FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Bentonville Public Schools** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs \$2.05; lunch costs (K-6) \$2.85 & (7-12) \$3.05. **Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals**. According to Act 656, for the 23-24 School year, students qualifying for reduced meals will no longer be charged the copay. This packet includes an application for free or reduced price meal benefits, and a set of detailed instructions. 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), 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.

FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2023-2024						
Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly			
1	26,973	2,248	519			
2	36,482	3,041	702			
3	45,991	3,833	885			
4	55,500	4,625	1,068			
5	65,009	5,418	1,251			
6	74,518	6,210	1,434			
7	84,027	7,003	1,616			
8	93,536	7,795	1,799			
Each additional person:	9,509	793	183			

- 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 haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail Christie Jay @ 479-254-5026 or cjay@bentonvillek12.org.
- 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: Annette Bunton, 400 NW 2nd
 Street, Bentonville, AR 72712, 479-254-5095 or abunton@bentonvillek12.org.
- 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 Annette Bunton, 400 NW 2nd Street, Bentonville, AR 72712, 479-254-5095 or abunton@bentonvillek12.org.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 bentonville.familyportal.cloud to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact: Annette Bunton, 400 NW 2nd Street, Bentonville, AR 72712, 479-254-5095 or abunton@bentonvillek12.org.

- 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 26,2023. 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 <u>may</u> be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please send in an application.
- 8. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
- 9. 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.
- 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: Debbie Jones, 500 Tiger Blvd., Bentonville, AR 72712, call 479-254-5000 or email: djones@bentonvillek12.org.
- 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 \$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.
- 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 <u>also</u> be counted as zeroes. Please be careful when leaving income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.
- 14. 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.
- 15. 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: **Annette Bunton**, **400 NW 2**nd **Street**, **Bentonville**, **AR 72712**, **479-254-5095 or abunton@bentonvillek12.org**.
- 16. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**, contact your local assistance office or call **501-682-8276**.

If you have other questions or need help, call **479-254-5095**. Sincerely,

Annette Bunton

Nutrition Commission No.

Nutrition Service Manager

HOW TO APPLY FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS

Please use these instructions to help you fill out the application for free or reduced price school meals. You only need to submit one application per household, you are not sure what to do next, please contact: Annette Bunton, 400 NW 2nd Street, Bentonville, AR 72712, 479-254-5095 or abunton@bentonvillek12.org. reduced price school meals. Please follow these instructions in order! Each step of the instructions is the same as the steps on your application. If at any time even if your children attend more than one school in Bentonville District. The application must be filled out completely to certify your children for free or

PLEASE USE A PEN (NOT A PENCIL) WHEN FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION AND DO YOUR BEST TO PRINT CLEARLY.

STEP 1: LIST ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WHO ARE INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND STUDENTS UP TO AND INCLUDING GRADE 12

Tell us how many infants, children, and school students live in your household. They do NOT have to be related to you to be a part of your household.

Who should I list here? When filling out this section, please include ALL members in your household who are:

- Children age 18 or under AND are supported with the household's income;
- In your care under a foster arrangement, or qualify as homeless, migrant, or runaway youth;
- Students attending **Bentonville Public Schools**, regardless of age.

A) List each child's name. Print each child's name. Use one line of the application for each child. When printing names, write one letter in each box. Stop if you run out of space. If there are more children present than lines on the application, attach a second piece of paper with all required information for the additional children.

B) Is the child a student at
Bentonville Public Schools? Mark
'Yes' or 'No' under the column
titled "Student" to tell us which
children attend Bentonville Public
Schools. If vou marked 'Yes,' write

Schools. If you marked 'Yes,' write the grade level of the student in the 'Grade' column to the right.

C) Do you have any foster children? If any children listed are foster children, mark the "Foster Child" box next to the child's name. If you are ONLY applying for foster children, after finishing STEP 1, go to STEP 4.

Foster children who live with you may count as members of your household and should be listed on your application. If you are applying for both foster and non-foster children, go to step 3.

D) Are any children homeless, migrant, or runaway? If you believe any child listed in this section meets this description, mark the "Homeless, Migrant, Runaway" box next to the child's name and complete all steps of the application.

STEP 2: DO ANY HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE IN SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)?

If anyone in your household (including you) currently participates in one or more of the assistance programs listed below, your children are eligible for free school meals:

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- A) If no one in your household participates SNAP:Leave STEP 2 blank and go to STEP 3.
- B) If anyone in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:
- Write a case number or identified for SNAP. You only need to provide one case number. If you participate in SNAP and do not know your case number or identified, contact: 479-273-9011. Go to STEP 4.

STEP 3: REPORT INCOME FOR ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

How do I report my income?

- Use the charts titled "Sources of Income for Adults" and "Sources of Income for Children," printed on the back side of the application form to determine if your household has income to report.
- Report all amounts in GROSS INCOME ONLY. Report all income in whole dollars. Do not include cents.
 - o Gross income is the total income received before taxes
- Many people think of income as the amount they "take home" and not the total, "gross" amount. Make sure that the income you report on this application has NOT been reduced to pay for taxes, insurance premiums, or any other amounts taken from your pay.

