

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL MEALS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Coweta Public Schools** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs \$ **2.00** ; lunch costs \$ **3.00** . **Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals.** Reduced-price is \$ **.30** for breakfast and \$ **.40** for lunch. This packet includes an application for free or reduced-price meal benefits and a set of detailed instructions. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS?
  - All children in households receiving benefits from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) 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.
  - Children may receive free or reduced-price meals if your household's income is within the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify for free or reduced-price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

<b>FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART for School Year: 2018</b>					
Household Size	Yearly	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	22,311	1,860	930	859	430
2	30,044	2,504	1,252	1,156	578
3	37,777	3,149	1,575	1,453	727
4	45,510	3,793	1,897	1,751	876
5	53,243	4,437	2,219	2,048	1,024
6	60,976	5,082	2,541	2,346	1,173
7	68,709	5,726	2,863	2,643	1,322
8	76,442	6,371	3,186	2,941	1,471
Each additional person:	7,733	645	323	296	149

2. 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 have not been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail **Max Myers, (918) 486-6506, P O Box 550, Coweta, OK 74429, email: max.myers@cowetaps.org**.
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: **Vickie Middleton, 407 N Broadway, P O Box 550, Coweta, OK 74429, (918) 486-0801, email: vickie.middleton@cowetaps.org** .
4. 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 please

read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact **Vickie Middleton, 407 N Broadway, P O Box 550, Coweta, OK 74429, (918) 486-0801, email: [vickie.middleton@cowetaps.org](mailto:vickie.middleton@cowetaps.org)** 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 <http://www.cowetaps.org> (**must print and send in or email**) to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact **Vickie Middleton, (918) 486-0801, 407 N Broadway, Coweta, OK 74429, email: vickie.middleton@cowetaps.org** 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, through **9/28/2017**. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. If you do not send in a new application that is approved by the school or you have not been notified that your child is eligible for free meals, your child will be charged the full price for meals.
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. 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 DO NOT 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.
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 call or writing to:  
**Max Myers, (918) 486-6506, P O Box 550, Coweta, OK 74429, email: max.myers@cowetaps.org**
11. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A UNITED (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 made only \$900, put down that you made \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it; do not include it if you work overtime only 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, 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 IS NOT 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 **Vickie Middleton, (918) 486-0801, 407 N Broadway, Coweta, OK 74429, email: vickie.middleton@cowetaps.org** 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 or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1-866-411-1877.

If you have other questions or need help, call **(918) 486-0801** .

Sincerely,

*Vicki Middleton*

# HOW TO APPLY FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS

Please use these instructions to help you fill out the application for free or reduced price school meals. You only need to submit one application per household, even if your children attend more than one school in Coweta Public Schools. The application must be filled out completely to certify your children for free or reduced price school meals. Please follow these instructions in order! 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 Vickie Middleton, (918) 486-0801, email:vickie.middleton@cowetaps.org.

## **STEP 1: LIST ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WHO ARE INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND STUDENTS UP TO 18 YEARS OF AGE**

Tell us how many infants, children, and school students live in your household. They do NOT have to be related to you to be a part of your household.

**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, or runaway youth;
- Students attending [Coweta Public Schools], regardless of age.

<p><b>A) List each child's name.</b> Print each child's name. Use one line of the application for each child. When printing names, write one letter in each box. 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.</p>	<p><b>B) Is the child a student at [name of school/school system here]?</b> Mark 'Yes' or 'No' under the column titled "Student" to tell us which children attend [name of school/school district here]. If you marked 'Yes,' write the grade level of the student in the 'Grade' column to the right.</p>	<p><b>C) Do you have any foster children?</b> If any children listed are foster children, mark the "Foster Child" next to the child's name. If you are ONLY applying for foster children, after finishing <b>STEP 1</b>, go to <b>STEP 2</b>. <u>Foster children who live with you may count as members of your household and should be listed on your application.</u> If you are applying for both foster and non-foster children, go to step 3.</p>
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**PLEASE USE A PEN (NOT A PENCIL) WHEN FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION AND DO YOUR BEST TO PRINT CLEARLY.**

## **STEP 2: DO ANY HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE IN SNAP, TANF, OR FDPIR?**

**If anyone in your household (including you) currently participates in one or more of the assistance programs listed below, your child is eligible for free or reduced price school meals.**

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

<p><b>A) If no one in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Leave <b>STEP 2</b> blank and go to <b>STEP 3</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>B) If anyone in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Write a case number for SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR. You must have a case number to participate in one of these programs and do not know your case number, call the number on the application.</li> <li>● Go to <b>STEP 4</b>.</li> </ul>
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## STEP 3: REPORT INCOME FOR ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

### How do I report my income?

- Use the charts titled “**Sources of Income for Adults**” and “**Sources of Income for Children,**” printed on the back of this application. Report the income for each household member if the household has income to report.
- Report all amounts in GROSS INCOME ONLY. Report all income in whole dollars. Do not include cents.
  - 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 amount reported has not been reduced to pay for taxes, insurance premiums, or any other amounts taken from your pay.
- Write a “0” in any fields where there is no income to report. Any income fields left empty or blank will also be counted as zero. If a field is blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report. If local officials suspect that your household income is being underreported, it will be investigated.
- Mark how often each type of income is received using the check boxes to the right of each field.

