

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS

July 1, 2025

Children need healthy meals to learn. Avon Lake City Schools offers healthy meals every school day.

Lunch costs are as follows: Grades K-4 (\$3.00), Grades 5-8 (\$3.25), and Grades 9-12 (\$3.50). Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Reduced price is \$.40 cents for lunch.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?

- All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Ohio Works First (OWF) 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 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.

Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$28,953	\$2,413	\$ 557
2	\$39,128	\$3,261	\$ 753
3	\$49,303	\$4,109	\$ 949
1	\$59,478	\$4,957	\$1,144
i	\$69,653	\$5,805	\$1,340
5	\$79,828	\$6,653	\$1,536
7	\$90,003	\$7,501	\$1,731
8	\$100,178	\$8,349	\$1,927
Each Additional Person	\$10,175	\$ 848	\$ 196

- 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 email Andrea Sokolow, Food Service Supervisor at Andrea. Sokolow@alcsoh.org or call at (440) 930-8215.
- 3. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. Use our 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 the building secretary of the oldest child in your family.
- 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. Please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact Andrea Sokolow, Food Service Supervisor at Andrea.Sokolow@alscoh.org or call (440) 930-8215.
- 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 September 30, 2024. 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 Autumn Reed, Treasurer at Avon Lake City Schools, 175 Avon Belden Road, Avon Lake, OH 44012 or email to Autumn.Reed@alcsoh.org or call at (440) 933-5163.
- 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 \$1,000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1,000 each 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 the 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 SO 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 Andrea Sokolow, Food Service Supervisor at Andrea.Sokolow@alcsoh.org or call at (440) 930-8215.
- 15. WHY AM I BEING ASKED ABOUT GIVING MY CONSENT FOR AN INSTRUCTIONAL FEE WAIVER? Ohio public schools are required to waive the school instructional fees for children who qualify for free meal benefits. School Food Service personnel must have parental consent to share student meal application if your child(ren) qualify for a fee waiver. If you agree to allow you child(ren)'s meal application to be shared with school officials to see if he/she/they qualifies for a fee waiver then check "yes" in part 5. If you do not wish for the information to be shared then check "no" in part 5. Answering this question either way will not change whether your child(ren) will get free or reduced price meals.
- 16. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for Ohio SNAP, or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 877-852-0010.

If you have other questions and/or need help, call Andrea Sokolow at (440) 930-8215 or email her at Andrea.Sokolow@alcsoh.org

Andrea Sokolow

Andrea Sokolow

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING

A household member is any child or adult living with you.

IF YOUR HOUSEHOLD RECEIVES BENEFITS FROM THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) OR OHIO WORKS FIRST (OWF), FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

- Part 1: List all household members and the school name and grade level for each child.
- Part 2: List the 7 or 10-digit case number for any household member (including adults) receiving SNAP or OWF benefits.
- Part 3: Skip this part.
- Part 4: Skip this part.
- **Part 5:** Answer yes or no and sign your name if you would like the application to be checked by school officials to determine if the child(ren) qualifies for a school instructional fee waiver.
- Part 6: Sign the form. The last four digits of a Social Security Number are **not** necessary.
- Part 7: 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 meals.

IF NO ONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD RECEIVES SNAP OR OWF BENEFITS AND IF ANY CHILD IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD IS HOMELESS, MIGRANT OR RUNAWAY, FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

- Part 1: List all household members and the school name and school grade level for each child.
- Part 2: Skip this part.
- Part 3: If any child you are applying for is homeless, migrant, or a runaway, check the appropriate box and call Andrea Sokolow, Food Service Supervisor, at Andrea.Sokolow@alcsoh.org or (440) 930-8215. If not, skip this part.
- Part 4: Complete only if a child in your household isn't eligible under Part 3. See Instruction for all other households.
- **Part 5:** Answer yes or no and sign your name if you would like the application to be checked by school officials to determine if the child(ren) qualifies for a school instructional fee waiver.
- Part 6: Sign the form. The last four digits of a Social Security Number are not necessary if you didn't need to complete in part 4.
- Part 7: 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 meals.

IF YOU APPLY FOR A FOSTER CHILD, FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

If all children in the household are foster children:

- Part 1: List all foster children and the school name and grade level for each child. Check the box that indicates the child is a foster child.
- Part 2: Skip this part.
- Part 3: Skip this part.
- Part 4: Skip this part.
- Part 5: Answer yes or no and sign your name if you would like the application to be checked by school officials to determine if the child(ren) qualifies for a school instructional fee waiver.
- Part 6: Sign the form. The last four digits of a Social Security Number are not necessary.
- Part 7: 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 meals.