- Write a "0" in any fields where there is no income to report. Any income fields left empty or blank will also be counted as a zero. If you write '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report. If local officials suspect that your household income was reported incorrectly, your application will be
- Mark how often each type of income is received using the check boxes to the right of each field.

3.A. REPORT INCOME EARNED BY CHILDREN

A) Report all income earned or received by children. Report the combined gross income for ALL children listed in STEP 1 in your household in the box marked "Child Income." Only count foster children's income if you are applying for them together with the rest of your household.

What is Child Income? Child income is money received from outside your household that is paid DIRECTLY to your children. Many households do not have any child income.

3.B REPORT INCOME EARNED BY ADULTS

Who should I list here?

- When filling out this section, please include ALL adult members in your household who are living with you and share income and expenses, even if they are not related and even if they do not receive income of their own.
- Do NOT include:
- People who live with you but are not supported by your household's income AND do not contribute income to your household.
- Infants, Children and students already listed in STEP 1.

household member in the boxes marked 1. If a child listed in STEP 1 has income, follow the instructions in STEP 3, part A. household members you listed in STEP "Names of Adult Household Members B) List adult household members' (First and Last)." Do not list any names. Print the name of each

C) Report earnings from work. Report all income from work in the "Earnings from Work" field on the application. This is usually the money received from working at jobs. If you are a self-employed business or farm owner, you will report your net income.

What if I am self-employed? Report income from that work as a net amount. This is calculated by subtracting the total operating expenses of your business from its gross receipts or revenue.

(Children and Adults)." This number MUST be equal to the number of household members listed in STEP 1 and STEP 3. If there are any application, go back and add them. It is very important to list all household members, as the size of your household affects your household members in the field "Total Household Members members of your household that you have not listed on the F) Report total household size. Enter the total number of eligibility for free and reduced price meals. pensions/retirement/all other income. Report all income that applies in the

"Pensions/Retirement/ All Other Income" field on the application.

E) Report income from

Assistance/Child Support/Alimony" field on the application. Do not report the cash value of any public assistance benefits NOT support/alimony. Report all income that applies in the "Public regular payments should be reported as "other" income in the listed on the chart. If income is received from child support or alimony, only report court-ordered payments. Informal but D) Report income from public assistance/child next part.

Security Number. If no adult household members have a Social G) Provide the last four digits of your Social Security Number. An adult household member must enter the last four digits of Security Number, leave this space blank and mark the box to eligible to apply for benefits even if you do not have a Social their Social Security Number in the space provided. You are the right labeled "Check if no SSN."

STEP 4: CONTACT INFORMATION AND ADULT SIGNATURE

All applications must be signed by an adult member of the household. By signing the application, that household member is promising that all information has been truthfully and completely reported. Before completing this section, please also make sure you have read the privacy and civil rights statements on the back of the application.

address in the fields provided if this information is available. Sharing a phone number, email address, or both is optional, If you have no permanent address, this does not make your children ineligible for free or reduced price school meals. A) Provide your contact information. Write your current but helps us reach you quickly if we need to contact you.

B) Print and sign your name. Print the name of the adult signing the application and that person signs in the box "Signature of adult."

C) Write today's date. In the space provided, write today's date in the box.

ethnicity. This field is optional and does not affect your (optional). On the back of the application, we ask you to share information about your children's race and children's eligibility for free or reduced price school D) Share children's racial and ethnic identities

2023-2024 Household Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals Complete one application per household. Please use a pen (not a pencil)

STEP 1 List ALL H	ousehold Members who are infants, children, and st	tudents u _l	o to and including grade 12 (if more spaces are required f	for additional names, attach another sheet	of paper)
	Child's First Name	MI	Child's Last Name	Name of School	Grade Student? Foster Homeless, Yes No Child Migrant,
Definition of Household Member : "Anyone who is living with you and shares income and expenses, even if not related."					Runaway
Children in Foster care and children who meet the definition of Homeless, Migrant or Runaway are eligible for free meals. Read How to Apply for Free and Reduced Price					Check all th
STEP 2 Do any Ho	ousehold Members (including you) currently particing	oate in the	e following assistance program: Supplemental Nutrition A	Assistance Program (SNAP)?	
	Write a case number or identifier here, then go to ST			e number or identifier. Case Number or Ide	antifier:
	-			Case Number of fue	indie.
STEP 3 Report II	ncome for ALL Household Members (Skip thi	s step if	you answered 'Yes' to STEP 2)		
	A. Child Income Sometimes children in the household earn or receive in Household Members listed in STEP 1 here. B. All Adult Household Members (incli		,	Child income	How often? Bi-Weekly 2x Month Monthly
Are you unsure what income to include here?			f) even if they do not receive income. For each Household Mem urce, write '0'. If you enter '0' or leave any fields blank, you are o		
Flip the page and review the charts titled "Sources	Name of Adult Household Members (First and Last)	Earni	Child Co.	Assistance / How often? upport/Alimony Weekly Bi-Weekly 2x Month Monthly	Pensions/Retirement/ How often? All Other Income Weekly Bi-Weekly 2x Month Monthly
of Income" for more information.		Ś	ngs from Work Weekly Bi-Weekly 2x Month Monthly \$	Weekly Bi-Weekly 2x Month Monthly	\$ 0000
The "Sources of Income for Children" chart will		\$	0000\$		\$ 0000
help you with the Child Income section.		\$	0 0 0 0 s		\$ 0000
The "Sources of Income		\$	0 0 0 0 s	0 0 0 0	\$ 0000
for Adults" chart will help you with the All Adult		\$	0000\$	0000	\$ 0000
Household Members section.	Total Household Members	Last Fo	ur Digits of Social Security Number (SSN) of	x x x	
	(Children and Adults)	Primary	Wage Earner or Other Adult Household Member	<u> </u>	Check if no SSN.
Disclosure (Optional)	O I do not want school offici	ials to sha	are information from my free and reduced price meal a	pplication with Medicaid or the State Child	dren's Health Insurance Program (ArKids 1 st).
STEP 4 Contact in	formation and adult signature				
	mation on this application is true, and that all income is reporte may lose meal benefits, and I may be prosecuted under applica		tand that this information is given in connection with the receipt of Fe and Federal laws."	ederal funds, and that school officials may verify (che	eck) the information. I am aware that if I purposely give
Street Address (if available)	Apt#	City	State Z	Zip Daytime Phone and	Email (Optional)
Printed name of the adult si	gning the form	C:au	nature of adult	Today's date	