### 3.A. REPORT INCOME EARNED BY CHILDREN

**A) Report all income earned or received by children.** Report the combined gross income for ALL children listed in STEP 1 in your household. Do not count foster children’s income if you are applying for them together with the rest of your household.

**What is Child Income?** Child income is money received from outside your household that is paid DIRECTLY to your children. Many households receive child support payments for their children.

### 3.B REPORT INCOME EARNED BY ADULTS

#### Who should I list here?

- When filling out this section, please include ALL adult members in your household who are living with you and share in the household expenses, related and even if they do not receive income of their own.
- **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.
  - Infants, Children and students already listed in **STEP 1.**

<p><b>B) List adult household members’ names.</b> Print the name of each household member in the boxes marked “Names of Adult Household Members (First and Last).” <u>Do not list any household members you listed in STEP 1.</u> If a child listed in <b>STEP 1</b> has income, follow the instructions in <b>STEP 3, part A.</b></p>	<p><b>C) Report earnings from work.</b> Report all income from work in the “Earnings from Work” field on the application. This is usually the money received from working at jobs. If you are a self-employed business or farm owner, you will report your net income.</p> <p><b>What if I am self-employed?</b> Report income from that work as a net amount. This is calculated by subtracting the total operating expenses of your business from its gross receipts or revenue.</p>	<p><b>D) Report income from Support/Alimony.</b> Report all income from Support/Alimony. Report the <u>value of any payments received.</u> If income is received from a court-ordered arrangement, report it as “Court-ordered support/alimony.”</p>
<p><b>E) Report income from pensions/retirement/all other income.</b> Report all income that applies in the “Pensions/Retirement/ All Other Income” field on the application.</p>	<p><b>F) Report total household size.</b> Enter the total number of household members in the field “Total Household Members (Children and Adults).” This number <b>MUST</b> be equal to the number of household members listed in <b>STEP 1</b> and <b>STEP 3.</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>G) Provide the household size.</b> Report the total number of adult household members in the field “Total Household Members (Children and Adults).” Social Security Number. If no Social Security Number, leave the field blank. If you have a Social Security Number, leave the field labeled “Check for Social Security Number.”</p>

## STEP 4: CONTACT INFORMATION AND ADULT SIGNATURE

**All applications must be signed by an adult member of the household. By signing the application, that household member is promising that the information provided is true and completely reported. Before completing this section, please also make sure you have read the privacy and civil rights statement.**

<p><b>A) Provide your contact information.</b> 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 school meals. Sharing a phone number, email address, or both is optional, but helps us reach you quickly if we need to contact you.</p>	<p><b>B) Print and sign your name and write today’s date.</b> Print the name of the adult signing the application and that person signs in the box “Signature of adult.”</p>	<p><b>C) Mail Completed Form to: Coweta Public Schools, Child Nutrition, 407 N Broadway, Coweta, OK 74429 (or return to your student’s school.</b></p>	<p><b>D) Share your contact information (optional).</b> You may choose to share your contact information with the school district to help us reach you quickly if we need to contact you.</p>
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## SHARING INFORMATION WITH MEDICAID/SOONERCARE

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

If your children get free or reduced-price school meals, they **MAY** also be able to get free or low-cost health insurance through Medicaid or SoonerCare. Children with health insurance are more likely to get regular health care and are less likely to miss school because of sickness.

Because health insurance is so important to children's well-being, ***the law allows us to tell Medicaid and SoonerCare that your children are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals unless you tell us not to.*** Medicaid and SoonerCare only use the information to identify children who may be eligible for their programs. Program officials may contact you to offer to enroll your children. Filling out the Application for Free and Reduced-Price Meals does not automatically enroll your children in health insurance.

If you do not want us to share your information with Medicaid or SoonerCare, fill out the form below and send in. (Sending in this form will not change whether your children get free or reduced-price school meals.)

**No! I DO NOT** want information from my Application for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals shared with Medicaid or SoonerCare.

If you checked **No**, fill out the form below to ensure that your information is **NOT** shared for the child(ren) listed below:

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian :

Date:

Printed Name:

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
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For more information, you may call your child's school.

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