefits from NJ SNAP or NJ TANF/WorkFirst-NJ 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.
- 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 may receive free or reduced price meals if your household's income is within the limits on the New Jersey Expanded Income Guidelines. Your child may qualify for free or reduced-price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

### **New Jersey Expanded Income Guidelines (NJEIE)**

New Jersey participants qualify for meals at no charge if the household income falls at or below the limits on this chart and above the limits on the Federal Reduced Price Meal chart.

**NJEIE does not apply to schools/sites participating in CEP.**

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
- 1 -	35,056	2,922	1,461	1,349	675
- 2 -	47,376	3,948	1,974	1,823	912
- 3 -	59,696	4,975	2,488	2,296	1,148
- 4 -	72,016	6,002	3,001	2,770	1,385
- 5 -	84,336	7,028	3,514	3,244	1,622
- 6 -	96,656	8,055	4,028	3,718	1,859
- 7 -	108,976	9,082	4,541	4,192	2,096
- 8 -	121,296	10,108	5,054	4,666	2,333
Each add'l household member	12,320	1,027	514	474	237

~When all income is reported with the same frequency (i.e., all reported as weekly, every 2 weeks, monthly, or twice a month), total the income and the number of household members and compare it to this chart. Do not annualize if all income reported is the same frequency.

~When income is reported with different frequencies, annualize the number, total the income and the number of household members and compare it to the annual income column on this chart.

**Annual Income Conversion: Weekly x 52, Every 2 weeks x 26, Twice a month x 24, and Monthly x 12**

## 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 send in an application.

*How do I apply for free or reduced-price school meals?*

Each school and district must provide a paper copy of the “School Meals and Summer EBT Application.” Online applications may be available as well; families will need to contact their school or food service department for information on how to apply.

*Do I need to fill out an application for each child?*

No, use one application for all students in your household.

*Why should I apply for free school meals?*

Applying for school meals helps families *and* schools. Families can receive no- or low-cost meals and discounted school fees, bus passes, utilities, etc. By applying for school meals, families are also helping their school and district receive additional school funding, qualify for grants and additional nutrition programs.

*Is the information provided in the application secure and confidential?*

Yes, the information provided during the application process is confidential and protected. All sponsors collecting and processing meal applications must follow strict guidelines for the release of student or meal eligibility information (including private student information and/or eligibility status). School meals are not part of the public charge rule.

*Will the meal application affect my child’s access to school meals?*

Yes. Completing the meal application is how we determine a student’s eligibility for free school meals. We want to reassure you that your children will continue to have access to school meals.

*How do I know if I need to fill out a form?*

Meal applications must be returned for the purpose of verifying student meal eligibility. If you did not receive a form, please contact our school's front office to obtain a copy.

If you participate in any programs like SNAP, TANF, etc. you may not need to complete an application and should have received a letter stating that your children were Directly Certified to participate in the meal program at no charge. Please verify this with your child’s school.