If some of the children in the household are foster children:

- Part 1: List all household members and the school name and school grade level for each child. For any person, including children, with no income, you must check the "No Income" box. Check the box if the child is a foster child.
- Part 2: If the household does not have a 7 or 10-digit SNAP or OWF case number, skip this part.
- Part 3: If any child you are applying for is homeless, migrant, or a runaway check the appropriate box and call Andrea Sokolow, Food Service Supervisor, at Andrea Sokolow@alcsoh.org or (440) 930-8215. If not, skip this part.
- Part 4: Follow these instructions to report total household income from this month or last month.
 - **Box 1–Name:** List all household members with income.
 - Box 2 –Gross Income and how often it was received: For each household member, list each type of income received for the month. Check the appropriate box to note how often the person receives the income weekly, every other week, twice a month, or monthly. For earnings, list the gross income not the take-home pay. Gross income is the amount earned *before* taxes and other deductions and can be found on pay stubs. For other income, list the amount and check the box to note how often each person received assistance from welfare, child support, alimony, pensions, retirement, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veteran's benefits (VA benefits), and disability benefits. Under *All Other Income*, list Worker's Compensation, unemployment or strike benefits, regular contributions from people who do not live in your household, and any other income. Do not include income from SNAP, FDPIR, WIC, federal education benefits and foster payments received by the family from the placing agency. For ONLY the self-employed, report income after expenses under *Earnings from Work*. This is for your business, farm, or rental property. If you are in the Military Privatized Housing Initiative or receive combat pay, do not include these allowances as income.
- Part 5: Answer yes or no and sign your name if you would like the application to be checked by school officials to determine if the child(ren) qualifies for a school instructional fee waiver.
- Part 6: An adult household member must sign the form and list the last four digits of their Social Security Number (or mark the box if he or she doesn't have one).
- Part 7: 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 meals.

ALL OTHER HOUSEHOLDS (INCLUDING WIC HOUSEHOLDS) FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

- Part 1: List all household members and the school name and grade level for each child. For any person, including children, with no income, you must check the "No Income Box."
- Part 2: If the household does not have a 7 or 10-digit SNAP or OWF case number, skip this part.
- Part 3: If any child you are applying for is homeless, migrant, or a runaway check the appropriate box and call Andrea Sokolow, Food Service Supervisor, at Andrea Sokolow@alcsoh.org or (440) 930-8215. If not, skip this part.
- Part 4: Follow these instructions to report total household income from this month or last month.
 - **Box 1 Name:** List all household members with income.
 - Box 2 Gross Income and how often it was received: For each household member, list each type of income received for the month. Check the box to note how often the person receives the income weekly, every other week, twice a month, or monthly. For earnings, be sure to list the gross income not take-home pay. Gross income is the amount earned *before* taxes and other deductions and can be found on pay stubs. For other income, list the amount and check the box to note how often each person received assistance from welfare, child support, alimony, pensions, retirement, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veteran's benefits (VA benefits), and disability benefits. Under *All Other Income*, list Worker's Compensation, unemployment or strike benefits, regular contributions from people who do not live in your household, and any other income. Do not include income from SNAP, FDPIR, WIC, federal education benefits and foster payments received by the family from the placing agency. For ONLY the self-employed, report income after expenses under *Earnings from Work*. This is for your business, farm, or rental property. If you are in the Military Privatized Housing Initiative or receive combat pay, do not include these allowances as income.
- Part 5: Answer yes or no and sign your name if you would like the application to be checked by school officials to determine if the child(ren) qualifies for a school instructional fee waiver.
- Part 6: An adult household member must sign the form and list the last four digits of their Social Security Number (or mark the box if he or she doesn't have one).
- Part 7: 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 meals.

2024-2025 FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL MEALS APPLICATION

Part 1. ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS																		
Names of <u>all</u> household members (First, Middle Initial, Last)	Name of school and grade level for each child/or indicate "N/A" if child is not in school. School Grade					Check if a foster child (legal responsibility of welfare agency or court) *If all children listed below are foster children, skip to Part 5 to sign this form.						Check if No Income						
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the name and 7 or 10-digit case number for t NAME: Part 3. If any child you are applying for is	he person who	rec	eive 7 o	s bo	enef 0-DI	fits a	and skip to T CASE NU	Pa MB	art (ER	5. If ı :	no c	ne receives the	se l	ene	efits,	, ski	ip to Part 3.	
at Andrea.Sokolow@alscoh.org or (440) 930-87	nomeiess, mij 215.	gra	nt, c)r a	run	iaw	ay cneck t	ne	app	orop	riat	e box and call	And	ırea	Sok	olov	v, Food Servi	e Supervisor
Homeless Migrant Runaway Part 4. TOTAL HOUSEHOLD GROSS INCO box for how often it is received. Record each	ME (before de		tion	ıs).	List	t all	I income on	the	sa	me l	ine	as the person w	ho I	rece	ives	it. (Check the	
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Signature of Parent/Guardian:	,	•							_	ate:		, .						
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Do not complete this section. Intended for school use only.

Your child(ren) may qualify for free or reduced-price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES 2025-2026								
Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly					
1	\$28,953	\$2,413	\$557					
2	39,128	3,261	753					
3	49,303	4,109	949					
4	59,478	4,957	1,144					
5	69,653	5,805	1,340					
6	79,828	6,653	1,536					
7	90,003	7,501	1,731					
8	100,178	8,349	1,927					
Each additional person:	10,175	848	196					

Privacy Act Statement: This explains how we will use the information you give us.
The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the

information on this application. You are not required to provide information, but if information is not provided, the state agency 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), Ohio Works First (OWF) case number or other 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.

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: How to File a 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 Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov