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## OSPI NEWS RELEASE: Eligible Families Encouraged to Apply for Free and Reduced-Price Meal Programs

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction sent this bulletin at 09/13/2018 08:40 AM PDT

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**OSPI** | Chris Reykdal  
State Superintendent

## Eligible Families Encouraged to Apply for Free and Reduced-Price Meal Programs

**OLYMPIA—September 13, 2018**—Washington public schools play a vital role in children’s health by providing free and reduced-price meals to students in need. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) administers the following United States (U.S.) Department of Agriculture nutrition programs: National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Special Milk Program.

The application process for participation in school meal programs is simple and confidential. All households with students enrolled in public K–12 schools receive application packets at the beginning of the school year. Households with incomes below certain levels (see the tables below) are encouraged to apply for any or all of the administered programs. The application packet provides instructions and directions on where to send the applications. Application review and determinations are made within 10 operating days of receipt of the application. Households denied eligibility can appeal the decision by contacting their school.

Applications can be submitted any time during the school year. Households that experience a change in income are encouraged to apply.

Students receiving help through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the Basic Food Program – as well as all other students in the same household – automatically qualify for free meals. The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) provides OSPI with a list of children who receive these services to facilitate automatic eligibility. If a household chooses to decline the free meal benefits after they are notified of their children’s eligibility, they must contact the school.

DSHS also provides OSPI with a list of children participating in certain Medicaid programs. All other students in the household can automatically qualify for free or reduced-price meals and eligibility can be extended.

Children in foster care are also eligible for free meal benefits. Children placed in foster care by DSHS are included in the list provided to OSPI. In households where children in foster care reside, all other students in the household may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals based on household size and income. In these situations, households may submit an application.

Students experiencing homelessness and migrant students, households taking part in Food Distribution Program on Native Reservations, and students in Head Start and the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program are also eligible for free meals. Contact your child’s school for more information.

Eligibility lasts from the date of approval up to the first 30 operating days of the next school year or until a family member contacts the school or district.

Households needing assistance with application materials in languages other than English should contact their school for assistance.

The income guidelines listed below are used to determine the eligibility of children to receive free or reduced-price meals or free milk. Washington state pays the cost of lunch for public school students eligible for reduced-price meals in grades K–3 and the cost of breakfast for public school students eligible for reduced-price meals in grades K–12.

### **U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Program Income Guidelines** July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019

#### FREE MEALS:

<b>Household Size</b>	<b>Annual</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Twice per month</b>	<b>Every two Weeks</b>	<b>Weekly</b>
<b>1</b>	\$15,782	\$1,316	\$658	\$607	\$304
<b>2</b>	21,398	1,784	892	823	412
<b>3</b>	27,014	2,252	1,126	1,039	520
<b>4</b>	32,630	2,720	1,360	1,255	628
<b>5</b>	38,246	3,188	1,594	1,471	736
<b>6</b>	43,862	3,656	1,828	1,687	844
<b>7</b>	49,478	4,124	2,062	1,903	952
<b>8</b>	55,094	4,592	2,296	2,119	1,060

**MORE\*** +5,616 +468 +234 +216 +108

REDUCED-PRICE MEALS:

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice per month	Every two Weeks	Weekly
<b>1</b>	\$22,459	\$1,872	\$936	\$864	\$432
<b>2</b>	30,451	2,538	1,269	1,172	586
<b>3</b>	38,443	3,204	1,602	1,479	740
<b>4</b>	46,435	3,870	1,935	1,786	893
<b>5</b>	54,427	4,536	2,268	2,094	1,047
<b>6</b>	62,419	5,202	2,601	2,401	1,201
<b>7</b>	70,411	5,868	2,934	2,709	1,355
<b>8</b>	78,403	6,534	3,267	3,016	1,508
<b>More*</b>	+7,733	+645	+323	+298	+149

\* For each additional household member, add this amount

If you have questions about eligibility, contact your child's school.

Schools with more than 25 percent of the enrolled K-4 students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals are required to operate the National School Lunch Program. In addition, schools with more than 40 percent of enrolled students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals are required to operate the School Breakfast Program.

**For more information**

- [Child Nutrition programs in Washington state](#)
- [Applications for free and reduced-price meals](#)

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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 Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.*

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), 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: mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; fax: (202) 690-7442; or email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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## Contact

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## About OSPI

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is the primary agency charged with overseeing K-12 education in Washington state. Led by State Superintendent Chris Reykdal, OSPI works with the state's 295 school districts and nine educational service districts to administer basic education programs and implement education reform on behalf of more than one million public school students.

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