INSTRUCTIONS Source	es of Income									
Sources of Income for Children			Source of Income for Adults							
Source of Child Income		Example (s)			Earı	ings from Work		istance/Alimony/ ld Support	Pensions/Retirement/ All Other Income	
Earnings from work	A child has a resalary or wage	egular full or part-time job w	here they ear	n a regular		ages, cash bonuses ne from self-		yment benefits compensation	 Social Security (including railroad retirement and black lung benefits) Private pensions or disability benefits Regular income from trusts or estates Annuities Investment income Earned interest Rental income 	
Social Security Disability Payments Survivor's Benefits		l or disabled and receives soc abled, retied, or deceased, an fits.	•		If you are i Basic pay	nt (farm or business) In the U.S. Military: and cash bonuses (do combat pay, FSSA or	Income (SSI	tance from state		
Income from person outside the household	e A friend or ext	tended family member regula	rly give a chil	d spending	privatized •Allowanc	nousing allowances) es for off-base housing	• Alimony p			
Income from any other source	A child receive or trust.	es regular income form a priv	ate pension fu	ınd, annuity,	food and c	othing	Veteran'sStrike ben	benefits	Regular cash payments form outside household	
OPTIONAL Children	Racial and Ethnic	Identities								
Ethnicity (check one): Race (check one or more) The Richard B. Russell National Sinformation, but if you do not subryou must include the last four digmember who signs the application you list a Supplemental Nutrition you indicate that the adult housely your information to determine if you of the lunch and breakfast prograprograms to help them evaluate, the inforcement officials to help them Nondiscrimination Statement:	Americal Americal chool Lunch Act renit all needed inform ts of the social securit assistance Program old member signing our child is eligible from the color of determine to look into violations.	quires the information on this a nation, we cannot approve you urity number of the primary wa ty number is not required when n (SNAP) case number or othe g the application does not have or free or reduced price meals, your eligibility information with penefits for their programs, aud of program rules.	application. Your child for free ge earner or on you apply on r SNAP identific a social seculand for admir education, he litors for programe we been treated	Asian Bla u do not have to give or reduced price me ther adult household behalf of a foster ch ier for your child or w rity number. We will histration and enforce alth, and nutrition am reviews, and law d unfairly.	e the Production alts. alts. Lar	rnative means of comniguage), should contact the at (202) 720-2600 (file a program discrimination Complaint First/www.usda.gov/sitesfax2Mail.pdf, from any st contain the complain priminatory action in suffer of an alleged civil rightail: U.S. Departme Office of the As	pe made availate a munication to obtain the responsible (voice and TTY) ation complaint form which can by default/files/do USDA office, by ant's name, addificient detail to its violation. The ant of Agriculture assistant Secreta	tain program informate State or local Agentor contact USDA the accuments/USDA-OAST calling (866) 632-98 tress, telephone numinform the Assistante completed AD-302° by for Civil Rights	or than English. Persons with disabilities who require tion (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Stoy that administers the program or USDA's TARGE rough the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Ald complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program to the service of the service at the s	
his institution is prohibited from descriptions are sexual orientation), disability, age	scriminating on the	basis of race, color, national of	origin, sex (incl	sex (including gender identity and Washington, D.C. 20250-9410				email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.		
	ool Use Only									
School use only Total Income:						,	Annual Inco Weekly	me Conversion: X 52=		
	ery 2 Weeks	O Twice a Month	О Мо	nth O Ye	oor		2x/month			
Household Size:	SNAP:	Categorically Eligible:		Date Withdrawn:						
	Reduced	O Denied		<u>-</u>			•			
		O Denied					-	_		
Determining Official's Signa					ermination	Doto			2023-2024	