

Douglas Public Schools

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Douglas Public Schools** offers healthy meals every school day during the **2023-2024 School Year. All students will receive free breakfast and lunch at school.** The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has provided funding for this year through the State budget. Completing the free and reduced price application form helps our community provide free meals to students.. The information you provide is confidential. We follow strict federal rules to keep your information private.

If you are not receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and have been approved for free or reduced-price school meals, you may be eligible for SNAP which provides monthly financial assistance to purchase groceries to Massachusetts residents who qualify. Find out if you are eligible for SNAP today by calling **Project Bread's Food Source Hotline at 1-800-645-8333** and a counselor can help you apply over the phone. You can also apply on your own online at DTA Connect: <https://dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/apply>

Frequently Asked Questions

DO I NEED TO FILL OUT A FREE AND REDUCED SCHOOL MEALS 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:
Douglas Food Service Department, 21 Davis St, Douglas MA, 01516

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 received carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact **Alison Weir, aweir@douglasps.net** immediately.

MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO COMPLETE A NEW APPLICATION?

Yes. Your child's application is only good for the previous school year and for the first few days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school informed you that your child is eligible for the new school year.

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.

WHO QUALIFIES FOR FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?

This year, all students in our schools will receive free breakfast and lunch at school. But only some students qualify as "eligible" for free meals. These are:

- All children in households receiving benefits from **MA SNAP, MA TAFDC, FDPIR, or specific categories of Medicaid** 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 2023 - 2024

Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$26,973	\$2,248	\$519
2	36,482	3,041	702
3	45,991	3,833	885
4	55,500	4,625	1,068
5	65,009	5,418	1,251
6	74,518	6,210	1,434
7	84,027	7,003	1,616
8	93,536	7,795	1,799
Each additional person:	+ 9,509	+ 793	+183

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 receive free meals, please call or e-mail the Food Service Director, Alison Weir, at 508-467-3332 x2253 or aweir@douglasps.net.

I RECEIVE WIC. CAN MY CHILDREN RECIEVE FREE MEALS?

Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please send in a completed application.

WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED?

Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income that you report.

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.

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 writing to: Paul Viera, Superintendent of Schools, 21 Davis St, Douglas MA 01516, or calling 508-476-7901.

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 occasionally. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.

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.

WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE REPORT OUR INCOME DIFFERENTLY?

Your basic pay and cash bonuses must be reported as income. If you receive 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.

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. You may also Contact **Alison Weir at 508-476-3332 ext 2253 to receive a second application.**

MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR?

To find out how to apply for **MA SNAP** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call **the MA DTA Assistance Line at 1-877-382-2363 (press 7 to apply for SNAP).**

If you have other questions or need help, call **508-476-3332 ext 2253.**

Sincerely,
Alison Weir
Food Service Director
08/17/2023

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 submit all needed information, 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 primary wage earner or other adult household member who signs the application. 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 FDPIR 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.

Non-Discrimination Statement:

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/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.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.

Limited English Proficiency

ATTENTION: Language assistance services are available to you free of charge. Call 508-476-7901

Spanish

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-508-476-7901

Vietnamese

CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số 508-476-7901

Mandarin Chinese

注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 508-476-7901

Portuguese

ATENÇÃO: Se fala português, encontram-se disponíveis serviços linguísticos, grátis. Ligue para 508-476-7901

Russian

ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните 508-476-7901

Haitian Creole

ATANSYON: Si w pale Kreyòl Ayisyen, gen sèvis èd pou lang ki disponib gratis pou ou. Rele 508-476-7901

