

Allegheny Valley School District / Child Nutrition Department

School Year 2021-2022 / Letter to Household

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn and **Allegheny Valley** offers healthy meals every school day. The district will be participating in the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) in the 2021-2022 school year. All enrolled students are eligible to receive a free breakfast and lunch meal each school day at no charge. *Households are still encouraged to apply for Free/Reduced price meals to allow families to participate in other benefits and for carryover use in the 2022-2023 school year. Below are some common questions and answers to aid in the process of determining your child's eligibility.

- 1. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD?** No. Families can apply online for free or reduced school meals at www.schoolcafe.com. If you are unable to complete an online application, you can request a Meals and/or Special Milk Program Family Application from your child's school office.
- 2. WHO SHOULD I INCLUDE AS MEMBERS OF MY HOUSEHOLD?** You must include all those living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends), who share income and expenses. You must include yourself and all children living with you. If you live with other people who are economically independent (for example, people who you do not support, who do not share income with you or your children, and who pay a pro-rated share of expenses), do not include them. Please write a 0 in the income field for household members that do not receive the types of income asked for on the form, or receive no income at all.



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

- 3. WHO CAN GET FREE/REDUCED MEALS?** All children in households receiving benefits from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) can get free meals regardless of your income. This includes children living in the household who do not receive SNAP or TANF. Your children can get free/reduced meals if your household's gross income is within the free/reduced limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. The required Federal Eligibility Income Chart is included in this letter.
- 4. CAN FOSTER CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS?** Yes, foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court, are eligible for free meals. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free meals regardless of income and should be included on the household application.
- 5. CAN HOMELESS, RUNAWAY, HEAD START AND MIGRANT CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS?** Yes, children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, head start or migrant qualify for free meals. If you haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail your child's school office to see if they qualify.
- 6. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS?** No, but please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. Call the school if you have questions.
- 7. 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 by **October 04, 2021** unless the school told you that your child is eligible for free meals for the new school year.
- 8. 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 fill out an application.
- 9. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED?** Yes and we may also ask you to send written proof.
- 10. 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 or reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.
- 11. 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 calling or writing to: **Hamsini Rajgopal, Business Manager at 724-274-5300 or email at: hrajgopal@avsd.k12.pa.us**
- 12. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN?** Yes. You or your children do not have to be U.S. citizens to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
- 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. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.

- 14. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE INCLUDE OUR HOUSING ALLOWANCE AS INCOME?** If you get an off-base housing allowance, it must be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income.
- 15. MY SPOUSE IS DEPLOYED TO A COMBAT ZONE. IS THEIR 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.
- 16. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR?** To find out how to apply for SNAP and/or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1-800-692-7462 (1-800-451-5886 TDD number for individuals with hearing impairments).

If you have other questions or need help, call the eligibility office at 724-274-2105.

Your children may qualify for Free or Reduced Priced Meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

Reduced Price Income Guideline Limits July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022					
Family Size	Annually	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	23,828	1,986	993	917	459
2	32,227	2,686	1,343	1,240	620
3	40,626	3,386	1,693	1,563	782
4	49,025	4,086	2,053	1,886	943
5	57,424	4,786	2,393	2,209	1,105
6	65,823	5,486	2,743	2,532	1,266
7	74,222	6,186	3,093	2,855	1,428
8	82,621	6,886	3,443	3,178	1,589
For each additional family member add:					
	8,399	700	350	319	162

Use of Information Statement: This explains how we will use the information you give us.

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the last four digits of the social security number of the adult household member who signs the application. The last four digits of the social security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals, and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs. We may share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews, and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer>, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

Submit your completed form or letter 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;
2. Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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