

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FREE & REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS 2015-2016

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Cranston Public Schools** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **\$0.00**; lunch costs **\$2.50 for elementary and \$3.25 for secondary**. **Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals.** Reduced price is **\$0.00** for breakfast and **\$0.40** for lunch. This packet includes an application for free or reduced price meal benefits, and a set of detailed instructions. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?

- All children in households receiving benefits from **RI SNAP**, or **RI TANF**, are eligible for free meals.
- Foster children that 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.

Federal Eligibility Income Chart for School Year 2015-2016			
HOUSEHOLD SIZE	YEARLY	MONTHLY	WEEKLY
1	21,775	1,815	419
2	29,471	2,456	567
3	37,167	3,098	715
4	44,863	3,739	863
5	52,559	4,380	1,011
6	60,255	5,022	1,159
7	67,951	5,663	1,307
8	75,647	6,304	1,455
For each additional family member, add...	+7,696	+642	+148

- 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 haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail **Norma Cole, Assistant Superintendent, Cranston Public Schools, (401) 270-8178, ncole@cpsed.net**.
- 3. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD?** No. *Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application for all students in your household.* We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. Return the completed application to: **Cranston Public Schools, Grant Office, 845 Park Ave., Cranston, RI 02910, (401) 270-8197.**
- 4. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS?** No, but please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact **Cranston Public Schools, Grant Office, 845 Park Ave., Cranston, RI 02910, (401) 270-8197, sscuncio@cpsed.net** immediately.

5. 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 few days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.
6. 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 send in an application.
7. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
8. 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 reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.
9. 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: **Raymond Votto, Cranston Public schools, 845 Park Ave., Cranston, RI 02920, (401) 270-8189, rvotto@cpsed.net.**
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT? Household members may not receive some types of income we ask you to report on the application, or may not receive income at all. Whenever this happens, please write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zeroes. Please be careful when leaving income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.
13. 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.
14. WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? List any additional household members on a separate piece of paper, and attach it to your application. Contact **Cranston Public Schools, Grant Office, 845 Park Ave., Cranston, RI 02910, (401) 270-8197, sscuncio@cpsed.net** immediately.
15. to receive a second application.
16. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for **RI SNAP** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call **the Department of Human Services at (401) 462-5300.**

If you have other questions or need help, call **(401) 270-8197.**

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Balducci
CFO, Cranston Public Schools
(401) 270-8196

Optional: Children Racial and Ethnic Identities

We are required to ask for information about your children's race and ethnicity. This information is important and helps to make sure we are fully serving our community. Responding to this section is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility for free or reduced price meal

Ethnicity (check one):

- Hispanic or Latino
- Non-Hispanic or Latino

Race (check one or more):

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

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Household Size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	21,775	1,815	419
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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 FDIPIR 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.

DO NOT FILL OUT THIS PART. THIS IS FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY.

Annual Income Conversion: Weekly x 52, Every 2 Weeks x 26, Twice A Month x 24 Monthly x 12

Total Income: _____ Per: Week, Every 2 Weeks, Twice A Month, Month, Year

Household size: _____ Date Withdrawn: _____ Eligibility: Free _____ Reduced _____ Denied _____

Categorical Eligibility: _____ Reason: _____

Determining Official's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Confirming Official's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Verifying Official's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at https://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Further, the Rhode Island Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, race, color, religion, national origin or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination with the State of Rhode Island, write to the Rhode Island Department of Education, Director, Office of Equity and Access, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 or call (401) 222-8979.

**NEW! Pay for Student Fees Online**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Cranston Public Schools is excited to offer **MySchoolBucks® School Store!** This online payment service provides a quick and easy way to pay for school-related purchases. You can now pay for items such as **Meal Plan Payment** and more using your credit/debit card or electronic check.

MySchoolBucks provides:

- **Convenience** - Available 24/7 on the web.
- **Efficiency** - Make purchases for all your students, even if they attend different schools within the district. Eliminate the need for your students to take money to school.
- **Flexibility** - Make payments using credit/debit cards and electronic checks.
- **Security** – MySchoolBucks adheres to the highest security standards, including PCI and CISP.

Enrollment is easy!

If you are already using MySchoolBucks to pay for school meals, your account is already set-up and ready to go! Just login and click on the new link to Store.

1. Go to www.MySchoolBucks.com and register for a free account.
2. You will receive a confirmation email with a link to activate your account.
3. Add your students using their school name and student ID.
4. Make purchases with your credit/debit card or electronic check.
A program fee may apply. You will have the opportunity to review any fees and cancel if you choose, before you are charged.

If you have any questions, contact MySchoolBucks directly:

- parentsupport@myschoolbucks.com
- 1-855-832-5226
- Visit myschoolbucks.com and click on Help/FAQ's

Thank you,

Cranston Public Schools
845 Park Avenue
Cranston, RI 02910