

INFORMATION LETTER

Frequently Asked Questions About Free And Reduced Price School Meals

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Earlham Community School offers healthy meals every school day as part of the federally funded Child Nutrition Programs. In order for a Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI) such as Earlham Community School to be eligible for meal reimbursement, we must document the number of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals. Although Earlham Community School provides meals at no charge to all of our residents/students, we request your cooperation in submitting this application so we can qualify for federal reimbursement. This packet includes an Iowa Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals/Milk, and a set of detailed instructions. Please fill out the application and return it to Earlham Community School **09/01/18**. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process. Please call **515-758-2214 Ext. 101** if you need assistance. **Please return or mail the completed application to:** Earlham Community School PO Box 430, Earlham, IA

1. **WHY DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION?** Completing the 2017-2018 Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals for your household allows the RCCI to receive reimbursement from the federal government for meals served to students.
2. **WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?** (which would allow the RCCI to get additional Federal Reimbursement)
 - All children in households receiving benefits from Food Assistance, the Family Investment Program (FIP) or a few specific Medicaid Programs, are eligible for free meals.
 - Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.
 - Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
 - Children may receive free or reduced price meals if your household's income is at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines below. (Requires submitting an Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals/Milk.)

FEDERAL INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES For School Year 2018-2019

Household Size	Yearly	Monthly	Twice per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	22,459	1,872	936	864	432
2	30,451	2,538	1,269	1,172	586
3	38,443	3,204	1,602	1,479	740
4	46,435	3,870	1,935	1,786	893
5	54,427	4,536	2,268	2,094	1,047
6	62,419	5,202	2,601	2,401	1,201
7	70,411	5,868	2,934	2,709	1,355
8	78,403	6,534	3,267	3,016	1,508
Each additional person:	7,992	666	333	308	154

3. **SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER FROM MY CHILD'S SCHOOL SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS?** If you received a letter from your child's school saying your child is approved for free meals or a Free Lunch Notice from DHS, submit a copy of the letter to the RCCI. You may add any students living in your household who are not listed.
4. **WHAT IF WE HAVE FOSTER CHILDREN?** Households with foster and non-foster children should include the foster child as a household member, as this may help other children in the household qualify for benefits. If the foster family is not eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits, that does not prevent a foster child from receiving free meal benefits.
5. **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, please call or e-mail **Leslie Winey 515-758-2214 ext. 101** **LWINEY@ECSDCARDS.COM**
6. **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.

7. MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT A NEW ONE FOR THE RCCI? 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.
8. I GET WIC. CAN THE RCCI GET FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please send in an application.
9. SHOULD 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.
10. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report. You are not required to provide proof with your application.
11. 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 reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit, if your household size goes up, or if you start getting Food Assistance, FIP or other benefits. These situations may assist the RCCI in getting higher reimbursement.
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 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.
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. There are currently no active Military Housing Projects in Iowa as found on [Active Military Housing Projects](#). Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.
15. DO I NEED TO PROVIDE MY SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER? Only the last four digits of the Social Security Number of the household's primary wage earner or another adult household member (or an indication of "none") is needed.
16. WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? List any additional household members on a Supplemental Worksheet, and attach it to your application. Contact **Leslie Winey 515-758-2214 ext. 101** **LWINEY@ECSDCARDS.COM** to receive a Supplemental Worksheet.
17. MY FAMILY NEEDS Assistance. ARE THERE PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for Food Assistance or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call **1-877-347-5678**. Your children may be eligible for **hawk-i** (children's health insurance) or a waiver of school fees. Read the information on the back of the Application for **hawk-i** information. A school waiver form is available from your school.
18. CAN CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES GET FOOD SUBSTITUTIONS? If a child has a disability, as determined by a licensed medical professional, and the disability prevents the child from eating the regular school meal, the school will make substitutions prescribed by the licensed medical professional. If a substitution is needed, there will be no extra charge for the meal. Please note, however, that the school is not required to make a substitution for a food allergy, unless it meets the definition of disability. Please call the school for further information.

If you have other questions or need help, call **515-758-2214 ext. 101**

Sincerely,

Leslie Winey