

Instructions for Public Media Release Universal Meals

Local educational agencies (LEA) are required to send a public media release (PMR) for free and reduced-price (F/RP) meals to the local media or post in a public place each school year, unless the school is (1) a boarding school, (2) a residential child care institution without day students, or (3) a school that includes food service fees in tuition and all students are provided the same meals per Title 7, *Code of Federal Regulations*, Section 245.5(a).

Per *Education Code (EC)* 49501.5, public school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools serving students in grades transitional kindergarten through grade 12 (TK–12) are required to provide two meals free of charge (breakfast and lunch) during each school day to students requesting a meal, regardless of their free or reduced-price meal eligibility. While meals must be provided at no charge, **LEAs are still required to make eligibility determinations through the collection of meal applications and direct certification.**

Near the beginning of each school year, LEAs must notify the public that F/RP meals are available. LEAs must provide the PMR to the local news media, the local unemployment office, and any major employers who are contemplating large layoffs in the attendance area of the school.

The PMR must contain the same information supplied in the letter to households, except the PMR must contain both the free and reduced-price Income Eligibility Guidelines.

The LEA must sign, date, and send the PMR to the local media requesting that the release be published at no charge as a public service to the community. If your community does not have local media sources (i.e., newspaper, television, radio, podcast, etc.), post the PMR in several community areas (i.e., post office, community centers). You are not required to incur costs to have the PMR published and the local media is not required to publish it.

Make sure to keep a copy of the PMR and record the date when it was submitted, who it was sent to, and where the release was published/posted.

School Year 25-26

Public Media Release for Universal Meals

Bellevue Elementary School announces its policy to serve nutritious meals every school day under the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and/or Afterschool Snack Program. Breakfasts and lunches will be served free of charge every school day, but Bellevue Elementary is still required to make eligibility determinations for free and reduced-price meals. Effective July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026, children are considered eligible for free or reduced-price meals if the household income is less than or equal to the federal guidelines.

Income Eligibility Guidelines for Free Meals, Snacks and Milk in Child Nutrition Programs

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$ 20,345	\$ 1,696	\$ 848	\$ 783	\$ 392
2	\$ 27,495	\$ 2,292	\$ 1,146	\$ 1,058	\$ 529
3	\$ 34,645	\$ 2,888	\$ 1,444	\$ 1,333	\$ 667
4	\$ 41,795	\$ 3,483	\$ 1,742	\$ 1,608	\$ 804
5	\$ 48,945	\$ 4,079	\$ 2,040	\$ 1,883	\$ 942
6	\$ 56,095	\$ 4,675	\$ 2,338	\$ 2,158	\$ 1,079
7	\$ 63,245	\$ 5,271	\$ 2,636	\$ 2,433	\$ 1,217
8	\$ 70,395	\$ 5,867	\$ 2,934	\$ 2,708	\$ 1,354
For each additional family member, add:	\$ 7,150	\$ 596	\$ 298	\$ 275	\$ 138

Income Eligibility Guidelines for Reduced Meals or Snacks in Child Nutrition Programs

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$ 28,953	\$ 2,413	\$ 1,207	\$ 1,114	\$ 557
2	\$ 39,128	\$ 3,261	\$ 1,631	\$ 1,505	\$ 753
3	\$ 49,303	\$ 4,109	\$ 2,055	\$ 1,897	\$ 949
4	\$ 59,478	\$ 4,957	\$ 2,479	\$ 2,288	\$ 1,144
5	\$ 69,653	\$ 5,805	\$ 2,903	\$ 2,679	\$ 1,340
6	\$ 79,828	\$ 6,653	\$ 3,327	\$ 3,071	\$ 1,536
7	\$ 90,003	\$ 7,501	\$ 3,751	\$ 3,462	\$ 1,731
8	\$ 100,178	\$ 8,349	\$ 4,175	\$ 3,853	\$ 1,927
For each additional family member, add:	\$ 10,175	\$ 848	\$ 424	\$ 392	\$ 196

Households do not need to turn in an application when the household receives a notification letter saying that all children automatically qualify for free meals when any household member receives benefits from CalFresh, CalWORKs, or FDPIR. Children who meet the definition of foster, homeless, migrant, or runaway, and children enrolled in their school's Head Start program are eligible for free meals. Contact school officials if any child in the household is not on the notification letter. The household must let school officials know if they do not want to be considered eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Applications will be sent to the household with a letter about the school meal program. While breakfasts and lunches will be provided free of charge every school day, determining eligibility for free and reduced-price meals is still necessary and these determinations can be used to qualify households for other benefits. Households interested in establishing eligibility for meal benefits, must fill out one application for all children in the household and give it to the nutrition office at 22736 Kuien Mill Road, Sonora, Ca 95370. For a simple and secure method to apply, use our online application at [\[insert web address\]](#). Contact [\[insert name\]](#) at [\[insert phone number\]](#) for help filling out the application. The school will provide notification regarding the outcome of your applications.

Households may turn in an application at any time during the school year. If you are not eligible now, but your household income goes down, household size goes up, or a household member starts receiving CalFresh, CalWORKs, or FDPIR, you may turn in an application at that time. Information given on the application will be used to determine eligibility and may be verified at any time during the school year by school officials. The last four digits of the Social Security number from any adult household or checking that you do not have a Social Security number is required if you include income on the application.

Households that receive Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits, may be considered eligible for free or reduced-price meals by filling out an application.

Foster children are considered eligible for free meals and may be included as a household member if the foster family chooses to also apply for the non-foster children on the same application. Including foster children as a household member may help the non-foster children qualify for free or reduced-price meals. If the non-foster children are not eligible, this does not keep foster children from being considered eligible for free meals.

Your child's eligibility status from last school year will continue into the new school year for up to 30 school days or until the school processes your new application, or your child is otherwise certified for free or reduced-price meals. School officials do not have to send reminder or expired eligibility notices.

If you do not agree with the decision or results of verification, you may discuss it with school officials. You also have the right to a fair hearing, which may be requested by calling or writing the hearing official: Carmel Portillo, Superintendent, 22736 Kuien Mill Road, Sonora, CA 95370. (209) 586-5510.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, [AD-3027](#)  [\(PDF\)](#), found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint 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, Mail Stop 9410
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

2. fax:
202-690-7442; or

3. email:
Program.Intake@usda.gov.

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