

Dear Family,

For school year 23-24, the North Dakota legislation passed an appropriation of Senate Bill 2284 that allows families to receive free meals if they fall below 200% of the federal poverty line. To qualify, families must fill out the Student Fees Assistance and Benefits Applications (also known as Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application). If families qualify, households can receive free meals and other additional benefits such as:

- Waived (cancelled) fees for school related activities such as band rentals, activity fees, exam fees, and others.
- Increase funding to the district for educational programs through Title 1 funding, foundation aid, e-rate for technology grants, and others.

To make a complete meal, federal regulations require students to take at least 3 of the 5 meal components: Meat/Protein, Fruit, Vegetable, Grain and Milk. Any a la cart items or extra food items (items that are not part of the meal) need to be purchased with available funds either in the student's lunch account or with cash. These purchases cannot be charged.

Please see the chart below for income guidelines. Even though there is a reduced column below, those families will qualify for free meals as the state is covering those expenses. Documents such as check stubs or tax forms do not need to be submitted with the application. Three percent of the eligible families will be contacted to provide income documentation in early October.

To submit an application, please complete the application online at [EZmealapp.com](https://EZmealapp.com) or submit a completed paper application to any school or mail to Fargo Public Schools Nutrition, 3901 40<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Fargo ND 58104. A new application must be submitted each year.

#### Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Do I need to fill out an application for each child?** No. Use one 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. Applications can be completed online at [EZMealApp.com](https://EZMealApp.com).
2. **Who can qualify for free meals or get other benefits?** All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) or the Temporary Assistance Program for Needy Families (**TANF**) can receive benefits regardless of your income. Also, your children can get benefits if your household income is within the limits on the Federal Income Chart.
3. **Can foster children get benefits?** Yes, foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible. Any foster child in the household is eligible regardless of income.
4. **Can homeless or runaway children get free meals or other benefits?** If you haven't been told your children will get free meals, please feel free to fill out an application or call the school at 701-446-1153 to see if they qualify.
5. **Should I fill out an application if I received a letter this school year saying my children are approved for free meals and benefits?** Please read any letter you receive regarding benefits carefully and follow the instructions. If you have questions, contact nutrition services at 701-446-1153.
6. **My child's application was approved last year. Do I need to fill out another 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 child(ren) get Benefits?** Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for benefits but an application is needed to determine eligibility. Receiving WIC benefits does not automatically qualify your family for benefits.
8. **Will the information I give be checked?** Yes, we may also ask you to send written proof of income.
9. **If I don't qualify now, may I apply later?** Yes, you may apply at any time during the school year if your household size goes up, income goes down, or if you start receiving SNAP TANF or FDPIR. If you lose your job, your children may be able to get benefits during the time you are unemployed.
10. **What if I disagree with the school's decision about my application?** Please call nutrition services at 701-446-1153 to verify your information is correct. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to Jackie Gapp, Business Manager 701-446-1032; Fargo Public Schools, 700 7<sup>th</sup> St. S., Fargo, ND 58103.
11. **May I apply if someone in my household is not a U.S. citizen?** Yes, you or your child(ren) do not have to be U.S. citizens to qualify for benefits.
12. **Whom should I include as members of my household?** You must include all people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends). You must include yourself and all children living with you.

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.
14. **We are in the military. Do we include our housing allowance as income?** If you receive an off-base housing allowance, it must be included as income.
15. **My spouse is deployed to a combat zone. Is his/her combat pay counted as income?** No, if the combat pay is received in addition to their basic pay because of their deployment and it wasn't received before they were deployed, combat pay is not counted as income. Contact your school for more information.

**FEDERAL INCOME CHART**  
For School Year 2023-2024



**Department of Public Instruction Child Nutrition and Food Distribution Programs**  
**Income Eligibility Guidelines**  
**July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024**

Federal Reduced-Price Meal – 185 Percent						State Free - 200 Percent					
Household Size	Yearly	Monthly	2x Month	Every 2 Weeks	Weekly	Household Size	Yearly	Monthly	2x Month	Every 2 Weeks	Weekly
1	\$26,973	\$2,248	\$1,124	\$1,038	\$519	1	\$29,160	\$2,430	\$1,215	\$1,122	\$561
2	\$36,482	\$3,041	\$1,521	\$1,404	\$702	2	\$39,440	\$3,287	\$1,643	\$1,517	\$758
3	\$45,991	\$3,833	\$1,917	\$1,769	\$885	3	\$49,720	\$4,143	\$2,072	\$1,912	\$956
4	\$55,500	\$4,625	\$2,313	\$2,135	\$1,068	4	\$60,000	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$2,308	\$1,154
5	\$65,009	\$5,418	\$2,709	\$2,501	\$1,251	5	\$70,280	\$5,857	\$2,928	\$2,703	\$1,352
6	\$74,518	\$6,210	\$3,105	\$2,867	\$1,434	6	\$80,560	\$6,713	\$3,357	\$3,098	\$1,549
7	\$84,027	\$7,003	\$3,502	\$3,232	\$1,616	7	\$90,840	\$7,570	\$3,785	\$3,494	\$1,747
8	\$93,536	\$7,795	\$3,898	\$3,598	\$1,799	8	\$101,120	\$8,427	\$4,213	\$3,889	\$1,945
For each additional family member add	\$9,509	\$793	\$397	\$366	\$183	For each additional family member, add	\$10,280	\$857	\$428	\$395	\$198

**NOTE: Do not allow hardship deductions from the above.**

Reminders

\*Error Prone Applications: Any application within \$100 *per month* of the applicable IEGs.

\*Multiply income that is received every 2 weeks (biweekly) by 26 to arrive at annual income.

\*Multiply weekly income by 52 to arrive at annual income.

\*Gross or total income must be used in determining eligibility For wage earners.

\*A net loss from a business or farm may not be used to offset other income. A negative income is denoted as \$0.

Teams/general-4nsp/new year 2024

	Yearly	Monthly	2x Month	Every 2 weeks (Bi-Weekly)	Weekly
Annual Income Conversion: Multiply income by	X 1	X 12	X 24	X 26	X 52
Error Prone: \$ Range Below the free or reduced-price income eligibility limit.	\$0-\$1,200	\$0-\$100	\$0-\$50	\$0-\$50	\$0-\$25

If you have other questions or need help, call the Nutrition Services Department at 701-446-1153.

Sincerely,

Cindy Hogenson, Director of Nutrition Services

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/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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.