

Public Media Release for Connecticut School Nutrition Programs



The **Easton, Redding & Region 9 Food Service Program** announced today its policy for determining eligibility of children who may receive free or reduced-price meals served under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), or free milk served under the Special Milk Program (SMP).

Local school officials have adopted the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs) for family size and income criteria for determining eligibility. The following income guidelines will be used in Connecticut from **July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023**, for determining eligibility of participants for free and reduced-price meals and free milk in the Child Nutrition Programs.

Income Guidelines for Child Nutrition Programs: July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023*											
Free meals						Reduced-price meals					
Household size	Annual gross income	Monthly gross income	Twice per month	Every two weeks gross income	Weekly gross income	Household Size	Annual gross income	Monthly gross income	Twice per month	Every two weeks gross income	Weekly gross income
1	17,667	1,473	737	680	340	1	25,142	2,096	1,048	967	484
2	23,803	1,984	992	916	458	2	33,874	2,823	1,412	1,303	652
3	29,939	2,495	1,248	1,152	576	3	42,606	3,551	1,776	1,639	820
4	36,075	3,007	1,504	1,388	694	4	51,338	4,279	2,140	1,975	988
5	42,211	3,518	1,759	1,624	812	5	60,070	5,006	2,503	2,331	1,156
6	48,347	4,029	2,015	1,860	930	6	68,802	5,734	2,867	2,647	1,324
7	54,483	4,541	2,271	2,096	1,048	7	77,534	6,462	3,231	2,983	1,492
8	60,619	5,052	2,526	2,332	1,166	8	86,266	7,189	3,595	3,318	1,659
Each additional family member	+ 6,136	+ 512	+ 256	+ 236	+ 118	Each additional family member	+ 8,732	+ 728	+ 364	+ 336	+ 168

The income calculations above are based on the following formulas:

- monthly income is calculated by dividing the annual income by 12;

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- twice monthly income is computed by dividing annual income by 24;
- income received every two weeks is calculated by dividing annual income by 26; and
- weekly income is computed by dividing annual income by 52.

All numbers are rounded upward to the next whole dollar.

Students residing in households with income at or below the levels shown in the chart above are eligible for free or reduced-price meals or free milk. To apply for free or reduced-price meals or free milk, households should fill out the application and return it to the school. Click on the following link to access an application.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oVSk9ny8eYHVlx1z3cch99Tx4jyWz47y/view?usp=sharing> or contact Deena Robushi at 203-261-2513. Only one application is required per household and an application for free or reduced-price benefits cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions.

The information provided on the application is confidential and will be used only for the purposes of determining eligibility and for administration and enforcement of the lunch, breakfast, milk, and P-EBT programs. Additionally, all school-aged students in income-eligible households can receive school meal benefits regardless of a student's immigration status, and the district/school does not release information for immigration-related purposes in the usual course of operating the CNPs. Note that the district *may* share your eligibility information with education, health, social service, 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. This information may also be verified at any time during the school year by school or other program officials. Applications may be submitted at any time during the year.

For up to 30 operating days into the new school year, a student's eligibility (free, reduced, or paid) as of June 2022 will be the eligibility that will be carried over for the first 30 operating days into SY 2022-23, starting with the first day of school. When the carry-over period ends, unless the household is notified that the students are directly certified or the household submits an application that is approved for free or reduced-price meals, the students must pay full price for SBP and NSLP school meals during SY 2022-23. Households will not be sent a reminder or a notice of expired eligibility in those districts participating in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs.

Special notice: During the transition back to normal school operations in school year 2022-23, the **Easton Redding & Region 9 Food Service Program** has opted in to the School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART) funds providing meals (breakfast and lunch) at no cost for all students at the beginning of the school year. Please note that meals at no cost to all students *are unlikely to last all year and are subject to the availability of district funds*. Since the availability of meals at no cost will expire when all funds have been expended, it is critical that households submit a free and reduced-price meal application as soon as possible to determine a student's eligibility for this school year and avoid unpaid meal charges.

