

August 24, 2016

Dear Parents,

The 2016-2017 school year is upon us! The staff and faculty are very excited to welcome your children for a new year. We know that the start of the school year is a busy time for all!!

We hope you are now familiar with the food service upgrade in Infinite Campus. You can make one payment at any school and the program will use the family account to track your balances. Your journal balance can be accessed through your parent portal, just click "food services" in the portal. Remember to check the balance often.

I would also like to encourage all parents to complete an application for "Free and Reduced Lunches". This not only helps in your household expenses it also helps the school when applying for various grants. The information is completely **CONFIDENTIAL** and the 2016-17 application can be obtained from any school's office, or on our school website anytime during the school year. Applications must be submitted annually. If your family was on Free/Reduced the previous year you **MUST reapply BEFORE** October 1<sup>st</sup> of the new year to see if you qualify for Free/Reduced in the current year. Otherwise, any charges you incur after October 1<sup>st</sup> will have to be paid in full by you.

One item you need to remember is the mandate that schools must charge for a second entrée! Students who wish to have seconds of the main lunch item will have to pay twenty cents (\$.20). This is a state mandate for all school systems. This applies to **ALL** students including those in the free and reduced lunch program. The good news however is that the salad bar and non-entrée items are **FREE** seconds to all students.

If your child(ren) are on free and reduced and bring a cold lunch and wish to have school milk they will be charged thirty five cents (.35). Milk is not covered under free and reduced.

I hope you had a relaxing and fun summer. I look forward to seeing parents as the fall progresses.

Sincerely,

John Fitzgerald, Superintendent

# FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Red Lodge School Dist. offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs K-6 \$1.50, 7-12 \$2.00; lunch costs K-6 \$2.50, 7-12 \$2.75. **Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals.** 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 **SNAP, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) or 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 2016-17			
Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	21,978	1,832	423
2	29,637	2,470	570
3	37,296	3,108	718
4	44,955	3,747	865
5	52,614	4,385	1,012
6	60,273	5,023	1,160
7	67,951	5,663	1,307
8	75,647	6,304	1,455
Each additional person:	7,646	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 John Fitzgerald.
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* if all children attend Red Lodge School Dist. We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. Return the completed application to one of your children's school.
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 John Fitzgerald 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, through October 1. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. If you do not send in a new application that is approved by the school or you have not been notified that your child is eligible for free meals, your child will be charged the full price for meals.
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: John Fitzgerald.
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, 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 any school to receive a second application.
15. 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, call the Montana Public Assistance Helpline at 1-888-706-1535, apply online at [www.apply.mt.gov](http://www.apply.mt.gov) or contact a local assistance office.

If you have other questions or need help, call 446-2110.

Sincerely,

John Fitzgerald

## Application Instructions -Free and Reduced-price School Meals

Please use these instructions to help you fill out the application for free or reduced price school meals. You only need to submit one application per household if your children attend Red Lodge School Dist. The application must be filled out completely to certify your children for free or reduced price school meals. Please follow these instructions in order! Each step of the instructions is the same as the steps on your application. If at any time you are not sure what to do next, please contact Red Lodge School Dist. 406-446-2110. Please use a pen (not a pencil) to complete the application and print clearly.

### STEP 1: List all CHILDREN in the household.

Tell us how many infants, children, and school students live in your household. They do NOT have to be related to you to be a part of your household.

#### Who should I list here?

- Children age 18 or under and are supported with the household's income;
- Children in your care under a foster arrangement, or who qualify as homeless, migrant, or runaway youth;
- Students attending Red Lodge School Dist. *regardless of age.*

**A) List each child's name.** For each child, print their first name, middle initial and last name. Use one line of the application for each child. If there are more children present than lines on the application, attach a second piece of paper with all required information for the additional children.

**B) Is the child a student?** If attending school, indicate the name of school and grade level for each child and mark 'Yes' or 'No' under the column titled "Student" to tell us which children attend **Red Lodge School Dist.**

**C) Are any children homeless, runaway, or migrant?** If you believe any child listed in this section may meet this description, please mark the "Homeless, Migrant, Runaway" box next to the child's name and **complete all steps of the application.**

**D) Do you have any foster children?** If any children listed are foster children, mark the "Foster Child" box next to the child's name. Foster children who live with you may count as members of your household and should be listed on your application. If you are *only* applying for foster children, after completing STEP 1, skip to STEP 4 of the application and these instructions.

