



**Clarksville-Montgomery
County School System
School Nutrition**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Clarksville Montgomery County School System School Nutrition Program offers healthy meals for **traditional students** every school day. Breakfast costs \$1.00 for elementary, and \$1.15 for middle and high; lunch costs \$2.65 for elementary and \$2.85 for middle and high. Your child(ren) may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals. Reduced price is \$0.30 for breakfast and \$0.40 for lunch. This packet includes information on where to obtain 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. **Can I apply online?** Yes! Families of traditional students 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 <https://schoolcafe.com> to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact **Tiffany Contreras at (931) 920-7843 or tiffany.contreras@cmcss.net** if you have any questions about the online application.
2. **Who can get free or reduced price meals?**
 - Traditional students in households receiving benefits from SNAP, FDPIR, or TANF, are eligible for free meals.
 - Traditional students in households receiving benefits from Medicaid are eligible for free or reduced meals.
 - Traditional students that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.
 - Traditional students participating in their school's Head Start program are eligible for free meals.
 - Traditional students who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
 - Traditional students who are directly certified are eligible to receive free meals.
 - When known to CMCSS, households will be notified of their children's eligibility for free meals based on their participation (or a household member's participation) in SNAP, FDPIR, or TANF, if the State program meets Federal standards.
 - When known to CMCSS, households will be notified of any child's eligibility for free meals based on the individual child's designation as Other Source Categorically Eligible, as defined by law. Children are determined Other Source Categorically Eligible if they are: homeless, migrant, runaway, a foster child, or enrolled in Head Start.
 - Traditional students 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.
 - Students enrolled in CMCSS K-12 Virtual are not eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits.

Income Eligibility Reduced-Price Guidelines—July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024					
Family Size	Annually	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	26,973	2,248	1,124	1,038	519
2	36,482	3,041	1,521	1,404	702
3	45,991	3,833	1,917	1,769	885
4	55,500	4,625	2,313	2,135	1,068
5	65,009	5,418	2,709	2,501	1,251
6	74,518	6,210	3,105	2,867	1,434
7	84,027	7,003	3,502	3,232	1,616
8	93,536	7,795	3,898	3,589	1,799
For each additional family member add:					
	9,509	793	397	366	183

3. **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 you haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call our Federal Programs Coordinator at (931) 553-1155 (foster and migrant coordinator), or our Homeless Liaison at (931) 648-5653 x 1005 (homeless liaison).
4. **Do I need to fill out an application for each child?** No. Families of traditional student(s) may 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: **Child Nutrition, Attn: Tiffany Contreras, 621 Gracey Ave., Clarksville, TN 37040.**
5. **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 received carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact **Tiffany Contreras at (931) 920-7843 or tiffany.contreras@cmcss.net** immediately.
6. **After I apply for free and reduced meals, will my household's eligibility determination extend to other children in my household who enroll at a later date?** Households approved for free or reduced-price meals will receive an approval letter. If your household is approved for benefits and there are additional children in your household enrolled in CMCSS who are not listed on your approval letter, or if any children in your household enroll in CMCSS after the date indicated on your approval letter, please e-mail Tiffany Contreras at tiffany.contreras@cmcss.net to update students in the household. Benefits will not automatically extend to newly enrolled students until notification is made to the Child Nutrition Department by the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will be responsible for any meal charges accumulated prior to the date of notification. Students enrolled in CMCSS K-12 Virtual are not eligible for benefits.
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 for the first few days of this school year. Families of traditional student(s) must send in a new application unless you have documentation showing that your child is eligible for the new school year. If you do not send in a new application to be approved and you have not been notified that your child is eligible for free meals, your child will be charged the full price for meals.



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8. **I get WIC. Can my children get free meals?** Traditional student(s) in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please send in an application.
9. **Will the information I give be checked?** Yes. In accordance with program regulations school officials will be verifying the income of some households at some time during the school year. Selected households will be requested to provide income documentation in order to continue receiving free and reduced-price meals.
10. **If I don't qualify now, may I apply later?** Yes, families of traditional student(s) 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.
11. **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: Shane Tarkington, 621 Gracey Avenue, Clarksville, TN 37040, Phone: (931) 920-7842 or Email: shane.tarkington@cmcss.net.
12. **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.
13. **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.
14. **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.
15. **Do I have to provide my social security number?** Only the last 4 digits of the social security number of the household's primary wage earner or another adult household member (or an indication of "none") is required.
16. **May I decline benefits?** Yes. Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact Tiffany Contreras at tiffany.contreras@cmcss.net if they choose to decline the free or reduced meal benefits.
17. **What if all children eligible for benefits are not on the notice of eligibility letter?** If children or households receive benefits under Assistance Programs or Other Source Categorically Eligible programs and are not listed on the notice of eligibility and are not notified by the school of their free meal benefits, the parent or guardian should contact Tiffany Contreras at tiffany.contreras@cmcss.net or should submit an income application.
18. **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.
19. **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 Tiffany Contreras at (931) 920-7843 or tiffany.contreras@cmcss.net to receive a second application.
20. **My family needs more help. Are there other programs we might apply for?** To find out how to apply for SNAP or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1-866-311-4287 in Tennessee.

If you have other questions or need help, call (931) 920-7843.

Sincerely,

School Nutrition Director

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

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/ad-3027.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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