

Free and Reduced-Price Meals Program Information

Through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, Free and Reduced-Price Meals are provided to those students who meet eligibility guidelines. The Program is completely confidential and applications for Free and Reduced Price meals may be completed at any time during the school year. Free and Reduced meals applications are available in English and Spanish at any APS - Aurora Public Schools - office or cafeteria. Applications are also available at the Nutrition Services District Office located at 15700 E 1st Ave. Aurora, CO 80011. Complete the application and return it to either the School Kitchen Manager or the Nutrition Services District Office.

Each year a new application must be complete and a new determination of eligibility will be made. Completion of an application does not automatically qualify a student for the Free and Reduced Meals Program. Once the Nutrition Services office receives an application, eligibility determination may take up to ten business days to complete. All applications are confidential.

Once a household is approved for free or reduced-price meals benefits, the household will remain eligible for those benefits for the remainder of the school year plus a maximum of 30 operating days after the first operating day in the following school year.

Free and Reduced-Price Meals Program / FAQ's

What are the benefits for completing the Free and Reduced-Price Meal application?

Numerous scientific studies have suggested a strong link between child nutrition and learning in school. This supports the importance of the availability of school meals programs in improving the educational performance of our children. Besides having your child receive a healthy and nutritious meal, it is important to Aurora Public Schools (APS) to receive the funding for these meals. The district receives extra funds for educational needs once your child has qualified for free or reduced price meals. The district receives the extra funds even if your child does not participate in the school meals program; therefore, it is important to complete the application yearly.

How do I apply for Free/Reduced-Price meal benefits for my children?

To receive meal benefits you must complete a Free and Reduced-Price meal application. We cannot approve an application that is not complete, please be sure to fill out all required information.

Completed applications must contain:

- All Students Names attending Aurora Public Schools
- Student(s) gross income, frequency, and source of current gross income or the box checked "No Income"
- The names of all household members not listed in the student section
- The amount, frequency, and source of current gross income by each household member or the box checked "No Income"
- Last four digits of Social Security Number of the adult household member who signs the application or an indication that the household member does not have one
- The signature of an adult household member
- If your household qualifies for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), do not list the gross income

Why do I have to reapply each year?

Federal guidelines require that we have a new application on file each school year.

Do I need to fill out an application for each student?

No. Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application for all students attending Aurora Public Schools in your household.

How do I know what my child's meal status will be?

Once your application is processed, we will send you a notification letter stating your child's meal eligibility status. Please keep the letter for your records.

If I already receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-SNAP- (formerly Food Stamp Program), do I have to apply to get benefits?

If you are on this program, you may receive a letter at the beginning of the school year that states your students qualify for free meals. If you do not receive a letter, you must fill out an application with all the names of your children, the name of the person receiving benefits, case number, and your signature. If you receive the letter, but it does not cover all of your children, you will have to contact Nutrition Services Department to identify additional students in the household. You may contact us either by phone at 303-343-0295 Ext. 28556 or Ext. 28565 or in person at 15700 E 1st Ave. Aurora, CO 80011.

May I complete an application for Free and Reduced-price meals by phone, fax, or on-line?

We are unable to accept applications by phone, fax or on-line. All applications should have the original signature of an adult household member. All applications may be turned in to the School Kitchen Manager or mailed to the Nutrition Services Department at 15700 E 1st Ave., Aurora, CO 80011.

What happens if I do not return the application?

Your household will be required to pay the full price for any breakfast or lunch your child purchases at school.

What does "temporary free" status mean when completing a Free and Reduced Price Meal application?

When a household reports zero income (looking for work, awaiting unemployment benefits) or a temporary reduction in income (such as work lay-off or recovering from a minor injury that temporarily prevents a household member from working), a temporary approval may be warranted for a period of 45 days.

You will be notified by letter at the beginning of the 45 days stating the date that your eligibility will expire. Please call Nutrition Services at 303-343-0295 Ext. 28556 or Ext. 28565 before that date to update your income information and to update your meal eligibility status or you can submit a new application five to seven days prior to the expiration date.

What do I do if my "temporary free" benefits have expired?

If your temporary benefits have expired, your temporary free status will change to a full paid status. You must complete a new application for the program with changes. Nutrition Services' officials will determine the new meal eligibility status for your child(ren) from the application. You must pay for any meals charged from the time your child's meal eligibility status expired.

Who has permission to see my application?

Nutrition Services' officials that process the meal application must see the application. We may share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews and law enforcement officials with proper documentation.

A student's school meal eligibility status is not released for any other purpose unless a parent or guardian has consented in writing.

Why was my application selected for verification?

Federal guidelines require us to conduct income verification each year for 3% of our applications on file. Applications are randomly selected for verification by our computer system. Within a specified time,

parents/guardians must provide adequate documentation to verify income. If the adequate documentation is not provided, the student will lose free or reduced-price meal benefits.

Why did my child's status change from free or reduced to full paid status during the school year?

The following are some reasons why you might have changed to a full paid status:

- If you did not complete a new application for the current school year within 30 days from the first day of school, your children will automatically change to a full paid status.
- You completed an application reporting zero income, it was approved with a temporary free status, and the application expired after 45 calendar days, because we did not receive the updated information by phone or a new application with the appropriate changes. On the other hand, the information submitted on the new application indicates that your child(ren) no longer qualify for free or reduced price meal benefits.
- You did not return the required documentation that we requested for the verification process.

If you have any questions regarding the Free and Reduced Meals Program, please feel free to email Isabel Medina at mimedina@aps.k12.co.us