Children need healthy meals to learn. Winchendon Public Schools is providing **free meals to all students** under the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs (Seamless Summer Option or Summer Food Service Program). Children enrolled in the district (or in the community) are eligible for these **free meals regardless of eligibility** through June 30, 2022. Even though meals are free, it is recommended that school districts still collect applications and notify households of the results.

If you are not receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and have been approved for free school meals, you may be eligible for SNAP which provides monthly financial assistance to purchase groceries to Massachusetts residents who qualify. Find out if you are eligible for SNAP today by calling Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333 and a counselor can help you apply over the phone. You can also apply on your own online at DTA Connect: https://dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/apply

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

## *Who can get free or reduced price meals?*

* + All children in households receiving benefits from **MA SNAP**, **MA TAFDC, FDPIR, or specific categories of Medicaid** 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 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 this chart.

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| --- |
| **FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2021-2022** |
| **Household size** | **Yearly** | **Monthly** | **Weekly** |
| 1 | $23,828 | $1,986 | $459 |
| 2 | $32,227 | $2,686 | $620 |
| 3 | $40,626 | $3,386 | $782 |
| 4 | $49,025 | $4,086 | $943 |
| 5 | $57,424 | $4,786 | $1,105 |
| 6 | $65,823 | $5,486 | $1,266 |
| 7 | $74,222 | $6,186 | $1,428 |
| 8 | $82,621 | $6,886 | $1,589 |
| Each additional person: | +8,399 | +700 | +162 |

## 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 or e-mail **mmurphy@winchendonk12.org.** 978-616-1459, Marilyn Murphy.

## 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: **Marilyn Murphy, 175 Grove Street, Winchendon, Ma. 01475, 978-616-1459,** mmurphy@winchendonk12.org**. ]**.

## 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 **(see above)** immediately.

## 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 **winchendonk12.org.** to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact (see contact information above, **if you have any questions about the online application.**

## 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. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.

## 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 a completed application.

## *Will the information I give be checked?*

Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.

## *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 and reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.

## *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: mmurphy@winchendonk12.org**. 978-616-1459, Marilyn Murphy**.

## *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.

## *What if my income is not always the same?*

List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make $1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made $900, put down that you made $1000 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.

## 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.

## *We are in the military. Do we report our income differently?*

Your basic pay and cash bonuses must be reported as income. Ifyou 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.

## WHAT IF THERE ISN’T 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 **[Marilyn Murphy, 175 Grove St. Winchendon, 978-616-1459,** mmurphy@winchendonk12.org**. to receive a second application.**

## *My family needs more help. Are there other programs we might apply for?*

To find out how to apply for **MA SNAP** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call **the MA SNAP Hotline at 1-866-950-3663**.

If you have other questions or need help, call **978-616-1459**.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Murphy
Food Services Secretary
8/27/2021

*The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not submit all needed information, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the last four digits of the social security number of the primary wage earner or other adult household member who signs the application. The social security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals, and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs.*

*We may share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews, and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules.*

**Non-Discrimination Statement:**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

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](https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf), (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/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
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

**Limited English Proficiency Taglines Cover Page**

Insert local phone numbers below where a parent who is not proficient in English and/or is hearing impaired could call to get access to program information. This should be available at the school or district level where a parent can go to get any vital information about their child’s education experience.

ATTENTION: If you speak [insert language], language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx (TTY: 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx).

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| **Spanish**ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx (TTY: 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx). |
| **Vietnamese**CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số 1-xxxxxx-xxxx (TTY: 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx). |
| **Mandarin Chinese**注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx (TTY：1-xxx-xxx-xxxx）。 |
| **Portuguese**ATENÇÃO: Se fala português, encontram-se disponíveis serviços linguísticos, grátis. Ligue para 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx (TTY: 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx). |
| **Russian**ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода.Звоните 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx (телетайп: 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx). |
| **Haitian Creole**ATANSYON: Si w pale Kreyòl Ayisyen, gen sèvis èd pou lang ki disponib gratis pou ou. Rele 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx (TTY: 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx). |
| [Insert language, as needed] |



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 **PUBLIC MEDIA RELEASE TEMPLATE**

**Winchendon Public Schools** will be participating inthe **National School Lunch Program and/or the School Breakfast Program**. As part of this program, **all our public schools** will offer healthy meals every school day. Breakfast will cost (0.00), lunch will cost **(0.00)**. Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals. Reduced price meals cost **[0.00]** for breakfast and **[0.00]** for lunch. **The USDA will be offering free breakfast and lunch for all public school children again in this upcoming school year. We are requesting that the breakfast and lunch applications are filled out as usual, as we need the status for funds associated with school academic programs, athletics programs, etc.**

Qualifications for children to receive free or reduced price meals include: belonging to a household whose income is at or below the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines, belonging to a household that receives public assistance, or if the child is homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, or participates in a Head Start or Even Start pre-K program.

Household size and income criteria are used to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits if the household does not receive assistance or the children are not in the other categories mentioned above. Children can get free or reduced-price meals if the household’s gross income falls at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guideline chart.

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| 5 | $57,424 | $4,786 | $1,105 |
| 6 | $65,823 | $5,486 | $1,266 |
| 7 | $74,222 | $6,186 | $1,428 |
| 8 | $82,621 | $6,886 | $1,589 |
| Each additional person: | +8,399 | +700 | +162 |

To apply for free or reduced-price meals, house­holds can fill out the application and return it to the school unless the household has already received notification that their children are approved for free meals this year. Application forms are being distributed to all households with a letter informing households of the availability of free and reduced-price meals for their children and what is required to complete on the application. Paper applications will be available at all of our public school’s offices upon request. Applications also are avail­able online at winchendonk12.org., look under, Parents information, click on Chartwells and follow the instructions given.

Only one application is required for all children in the household and the information provided on the appli­ca­tion will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and verification of data. Applications may be verified at any time during the school year by the school or other program officials. An application for free or reduced-price benefits cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions. In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability.

Families can apply for benefits at any time. If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the Federal Guidelines. Contact **Marilyn Murphy** at any time to request an application.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price policy, **Marilyn Murphy,** will review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the official may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to **Thaddeus King, Interim Superintendent of Schools, 175 Grove Street, Winchendon, Ma. 01475**. 978-297-0031,

When known to **Winchendon Public Schools** households will be notified of their children’s eligibility for free meals if they are members of households receiving assistance from 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.

An application is not required for free meal benefits for Assistance Program participants and all of the children in the household are eligible for free meal benefits. If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, or if a household does not receive a notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school to have free meal benefits extended to them. Participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals, but they will need to turn in an application including household size and total income.

When known to **Winchendon Public Schools,** households will also be notified of any child’s eligibility for free meals if the individual child is considered “Other Source Categorically Eligible”, because the child is categorized, as defined by law as:

* Foster
* Homeless,
* Migrant,
* Runaway,
* Enrolled in an eligible Head Start, or
* Enrolled in an eligible pre-kindergarten class.

If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school about their eligibility through the list above, or should submit an income application.

Households notified of their children’s eligibility must contact the school if the household chooses to decline the benefits.

For more information, you may call **Marilyn Murphy** at 978-616-1459or e-mail at **mmurphy@winchendonk12.org**.

**Non-Discrimination Statement:**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

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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.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.