

## Template for Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About

### FREE SCHOOL MILK

Dear Parent/Guardian:

[Insert name of school/school district] offers choice of low-fat and nonfat milk each school day. Children may buy milk for \$ [insert price]. Children who qualify under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines may get milk free. For more information, please call the school at [insert telephone number]. This packet includes an application for free milk benefits and detailed instructions.

**NOTE:** Children receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) benefits may be directly certified and automatically eligible for free milk without applying for benefits. Questions regarding SNAP/TFA and direct certification should be sent to the determining official [insert name and telephone number]. If you have received a NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION for free milk, **do not** complete the application. Let the school know if any children in your household are **not** listed on the **Notice of Direct Certification** letter you received.

The answers to common questions below can help you with the application process.

#### 1. Who can get free milk?

- All children in households receiving SNAP or TFA benefits are eligible for free milk.
- Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free milk.
- Children participating in their school's Head Start program are eligible for free milk.
- Children who meet the definition of homeless or runaway are eligible for free milk.
- Children may receive free milk if your household's income is within the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify for free milk if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart:

Free Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines Effective 7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017			
Household Size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	15,444	1,287	297
2	20,826	1,736	401
3	26,208	2,184	504
4	31,590	2,633	608
5	36,972	3,081	711
6	42,354	3,530	815
7	47,749	3,980	919
8	53,157	4,430	1,023
Each additional person	+5,408	+451	+104

2. **How do I know if my children qualify as homeless 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 have not been told your children will get free milk, please call or e-mail [insert school or homeless liaison].

3. **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 **[insert name, address and telephone number]**.
4. **Should I fill out an application if I received a letter this school year saying my children are already approved for free milk?** No, but please read the letter carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact **[insert name, address, telephone number and e-mail]** 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 **[insert Web site]** to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact **[insert name, address, telephone number and e-mail]** if you have any questions about the online application.
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. 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 milk?** Children in households participating in WIC **may** be eligible for free milk. 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 milk 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 **[insert name, address, telephone number and e-mail]**.
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 milk.
12. **What if my income is not always the same?** List the amount that you **normally** receive. For example, if you normally make \$1,000 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. When this happens, please write "0" in the field. Any income fields that are left empty or blank will **also** 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, or receive Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance payments, these 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 **[insert name, address, telephone number and e-mail]** to receive a second application
16. **My family needs more help. Are there other programs we might apply for?** To find out how to apply for SNAP benefits and to contact the Department of Social Services office in your town, contact United Way's free referral number **2-1-1** (free call, statewide).

If you have other questions or need help, call **[insert telephone number]**.

Sincerely,

**[insert name and title]**

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**Nondiscrimination Statement:** This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

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*Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.*

*To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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;*
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or*
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).*

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