

# BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Darryl L. Williams, Ed.D. ♦ Superintendent ♦ 6901 North Charles Street ♦ Towson, MD ♦ 21204

August 1, 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. The Baltimore County Public Schools serve healthy meals each school day, which may be purchased at the published school prices. For those who qualify, meals are also available free or at a reduced price. The reduced price is \$.00 for breakfast and \$.00 for lunch. All meals served meet nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

**If you received a NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE MEALS LETTER, do not complete the application. If you have children in your household that you did not receive a letter for or you have any questions contact the Office of Food and Nutrition Services at 443-809-7860.**

1. HOW DO I OBTAIN A HOUSEHOLD MEAL BENEFIT APPLICATION (HMBA)? The HMBA is available online to complete and submit electronically or you may obtain a paper HMBA from your child's school. The online application can be accessed on the Baltimore County Public Schools' Web site at [Online Meal Benefit Application](#) or [BCPS Parent Website](#) and clicking on "Free & Reduced Meals – Apply Online" on the left side menu bar. If you submit an application online, please do not complete a paper application. All applications will be processed in the order received.
2. DO I NEED TO COMPLETE A HOUSEHOLD MEAL BENEFIT APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. Complete one HMBA for all children 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 your child's school office or mail to: Baltimore County Public Schools, Office of Food and Nutrition Services, 9610 Pulaski Park Drive, Suite 219, Baltimore, MD 21220. If you have any questions, please call 443-809-7860.
3. WHO CAN RECEIVE FREE MEALS? All children in households that receive Food Supplement Program (FSP) benefits or temporary cash assistance (TCA), foster children, children certified as homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible to receive free meals regardless of your income. If your child(ren) are certified as homeless, please contact your child's school Pupil Personnel Worker. Also, your child(ren) can receive free meals if your household's gross income is within the free limits of the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.
4. WHO CAN RECEIVE NO-COST REDUCED PRICE MEALS? Your child(ren) can receive meals at no cost if your household's gross income is within the reduced price limits of the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.
5. MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO COMPLETE A HOUSEHOLD MEAL BENEFIT APPLICATION FOR THIS SCHOOL YEAR? Yes. Each year a student's eligibility for free and reduced price meals must be renewed or determined. A student's eligibility for meal benefits can carryover for a maximum of thirty (30) operating days into the new school year. However, **meal benefit eligibility determinations made in the current year supersedes the previous year meal benefit level.**
6. I RECEIVE WIC. ARE MY CHILDREN ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FREE MEALS? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please complete a HMBA to determine if your child(ren) are eligible.
7. WILL THE INFORMATION I LIST ON MY APPLICATION BE CHECKED? Yes. Your eligibility may be verified at any time during the school year. School officials may request you to send papers confirming that your child(ren) should receive free or reduced price meals.
8. IF I DON'T QUALIFY NOW, MAY I APPLY LATER? Yes. You may apply for free and reduced price meals at any time during the school year. If you are not eligible now but have a change such as a decrease in

household income, an increase in household size, become unemployed, or receive FSP or TCA for your child(ren), you may fill out an application at that time.

9. WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE DISTRICT'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION? Call the OFNS at 443-809-7860 if you have questions or disagree with your child's(ren's) eligibility determination. If a determination cannot be resolved with the OFNS, you may proceed by appealing the decision in writing to: Mr. Charles L. Patillo, Executive Director, Department of Business Services Operations, Baltimore County Public Schools, 9610 Pulaski Park Drive, Suite 219, Baltimore, MD 21220.
10. 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 a U.S. citizen to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
11. WHO SHOULD I INCLUDE AS MEMBERS OF MY HOUSEHOLD? Your household includes all those living as one economic unit, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, foster children, or friends) who share income and expenses. You must include yourself and all children living with you. Do not include other people that are living with you who are economically independent such as household members you do not support, who do not share income with you or your children, and who pay a pro-rated share of expenses.
12. WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME? List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally receive \$1000 each month but did not work a full month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1000 per month. If you normally work overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only work overtime sometimes. If you lost your job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.
13. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE INCLUDE OUR HOUSING ALLOWANCE AS INCOME? Your basic pay and cash bonuses must be reported as income. If you receive any cash value allowances for off-base housing allowance, food, or clothing, it must be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative do not include this housing allowance as income.
14. 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 his/her basic pay because of deployment, and it wasn't received before deployment, combat pay is not counted as income.
15. MY FAMILY NEEDS ADDITIONAL HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? For information and referral for the **FSP, TCA, and medical assistance programs** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1-800-332-6347. To apply for FSP benefits online go to [Maryland Department of Human Resources](#) or visit your local Baltimore County Department of Social Services office.
  - Catonsville District Office – 746 Frederick Rd., Catonsville, MD 21228
  - Dundalk District Office – 1400 Merritt Blvd., Suite C, Dundalk, MD 21222
  - Essex District Office – 439 Eastern Blvd., Essex, MD 21221
  - Reisterstown District Office – 130 Chartley Dr., Reisterstown, MD 21136
  - Towson District Office – 6401 York Rd., Baltimore, MD 21212
16. IF MY CHILD(REN) HAVE A DISABILITY AND CANNOT EAT THE REGULAR SCHOOL MEALS, WILL THERE BE A SUBSTITUTION AVAILABLE? Yes. If a child has been determined by a doctor to have a disability that would prevent the child from eating the regular school meal, the OFNS will make any substitutions as prescribed by the doctor at no extra charge. If you believe your child needs a substitution due to a disability, please call 443-809-7855 for further information.

If you have other questions or need additional help, please call 443-809-7860.

Sincerely,

Karen Levenstein  
Director  
Office of Food and Nutrition Services