



Jersey Shore Area School District

LEARNING | GROWING | SUCCEEDING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS

Apply online at <https://www.schoolcafe.com/jsasd>

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Jersey Shore Area School District offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast is available at no charge to students. Lunch costs **\$2.30** for elementary level and **\$2.40** for secondary (Middle School and High School). **Your child(ren) may qualify for free or reduced price meals.**

During the 2024-2025 School Year, all schools participating in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) are to provide free breakfasts for all enrolled students. Additionally, students identified as eligible for reduced-price lunches through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) will not be charged for their meals.

This packet includes an application for free and reduced-price meal benefits and a set of detailed instructions.



If you have received a **NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION** for free meals, **do not** complete the application. But, **do** let the school know if any children in your household are not listed on the **NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION** letter you received.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS?

- All children in households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly the Food Stamp Program) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits are eligible for free meals.
- Foster children who 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.
- Your children may qualify for free or reduced-price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

Income Guidelines for Reduced-Price Eligibility July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025					
Family Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$27,861	\$2,322	\$1,161	\$1,072	\$536
2	\$37,814	\$3,152	\$1,576	\$1,455	\$728
3	\$47,767	\$3,981	\$1,991	\$1,838	\$919
4	\$57,720	\$4,810	\$2,405	\$2,220	\$1,110
5	\$67,673	\$5,640	\$2,820	\$2,603	\$1,302
6	\$77,626	\$6,469	\$3,235	\$2,986	\$1,493
7	\$87,579	\$7,299	\$3,650	\$3,369	\$1,685
8	\$97,532	\$8,128	\$4,064	\$3,752	\$1,876
Each additional family member add:	+\$9,953	+\$830	+\$415	+\$383	+\$192

- 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, contact **Jodi Woleslagle** at jwoleslagle@jsasd.org or call 570-398-5250.
- 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. You may request a paper application from the school at any time. Return the completed application to your child's school.
- 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 read the letter you received carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification letter, contact **Sharon Koch** at skoch@jsasd.org or call 570-398-5051 immediately.
- 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 <https://www.schoolcafe.com/jsasd> or visit the PA Department of Human Services website at www.compass.state.pa.us.

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 30 operating school days of this school year, through **October 4, 2024**. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.
7. **I GET WIC. CAN MY CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS?** Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. 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/or 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 contacting **Benjamin Enders, 175 A&P Drive, Jersey Shore, PA 17740; 570-398-5050; benders@jsasd.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, write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zeroes. 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, 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. 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.
16. **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, visit www.compass.state.pa.us, contact your local county assistance office, or call 1-800-692-7462.

If you have other questions or need help, call **570-398-5051**.

Sincerely,

Sharon Koch

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, audiotope, 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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

ATTENTION: If you speak Spanish, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Contact your child's school.

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Comuníquese con la escuela de su niño.

2024-2025 SY

HOW TO APPLY FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS or THE SPECIAL MILK PROGRAM

Please use these instructions to help you fill out the application for free or reduced-price meals. You only need to submit one application per household, even if your children attend more than one school in **JERSEY SHORE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**. The application must be filled out completely to certify your children for free or reduced-price school meals. Please follow these step-by-step instructions beginning with **STEP 1!** Each step of the instructions is the same as the steps on your application. If at any time you are not sure what to do next, please contact Sharon Koch at skoch@jsasd.org or call 570-398-5051.

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 children live in your household. They do NOT have to be related to you to be a part of your household. 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.

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, runaway, or Head Start.
- A) **List each child's name.** Print each child's name. Use one line of the application for each child. 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) **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, finish completing **STEP 1**, then proceed to **STEP 3**.
- C) **Are any children homeless, migrant, runaway, or Head Start?** If you believe any child listed in this section meets this description, mark the corresponding box next to the child's name and complete all steps of the application.

STEP 2: DO ANY HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS (INCLUDING YOU) CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE IN ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS: SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) OR TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)?

- A) **IF NO ONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATES IN ANY OF THE ABOVE LISTED PROGRAMS:** Circle 'NO' and proceed to **STEP 3** on these instructions and **STEP 3** on your application.
- B) **IF ANYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATES IN ANY OF THE ABOVE LISTED PROGRAMS:** Circle 'YES' and provide the **nine-digit case number**. You only need to write **one** case number. If you participate in one of these programs and do not know your case number, contact **Dept of Human Services Helpline at 1-800-692-7462** or your County Assistance Office. You **must** provide a case number on your application if you circled "YES". **Skip to STEP 4.**

STEP 3: REPORT INCOME FOR ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS (EVEN IF THEY DO NOT RECEIVE INCOME).

- A) **REPORT ALL INCOME EARNED OR RECEIVED BY CHILDREN.** For ALL children listed in **STEP 1**, report the combined gross income in the box "Child Income" and check how often the income is received.
- B) **LIST ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS (including yourself)** 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** children listed in **STEP 1**.
 - **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.
- C) **REPORT TOTAL INCOME** for each household member listed for each source provided. Report all income in whole dollars. Do not include cents. If they do not receive income from any source, write "0". If you write "0" or leave any income fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report. Mark how often each type of income is received by using the boxes to the right of each field.
- **Report all amounts in GROSS INCOME ONLY.** 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.
 - **What if I am self-employed?** Report income as a net amount. This is calculated by subtracting the total operating expenses of your business from its gross receipts or revenue.
- D) **REPORT TOTAL HOUSEHOLD SIZE.** Enter the total number of household members in the field "Total Household Size (Children and Adults)." This number **MUST** be equal to the number of household members listed in **STEP 3**. If there are any members of your household that you have not listed on the application, go back and add them. It is very important to list all household members, as the size of your household affects your eligibility for free and reduced-price meals.
- E) **PROVIDE THE LAST FOUR DIGITS OF YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER.** The household's primary wage earner or another adult household member must provide the last four digits of his/her Social Security Number in the space provided. You are eligible to apply for benefits even if you do not have a Social Security Number. If no adult household members have a Social Security Number, leave this space blank and mark the box to 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 adult household member is promising all information has been truthfully and completely reported. **Before completing this section, please also make sure you have read the Privacy Act Statement and Non-discrimination Statement at the bottom of these instructions.**

