

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION LETTER FOR WEB-BASED APPLICATIONS
Frequently Asked Questions About Free and Reduced Price School Meals

Date: 07/24/2023

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Winterset Community School District offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs \$2.00; lunch costs K-3rd grade \$2.75, 4-12 grade \$3.00. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Reduced price is \$.30 for breakfast and \$.40 for lunch. Extra milk 1/2 pint is \$.50. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?

*All children in households receiving benefits from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or the Family Investment Program (FIP), 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 at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. (See these guidelines on our Web Site under Food Service)

2. SHOULD I COMPLETE AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?

No, but please read the letter carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your notification, contact: Jayne Ayala, 515-462-2718, jayala@winterset.k12.ia.us immediately as eligibility for free or reduced price meals is extended to all school age children in a household. If you did not receive a letter from the school, but received a Free Lunch Notice from DHHS, submit this letter to your children's school. You may add any students living in your household who are not listed on the letter. Also, if someone in your household receives food assistance and you did not receive either of these letters, you may complete an application listing the case number as this will qualify all school age children in your household for free meals. If you were informed that your children will get reduced price meals automatically, see the income guidelines on our website under Food Service and if you feel you would qualify for free meal benefits, complete an application for free and reduced meals.

3. CAN I APPLY ON-LINE? Yes, all Winterset School applications are done online. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information. Visit www.winterset.k12.ia.us to begin or learn more about the online application process. Contact Jayne Ayala, 303 Wambold Dr., Winterset, IA 50273, 515-462-2718 or email jayala@winterset.k12.ia.us if you have any questions about the online application.

4. WHAT IF I HAVE FOSTER CHILDREN? Households with foster and non-foster children may choose to include the foster child as a household member, as this may help other children in the household qualify for benefits. If the foster family is not eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits, that does not prevent a foster child from receiving free meal benefits.

5. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN QUALIFY AS HOMELESS, RUNAWAY OR MIGRANT ? Do the members of your household lack a permanent address? Are you staying together in a shelter, hotel, or other temporary housing? Does your family relocate on a seasonal basis? Are there children living with you who have chosen to leave their prior family or household? Yes, children who meet the definition of homeless runaway, or migrant qualify for free meals. Please call or e-mail Natalie Montross @ 515-462-3320, or nmontross@winterset.k12.ia.us to see if your child(ren) qualify, if you have not been informed that they will get free meals.

6. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. Complete the Web-based Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals for all students in your household. We cannot approve an application unless complete eligibility information is submitted, so be sure to complete all required information.

7. 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 until October 4 of the next year. You must fill out a new application unless the school has told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. When the carry-over period ends, unless you are notified that your children will receive free meals, or you submit a new application that is approved, the children must pay full price for school meals.

8. I GET WIC. CAN MY CHILD(REN) GET FREE MEALS? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please fill out an on-line application.

9. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A US CITIZEN? Yes. You, your child(ren) or other household members do not have to be a U.S. citizen to qualify for free or reduced price meals.

10. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes, we may ask you to send written proof of the household income your report. You are not required to provide proof with your on-line application.
11. 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 or reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit, if your household size goes up, or if you start getting Food Assistance, FIP or other benefits.
12. 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: Cammy Leners, 303 Wambold Dr., Winterset, 515-462-2718.
13. WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME? List the amount that you normally get. For example, if you normally get \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only got \$900, put down that you get \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but not if you get it only sometimes. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.
14. WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT? Household members may not receive some types of income we ask your 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 field 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.
15. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY, DO WE INCLUDE OUR HOUSING ALLOWANCE AS INCOME ? 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, 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. All other allowances must be included in your gross income. There are currently no active Military Housing Projects in Iowa. For a listing of Military Housing Projects by state visit the following web site: <http://www.acq.osd.mil/housing/mhpi.htm>. Any additional combat pay resulting fro deployment is also excluded from income.
16. DO I HAVE TO PROVIDE BY SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER? Only the last four digits of the Social Security Number of the household's primary wage earner or another adult household member (or an indication of "none") is needed.
17. WHO CAN GET FREE MILK? If your school participates in the Special Milk Program for half day kindergarten, your kindergarten child may be eligible for free milk. (Winterset Community School District does not participate in this program.) Children who buy extra milk with a meal or if they eat breakfast or lunch and have an afternoon milk break, are not eligible to receive free milk.
18. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for Food Assistance or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1-877-347-5678. Your child(ren) may be eligible for other benefits including Hawki (children's health insurance), or for a waiver of school fees. Please read the information included in the on-line application for Hawki information. Please contact the Administration office, 515-462-2718, for information about Hawki and the school fee waiver form.
19. CAN CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES GET FOOD SUBSTITUTIONS? If a child has a disability, as determined by a licensed medical professional, and the disability prevents the child from eating the regular school meal, the school will make substitutions prescribed by the licensed medical professional. If a substitution is needed, there will be no extra charge for the meal. Please note, however, that the school is not required to make a substitution for a food allergy, unless it meets the definition of disability. Please call the school for further information.
20. DO I NEED TO REPORT MY RACE AND ETHNICITY? It is optional to complete the racial/ethnic portion of the application however if you do not select race or ethnicity, one will be selected for you based on visual observation.
21. WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A COMPUTER AND NEED HELP WITH THE ON-LINE APPLICATION? There are computer kiosks at each of the Winterset School Buildings and also at the Administration Building for you to use. The staff is happy to assist anyone needing help with the on-line process. Paper applications can be obtained at the WCSD Administration Office, 303 Wambold Dr., Winterset.
22. TRANSLATED APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE AT: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/translated-applications>.

If you have other questions or need help, call Jayne Ayala at 515-462-2718.

Sincerely,

Jayne Ayala
Winterset Community School District
Administrative Assistant/Registrar
303 Wambold Dr.
Winterset, IA 50273
515-462-2718

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 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 (SNAP), Family Investment Program (FIP) 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.

USDA Nondiscrimination 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, (AD-3027) found online at: 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:

- (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: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Iowa Nondiscrimination Statement

It is the policy of this CNP provider not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, or religion in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code section 216.6, 216.7, and 216.9. If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by this CNP Provider, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, Grimes State Office building, 400 E. 14th St. Des Moines, IA 50319-1004; phone number 515-281-4121, 800-457-4416; website: <https://icrc.iowa.gov/>.