

Press Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Income Guidelines for Free and Reduced-Price Meals Announced

National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Special Milk, and Child and Adult Care Food Programs Are Affected

LANSING – The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is announcing release of the national household income guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for free and reduced-price meals and free milk through the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Special Milk, and Child and Adult Care Food Programs.

The income guidelines are effective now through June 30, 2026.

While all public schools across Michigan are encouraged to continue to offer meals free under the [Michigan School Meals](#) program, the income guidelines that are being announced remain critical for families whose children attend schools that do not offer free meals to all children through Michigan School Meals or whose children participate in other nutrition programs such as the Special Milk and Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Under USDA guidelines, families that qualify based on their household income can receive meals for their children at free or reduced prices. These guidelines aim to help make sure that no child goes hungry during the day, leading to better learning and overall health.

“Goal 3 of [Michigan’s Top 10 Strategic Education Plan](#) is to improve the health, safety, and wellness of all learners,” said State Superintendent Dr. Michael F. Rice. “Providing all children with access to nutritious food so that they can learn and grow is an important part of that goal. I urge families that may be eligible to apply for these benefits.”

To qualify:

- Families should contact their school, school district, childcare center, or family day care home sponsor to find out whether they participate in these programs.
- Schools, childcare centers, adult day care centers, and family day care home sponsors will provide an application or form for households to complete. If all children in a household attend the same school or center, only one form is required per household.
- Adults, children, or children experiencing foster care who get support from various programs such as Michigan's Family Independence Program, Food Assistance Program, or Food Distribution Program on Tribal Lands, or who are enrolled in Head Start, an at-risk afterschool center, or an emergency shelter, are automatically eligible for free meals. Households that receive Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals by filling out an application.

Households with incomes less than or equal to the following guidelines qualify for free or reduced-price meals or free milk:

Total Family Size	Scale for Free Meals or Free Milk	Scale for Free Meals or Free Milk	Scale for Reduced Price Meals	Scale for Reduced Price Meals
	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly
1	\$20,345	\$1,696	\$28,953	\$2,413
2	\$27,495	\$2,292	\$39,128	\$3,261
3	\$34,645	\$2,888	\$49,303	\$4,109
4	\$41,795	\$3,483	\$59,478	\$4,957
5	\$48,945	\$4,079	\$69,653	\$5,805
6	\$56,095	\$4,675	\$79,828	\$6,653
7	\$63,245	\$5,271	\$90,003	\$7,501

8	\$70,395	\$5,867	\$100,178	\$8,349
For each additional family member add:	\$7,150	\$596	\$10,175	\$848

An application to a school, childcare center, adult day care center, or family day care home sponsor can be approved if it contains complete documentation of household income, or documentation of current participation in Michigan's Family Independence Program, Food Assistance Program, or Food Distribution Program on Tribal Lands. Participating schools, childcare centers, adult day care centers, and family day care home sponsors accept these applications at any time during the year. A household may qualify due to a temporary loss of income, such as a period of unemployment.

Information supplied on an application may be verified at any time. In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability. An appeal procedure is available for households for which applications are denied.

This notification is required every year by the USDA to recognize changes in the consumer price index. For some public schools that participate in the Michigan School Meals program, families will still need to complete the Education and Nutrition Benefits application, or the Education Benefits form available from the school. These forms help decide if a local district can get other state funding and may help a household qualify for other support such as Pay to Play waivers, field trip support, and testing fees. Check with the school to see which application or form needs to be completed. [Income Guidelines for School Nutrition Programs Frequently Asked Questions](#) are available.

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