- A) PRINT AND SIGN YOUR NAME.** Print your name in the box "Printed name of adult completing the form." And sign your name in the box "Signature of adult completing the form."
- B) WRITE TODAY'S DATE.** In the space provided, write today's date in the box.
- C) PROVIDE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION.** Write your current address in the fields provided if this information is available. If you have no permanent address, this does not make your children ineligible for free or reduced-price meals. Sharing a phone number, email address or both is optional, but helps us reach you quickly if we need to contact you.
- D) SHARE CHILDREN'S RACIAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITIES (OPTIONAL).** At the bottom of the application, we ask you to share information about your children's race and ethnicity. This field is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.

Privacy Act Statement: This explains how we will use the information you give us.

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, 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 last four digits of the social security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program 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.

Non-discrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

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, audiotope, 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/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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

STEP 1 — All Children in the Household

Student ID	Last Name	First Name	MI	Date of Birth	School	Grade	Foster	Homeless	Migrant	Runaway	Head Start
							<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
							<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
							<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
							<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
							<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

STEP 2 — Assistance Programs

Do any household members (including you) currently participate in one or more of the following assistance programs: SNAP or TANF? **Circle one:** Yes / No

If you answered NO > Complete STEP 3. If you answered YES > Write a nine-digit case number, then skip to STEP 4.

Case Number:

STEP 3 — All Household Member Income (even if they do not receive income) (Skip this step if you answered 'Yes' in STEP 2)

Please read **How To Apply for Free and Reduced Price School Meals** for more information. The "Sources of Income for Children" section will help you with the Child Income question. The "Sources of Income for Adults" section will help you with the All Adult Household Members section.

Gross income and how often it is received:
W = Weekly, E = Every 2 weeks, T = Twice per month, M = Monthly, A = Annually

A. Sometimes children in the household earn or receive income. Please include the TOTAL income received by all household members listed in STEP 1 here.

B. List all household members not listed in STEP 1 (including yourself) even if they do not receive income. For each household member listed, report total income for each source in whole dollars only. If they do not receive income from any source, write '0'. If you write '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report.

Adult Household Member Name (First and Last)	Annual Income	Earnings from Work	How Often?					Public Assistance / Child Support / Alimony	How Often?					Pensions / Retirement / All Other Income	How Often?				
			A	W	E	T	M		A	W	E	T	M		A	W	E	T	M
			A	W	E	T	M		A	W	E	T	M		A	W	E	T	M
			A	W	E	T	M		A	W	E	T	M		A	W	E	T	M
			A	W	E	T	M		A	W	E	T	M		A	W	E	T	M
			A	W	E	T	M		A	W	E	T	M		A	W	E	T	M

Total Household Size (Children and Adults)

Last Four Digits of Social Security Number (SSN) of Primary Wage Earner or Another Adult Household Member or *** - ** -

Check if no SSN

STEP 4 — Contact Information and Adult Signature

I certify (promise) that all information on this application is true and that all income is reported. I understand that this information is given in connection with the receipt of Federal funds, and that school officials may verify (check) the information. I am aware that if I purposely give false information, my children may lose meal benefits, and I may be prosecuted under applicable State and Federal laws.

Printed name of adult completing the form

Signature of adult completing the form

Today's Date

Street Address (if available)

City

State

ZIP Code

Home Phone Number


Work Phone Number

Email

OPTIONAL — Children's Racial and Ethnic Identities

Ethnicity (check one):
☐ Hispanic or Latino
☐ Not Hispanic or Latino

Race (check one or more):
☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
☐ Black or African American
☐ Asian
☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
☐ White


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SHARING INFORMATION WITH OTHER JSASD PROGRAMS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Throughout the school year, the district may have reduced pricing for activities and/or programs for those students with confirmed Free or Reduced meal status.

For the program below, we must have your permission to share your information in order for your child to receive this benefit. The only information that will be shared will be the status outcome of your application (Free or Reduced), not any income or other personal information and it will only be shared with those employees directly involved with the program. If additional activities or programs are offered, an additional form will be sent home with your student.

Sending in this form will not change whether your child or children receive free or reduced-price meals.

By default, I give permission for school officials to share the Free and Reduced eligibility status from my 2024-2025 application with the iPad Insurance Policy program to receive discounted rates. Please fill out form below and sign.

Child's Name: _____ School: _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

If you do not want the free and reduced eligibility status information shared, check the box below, fill out the form above and sign:

☐ **I do not give permission** for school officials to share the Free and Reduced eligibility status from my 2024-2025 application with the iPad Insurance Policy program to receive discounted rates. **If I choose to purchase the iPad insurance, I will pay the full premium and deductible.**

****Please return this form with your Free/Reduced meal application so that we may follow your choice****