### STEP 2: Participation in SNAP, TANF or FDPIR?

**If anyone in your household participates in any of the programs below, your children are eligible for free school meals:**

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

**A) IF NO ONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATES IN ANY OF THE ABOVE LISTED PROGRAMS:**

- Mark 'NO' in the box and skip to STEP 3 on these instructions and STEP 3 on your application.
- Leave the MT Case# blank.

**B) IF ANYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATES IN ANY OF THE ABOVE LISTED PROGRAMS:**

- Mark 'YES' in the box and provide a MT case number for SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR. You only need to write one case number. If you participate in SNAP and do not know your case number, contact: 1-866-850-1556. You must provide a MT case number on your application if you marked the box "YES."
- Skip to STEP 4.

### STEP 3: Report Income for ALL Household Members.

**A) Child Income. Report all income earned by children.** Refer to the chart titled "Sources of Income for Children" in these instructions and report the combined gross income for ALL children listed in Step 1 in your household in the box marked "Total Child Income." **Only** count foster children's income if you are applying for them together with the rest of your household. It is optional for the household to list foster children living with them as part of the household.

#### What is Child Income?

Child income is money received from outside your household that is paid directly to your children on a regular/frequent basis. Many households do not have any child income. Use the chart below to determine if your household has child income to report.

Sources of Income for Children	
Sources of Child Income	Example(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular earnings from work</li> <li>• Social Security                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Disability Payments</li> <li>○ Survivor's Benefits</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A child has a job where they earn a salary or wages.</li> <li>• A child is blind or disabled and receives Social Security benefits.</li> <li>• A parent is disabled, retired, or deceased, and their child receives social security benefits.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income from persons <i>outside</i> the household</li> <li>Income from any other source</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A friend or extended family member <i>regularly</i> gives a child spending money.</li> <li>A child receives income from a private pension fund, annuity, or trust.</li> </ul>
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**B) Adult Income.** Print the first and last name of all Household Members not listed in STEP 1 even if no one receives income.

**Adult Income - Who should I list here?**  
 When filling out this section, please include all members in your household who are:

- Living with you and share income and expenses, even if not related and even if they do not receive income of their own.

Do not include people who:

- Live with you but are not supported by your household's income and who do not contribute income to your household.
- Children and students already listed in Step 1. If a child listed in STEP 1 has income, follow the instructions in STEP 3, part A.

**C) Sources of Income.**

**Report earnings from work.** Refer to the chart titled "Sources of Income for Adults" in these instructions and 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. This is calculated by subtracting the total operating expenses of your business from its gross receipts or revenue.

**Report income from Public Assistance/Child Support/Alimony.** Refer to the chart titled "Sources of Income for Adults" in these instructions and report all income that applies in the "Public Assistance/Child Support/Alimony" field on the application. Do not report the value of any cash value public assistance benefits NOT listed on the chart. If income is received from child support or alimony, only **court-ordered** payments should be reported here. Informal but regular payments should be reported as "other" income in the next part.

**Report income from Pensions/Retirement/All other income.** Refer to the chart titled "Sources of Income for Adults" in these instructions and report all income that applies in the "Pensions/Retirement/All Other Income" field on the application.

**How do I fill in the amount and how often it is received?**  
*For each type of income.*

- Report all amounts as gross income ONLY. Report income in whole dollars. Do not include cents.
  - Gross income is the total income received before taxes or deductions.
  - Many people think of income as the amount they "take home" and not the total, "gross" amount. Make sure that the income you report on this application has NOT been reduced to pay for taxes, insurance premiums, or any other amounts taken from your pay.
- Write a "0" in any fields where there is no income to report. Any income fields left empty or blank will be counted as zeroes. If you write '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report. If local officials have known or available information that your household income was reported incorrectly, your application will be verified for cause.
- Mark the circle to the right of the dollar amount to indicate how often income is received.