No application is required if the district directly certifies a student based on a household member receiving assistance from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or the Temporary Family Assistance

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(TFA) program. All students in these households are eligible for free meal benefits. Households receiving assistance under the SNAP/TFA programs will be notified of their eligibility and students residing in the household will be provided free benefits unless the household notifies the determining official that it chooses to decline benefits. If any students were not listed on the eligibility notice, the household should contact the district or school to have free meal benefits extended to those students. Households receiving SNAP or TFA benefits for their children should only submit an application if they are **not** notified of their eligibility by **October 18, 2022**.

Some students *may* be directly certified for free or reduced-price meals based on Medicaid (HUSKY A). No application is required if the district directly certifies a student based on Medicaid (HUSKY A). All students in these households are eligible for free or reduced-priced meal benefits. Households receiving assistance under Medicaid (HUSKY A) will be notified of their eligibility and their children will be provided free or reduced-price benefits accordingly, unless the household notifies the determining official that it chooses to decline benefits. If any students were not listed on the eligibility notice, the household should contact the district or school to have free or reduced-price meal benefits extended to those students.

If a student is not directly certified, the household should complete a free and reduced-price meal application form. The application for the SNAP or TFA households require the SNAP or TFA case number and the households may be asked to provide proof of the SNAP or TFA case number. The signature of an adult household member is also required.

Students in households participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Please send in an application or contact the determining official for more information.

When known to the district/school, households will be notified of any student's eligibility for free meals if the individual student is Other Source Categorically Eligible because the student is categorized as either: Homeless; runaway as defined by law and determined by the district's or school's homeless liaison; or enrolled in an eligible Head Start or pre-kindergarten class as defined by law. Households with students who are categorically eligible under Other Source Categorically Eligible Programs should complete an application and check-off the relevant box. Questions should be directed to the determining official. For any student not listed on the eligibility notice, the households should contact the school or determining official about any student also eligible under one of these programs or should submit an income application for the other students.

Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact the determining official or school if it chooses to decline the free meal benefits. If households/students are **not** notified by the district/school of their free meal benefits and they receive benefits under qualifying public assistance programs or under Other Source Categorically Eligible Programs, the parent/guardian should contact the determining official or their school.

Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court, are categorically eligible for free meals. A foster parent does not have to complete a free/reduced meal application if they can submit a copy

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of the legal document or legal court order showing that the student is a foster child. Additionally, a foster child may be included as a member of the foster family if the foster family chooses to also apply for benefits. If the foster family is not eligible for free or reduced-price meal benefits, it does not prevent a foster child from receiving free school meals. Note however, that a foster child's eligibility for free school meals does not automatically extend to all students in the household.

Application forms for all other households require a statement of total household income, household size and names of all household members. The last four digits of the social security number of an adult household member must be included or a statement that the household member does not have one. The adult household member must also sign the application certifying that the information provided is correct.

Under the provisions of the policy for determining eligibility for free and reduced-price meals, the Determining Official, Deena Robushi, 203-261-2513 will review applications and determine eligibility. If a parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the ruling of the determining official, they may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. If they wish to make a formal appeal, a request either orally or in writing, may be made to Hearing Official, Sara Scrofani 203-261-2513 for a hearing to appeal the decision.

The policy contains an outline of the hearing procedure. Each school and the central office of the school district has a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by an interested party.

If a household member becomes unemployed or if household size changes at any time, the household should contact the school to file a new application. Such changes may make the students of the household eligible for reduced-price meals, free meals, or free milk, if the household income falls at or below the levels shown in the Income Guidelines.

Questions regarding the application process may be directed to the determining official at 203-261-2513.

This is the Public Release we will send on **August 30, 2022** to the following news media outlets, the local unemployment office, major employers contemplating layoffs, etc.

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| 1. | District Website – www.ER9.org | 3. | Easton Courier |
| 2. | Hello Redding | 4. | |

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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; or
2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:** program.intake@usda.gov

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