



## POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS Frequently Asked Questions



- 1. Where can I get a free and reduced price application for meal benefits?** You may apply online at [www.myschoolapps.com](http://www.myschoolapps.com) or pick up a paper meal application from the school office. You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application if possible.
- 2. Why is it necessary to use BLACK or BLUE INK to complete the application form?** The scanning process recognizes black and blue ink the best. The scanner cannot recognize markings made in pencil or any color of ink other than blue or black. Therefore, applications completed in pencil or other colored ink will be sent back to the applicant.
- 3. Where do I send my completed paper application?** Mail or personally deliver completed applications to: Food and Nutrition Department, 12225 Kirkham Road, Suite 100, Poway, CA 92064-8847, or you can drop it off at your youngest child's school.
- 4. Who can get free meals?** All children in households receiving CalFresh (previously Food Stamps), CalWORKs (California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids), KinGAP, or FDPIR can get free meals regardless of your income. Medi-Cal recipients can get free or reduced-price meals depending on family income. Also, your children can get free meals if your household's gross income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.



If you received a NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION letter for free or reduced price meals, **do not** complete the application. **But do** let Food and Nutrition Department know if any children in your household are not listed on the Notice of Direct Certification letter you received.

- 5. How long does it take to process an application?** Online applications are normally processed within 24 hours. Paper applications usually take ten school days after receipt in the Food and Nutrition Department. However, it may take longer for paper applications at the start of school due to high volume.
- 6. Will I need to pay for my child's meals until the application is processed?** **Yes**, meal benefits start only after the **approval date** of your application.
- 7. How will I know if my child qualifies for free or reduced price meals?** The Food and Nutrition Department notifies all families who submit an application of their child's status by mail or email.
- 8. Who can get reduced-price meals?** Your children can get low cost meals if your household income is within the reduced-price limits on the Federal Eligibility Income Chart, shown on the Free and Reduced-Price application form. Families that receive Medi-Cal qualify for free or reduced-price meals depending on income.
- 9. Who should I include on the application as members of my household?** You must include every person living in your house, related or not. This includes yourself, your spouse, all children, grandparents, relatives, friends, babies, etc.
- 10. Do I have to complete a free/reduced application each year?** **Yes**. You must complete a new complete application each school year for approval.
- 11. Do pre-kindergarten students automatically qualify for free/reduced meals?** **No**. All students must complete a Free and Reduced Price Meal application each year.



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Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)**



- 12. Do I need to fill out a separate application for each child? No.** You can use **one** application form for all children (elementary, middle, and high school) in your household (including foster children). We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information.
- 13. 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 the next school year. You must send in a new application unless a District representative told you that your child is already eligible for the new school year.
- 14. Can foster children get free meals? Yes.** Yes, foster children who are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court, are eligible for free meals, regardless of income. List all children, including foster children, on the same application form and include all income received by the foster children.
- 15. Why was my application for meal benefits denied? Your income may be high. Also, you may have omitted or incorrectly completed important information on the application form.**
- 16. Can my children receive free meals if they qualified for free meals in another district? No.** You must **first** complete a meal benefit application for Poway Unified School District.
- 17. How can my child owe money if he or she is authorized free meals? Your child may have purchased an a la carte item (i.e., juice) that is not free. Also, your child may have consumed meals before your application was officially approved. Parents are responsible for all food items consumed by their children in both cases.**
- 18. Can homeless, runaway, and migrant children get free meals? Yes, children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant qualify for free meals. 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 Alternative Programs at 748-0010 ext. 2530 to see if your children meet the criteria for homeless, runaway, and migrant.**
- 19. Who has permission to see my application for free and reduced price meals? The authorizing official and specific Board approved school district officials.**
- 20. What is the process for my child to get free or reduced price breakfasts/lunches at the school site? Please inform your child to go to the school nutrition center and enter his or her six (6) digit Personal Identification Number (PIN) on the keypad next to the cashier station. Note: Secondary school students must select a school lunch. A La Carte items are not included in the free and reduced price meal benefits and all students must pay the full price for each item.**
- 21. 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.
- 22. Will the information I give be checked? Yes, and we may also ask you to send written proof.**