



NORTH EAST SCHOOL DISTRICT

Instructions to apply online for Free or Reduced Meal Benefits

- Go to the North East School District website at www.NESD1.org.
- Click ***Departments***
- Click ***Food Service***
- Click ***SchoolCafe***
- Sign into your existing *SchoolCafe* account or create a new account by following the prompts.
- After logging into your account, click ***Apply*** under the Dashboard / Benefits section and follow the prompts.

After your application is submitted, your eligibility will be determined and you will receive confirmation of approval or denial.

North East School District

Children need healthy meals to learn. **North East School District** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast is available at no charge to all students. Lunch will be free to all students in Elementary School, grades K-5. Lunch costs \$2.15 for Middle School and High School students, grades 6-12. **Your Middle School and/or High School child(ren) may also qualify for free or for reduced price meals.**

During the 2024-2025 School Year, all schools participating in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) are to provide free breakfasts for all enrolled students. Additionally, students identified as eligible for free or reduced-price lunches through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) will not be charged for their lunch. Snacks and a la carte purchases are not free.

This packet includes the instructions to apply for free and reduced-price meal benefits. Although Elementary School students will receive free lunch, all households who do not receive SNAP or TANF benefits and feel your income falls within the income eligibility chart below are encouraged to submit an income application to qualify for other district program benefits, regardless of your child's grade level. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

If you have received a **NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION** letter 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.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS OR SPECIAL MILK?

- All children in households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly the Food Stamp Program) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits 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.

INCOME ELIGIBILITY REDUCED PRICE GUIDELINES JULY 1, 2024-JUNE 30, 2025

Family Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$27,861	\$2,322	\$1,161	\$1,072	\$536
2	\$37,814	\$3,152	\$1,576	\$1,455	\$728
3	\$47,767	\$3,981	\$1,991	\$1,838	\$919
4	\$57,720	\$4,810	\$2,405	\$2,220	\$1,110
5	\$67,673	\$5,640	\$2,820	\$2,603	\$1,302
6	\$77,626	\$6,469	\$3,235	\$2,986	\$1,493
7	\$87,579	\$7,299	\$3,650	\$3,369	\$1,685
8	\$97,532	\$8,128	\$4,064	\$3,752	\$1,876
Each additional family member add:	+\$9,953	+\$830	+\$415	+\$383	+\$192

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, call or email NESD Administration Office at 814-725-8671, ext. 3910 or lboltz@nesd1.org.
3. DO I NEED TO COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. *Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application for all students in your household.* An incomplete application cannot be approved so be sure to enter all required information. You may request a paper application from the school at any time. If a paper application is used, return it to: NESD Administration Office, 50 E. Division St., North East, PA 16428.
4. SHOULD I COMPLETE AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? No, but read the letter you received carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification letter, contact NESD Administration Office at 814-725-8671, ext. 3910 or lboltz@nesd1.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 <https://www.nesd1.org/departments/food-service> or visit the PA Department of Human Services website at www.compass.state.pa.us.
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 30 operating school days of this school year. You must complete a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.

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. Submit an application to confirm.
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 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/or reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.
10. WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION? You should speak with school officials. You may also request a hearing by calling or writing to: NESD Administration Office, 50 E. Division St., North East, PA 16428, 814-725-8671, ext. 3910 or, lboltz@nesd1.org.
11. MAY 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.
12. WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME? Enter 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, enter \$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 that you are asked to report on the application or may not receive income at all. Whenever this happens, enter a 0 in the field. If any income fields are left blank, those will also be counted as zeroes. Be careful when leaving income fields blank, as it will be assumed 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. Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.
15. WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? There is no limit when applying online. For paper applications, list any additional household members on a separate piece of paper and attach it to your application or contact NESD Administration Office at 814-725-8671, ext. 3910 or lboltz@nesd1.org to request a second paper 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, visit www.compass.state.pa.us, contact your local county assistance office, or call 1-800-692-7462.

If you have other questions or require assistance, please call 814-725-8671, ext. 3910.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

ATTENTION: If you speak Spanish, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Contact your child's school.

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Comuníquese con la escuela de su niño.

HOW TO APPLY FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL MEALS

Use these instructions to help complete the online application for free or reduced-price school meals.

Submit only one application per household, even if your children attend more than one school within the North East School District.

STUDENTS TAB

Enter each student grades K-12 attending North East School District who are:

- Supported with the household's income, even if they are not related to you.
- In your care under a foster arrangement, or qualify as homeless, migrant, or runaway youth;

NOTE: They do NOT have to be related to you to be a part of your household.

Report all income earned or received by children. Report the combined gross income for each child in your household.

What is Child Income? Child income is money received from outside your household that is paid DIRECTLY to your children. Many households do not have any child income.

Sources of Income for Children	
Sources of Child Income	Example(s)
- Earnings from work	- A child has a regular full or part-time job where they earn a salary or wages
- Social Security <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disability Payments• Survivor's Benefits	- A child is blind or disabled and receives Social Security benefits - A parent is disabled, retired, or deceased, and their child receives Social Security benefits
- Income from person outside the household	- A friend or extended family member regularly gives a child spending money
- Income from any other source	- A child receives regular income from a private pension fund, annuity, or trust

ASSISTANCE TAB

If anyone in your household (including you) currently participates in one or more of the assistance programs listed below, your children are eligible for free school meals:

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

If anyone in your household participates in any of the above listed programs, enter the case number. You only need to provide one case number. If you participate in one of these programs and do not know your case number, contact: 1-877-395-8930 or your local assistance office.

HOUSEHOLD TAB

Enter ALL members in your household including adults, infants and children not attending North East School District who live with you and share income and expenses, even if they are not related and even if they do not receive income of their own.

Do NOT include:

- School age children entered in the STUDENTS tab.
- People who live with you but are not supported by your household's income AND do not contribute income to your household.

Report the gross income earned or received by each household member.

Sources of Income for Adults		
Earnings from Work	Public Assistance / Alimony / Child Support	Pensions / Retirement / All Other Income
<p>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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gross Salary, wages, cash bonuses •Net income from self- employment (farm or business) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. ○ Reporting Annual Income is allowable for seasonal or self-employment •U.S. Military: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Basic pay and cash bonuses (do NOT include combat pay, FSSA or privatized housing allowances) ○ Allowances for off-base housing, food, and clothing 	<p>Report all income that applies in the "Public Assistance/ Child Support/Alimony" field on the application. <u>Do not report the cash value of any public assistance benefits NOT listed on the chart.</u> If income is received from child support or alimony, only report court-ordered payments. Informal but regular payments should be reported as "other" income in the next part.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment benefits • Worker's compensation • Supplemental Security Income (SSI) • Cash assistance from State or local government • Alimony payments • Child support payments • Veteran's benefits • Strike benefits 	<p>Report all income that applies in the "Pensions/ Retirement/All Other Income" field on the application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Security (including railroad retirement and black lung benefits) • Private pensions or disability benefits • Regular income from trusts or estates • Annuities • Investment income • Earned interest • Rental income • Regular cash payments from outside household

Child income is money received from outside your household that is paid DIRECTLY to your children. Many households do not have any child income.

Sources of Income for Children	
Sources of Child Income	Example(s)
- Earnings from work	- A child has a regular full or part-time job where they earn a salary or wages
- Social Security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Payments • Survivor's Benefits 	- A child is blind or disabled and receives Social Security benefits - A parent is disabled, retired, or deceased, and their child receives Social Security benefits
- Income from person outside the household	- A friend or extended family member regularly gives a child spending money
- Income from any other source	- A child receives regular income from a private pension fund, annuity, or trust