**Use this chart to determine if your household has income to report.**

Sources of Income for Adults		
Earnings from Work	Public Assistance/Child Support/Alimony	Pensions/Retirement/All Other Income
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salary, wages, cash bonuses</li> <li>Net income from self-employment (farm or business)</li> <li>Strike benefits</li> </ul> <p><b>If you are in the U.S. Military:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic pay and cash bonuses (do NOT include combat pay, FSSA or privatized housing allowances)</li> <li>Allowances for off-base housing, food, and clothing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unemployment benefits</li> <li>Worker's compensation</li> <li>Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</li> <li>Cash assistance from State or local government</li> <li>Alimony payments</li> <li>Child support payments</li> <li>Veteran's benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Security (including railroad retirement and black lung benefits)</li> <li>Private Pensions or disability</li> <li>Income from trusts or estates</li> <li>Annuities</li> <li>Investment income</li> <li>Earned interest</li> <li>Rental income</li> <li>Regular cash payments from outside household</li> </ul>

**D) Report total household size.** Enter the total number of household members in the field "Total Household Members (Children and Adults)." This number **MUST** be equal to the number of household members listed in STEP 1 and STEP 3. If there are any members of your household that you have not listed on the application, go back and add them. It is very important to list all household members, as the size of your household determines your income cutoff for free and reduced price meals.

**E) Provide the last four digits of your Social Security Number.** The household's primary wage earner or another adult household member must enter the last four digits of their Social Security Number in the space provided. **You are eligible to apply for benefits even if you do not have a Social Security Number.** If no adult household members have a Social Security Number, leave this space blank and mark the box to the right labeled "Check if no SSN."

**STEP 4: Contact Information and Adult Signature**

All applications must be signed by an adult member of the household. By signing the application, that household member is promising that all information has been truthfully and completely reported. Please also make sure you have read the privacy and civil rights statements on the back of the application.

**A) Provide your contact information.** Write your current address in the fields provided if this information is available. If you have no permanent address, this does not make your children ineligible for free or reduced price school meals. Sharing a phone number, email address, or both is optional, but helps us reach you quickly if we need to contact you.

**B) Sign and print your name.** Print and sign your name in the designated boxes for the adult completing the form.

**C) Write Today's Date.** In the space provided, write today's date in the box.

**D) Share children's Racial and Ethnic Identities (optional).** On the back of the application, we ask you to share information about your children's race and ethnicity.



**OPTIONAL**

**Children's Racial and Ethnic Identities**

Collecting racial and ethnic information 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 meals.

**Ethnicity:**

Hispanic or Latino  
 Not Hispanic or Latino

**Race:**

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

*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: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_cust.html) 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 (566) 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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

**USDA is an equal opportunity provider.**

**Free/Reduced Price School Meals Income Guidelines**

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice a Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	21,978	1,832	916	846	423
2	29,637	2,470	1,235	1,140	570
3	37,296	3,108	1,554	1,435	718
4	44,955	3,747	1,874	1,730	865
5	52,614	4,385	2,193	2,024	1,012
6	60,273	5,023	2,512	2,319	1,160
7	67,932	5,663	2,832	2,614	1,307
8	75,591	6,304	3,152	2,910	1,455
Each additional family member	+7,696	+642	+321	+296	+148

# Buying Good Food is a SNAP!

**What is SNAP?**

SNAP is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program designed to help households afford healthy food.

Apply online at: [www.apply.mt.gov](http://www.apply.mt.gov)

**Where do I start?**

Contact the Montana Food Bank Network at (406) 239-6475 or [SNAP@mfbn.org](mailto:SNAP@mfbn.org). An Outreach worker can assist you with:

1. Determining whether you may qualify.
2. Filling out an application for SNAP benefits online or by phone.
3. Submitting verification of income & expenses.
4. Understanding the SNAP application process.

**Not sure if you want to apply?**

Complete the easy pre-screening tool:

[www.apply.mt.gov](http://www.apply.mt.gov)

Or contact the Montana Food Bank Network at (406) 239-6475

**Gross Monthly Income**

Family Size	Gross Monthly Income	Net Monthly Income
1	\$1962	\$981
2	\$2655	\$1328
3	\$3349	\$1675
4	\$4042	\$2021
5	\$4735	\$2368
6	\$5429	\$2715
Additional Members	\$693	\$347

Certain households will need to meet a lower Gross Income Guideline.

\*Effective October 2015

