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New Income Guidelines for Free & Reduced Price Meals in the National School Lunch and Breakfast; Child & Adult Care Food Programs

BARRE – The Vermont Agency of Education, Child Nutrition Programs announces its policy for free or reduced-price meals for children served under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), the After-School Snack Program (ASP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Each program, school and/or the Supervisory Union central office has a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by any interested party. The following household size and income guidelines will be used to determine eligibility:

Income Eligibility Guidelines School Year 2015 - 2016

Household Size	Free					Reduced Price				
	Yearly	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly	Yearly	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	15,301	1,276	638	589	295	21,775	1,815	908	838	419
2	20,709	1,726	863	797	399	29,471	2,456	1,228	1,134	567
3	26,117	2,177	1,089	1,005	503	37,167	3,098	1,549	1,430	715
4	31,525	2,628	1,314	1,213	607	44,863	3,739	1,870	1,726	863
5	36,933	3,078	1,539	1,421	711	52,559	4,380	2,190	2,022	1,011
6	42,341	3,529	1,765	1,629	815	60,255	5,022	2,511	2,318	1,159
7	47,749	3,980	1,990	1,837	919	67,951	5,663	2,832	2,614	1,307
8	53,157	4,430	2,215	2,045	1,023	75,647	6,304	3,152	2,910	1,455
For each additional household member add	5,408	451	226	208	104	7,696	642	321	296	148

Children from households whose income is at or below the levels shown are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Children who are eligible for reduced price meals will receive breakfast and lunch at no additional charge through state support of school nutrition programs.

Application forms are being sent to all homes with a letter to parents or guardians. To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households should fill out the application and return it to the school. Additional copies are available at the principal's office in each school. The information provided on the application is confidential and will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and may be verified at any time during the school year by school or other program officials. Applications may be submitted at any time during the year. For SFA officials to determine eligibility households receiving 3SquaresVT (food stamp benefits) or Reach-Up (TANF) must list the children's names, a 3SquaresVT or Reach-Up case number; and the signature of an adult household member. All children in households with any household member receiving benefits under assistance programs are eligible for free meals. Children in Other Source Categorically Eligible (i.e., children categorized as homeless, migrant, runaway, Head Start, Even Start, and foster children, if known) are also eligible for free meals.

IF YOU DO NOT LIST A 3SquaresVT or a Reach-Up Number, then the application must have the children's names, total household members, the amount of income each member received last month, the signature of an adult household member, and the last four digits of the adult's social security number or the mark the box if he or she does not have one. Foster children also categorically qualify for free meals/milk, regardless of the child's income. If you have foster children living with you and wish to apply for such meals or milk for them, please complete the application as instructed. Under the provisions of the policy, the approving official will review applications and determine eligibility.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price meal policy, the determining official(s), as designated by the sponsor/agency, shall review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the eligibility ruling may discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents may also make a formal request for an appeal hearing of the decision and may do so orally or in writing with the school's hearing official. Parents or guardians should contact their child(ren)'s school(s) for specific information regarding the name of the determining official and/or hearing official for a specific school or district.

If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the levels shown above.

DIRECT CERTIFICATION: Any member of a household currently certified to receive 3SquaresVT and/or Reach-Up benefits will be notified of the enrolled children's eligibility and that the enrolled children will be provided free benefits unless the household notifies the SFA that it chooses to decline benefits. If 3SquaresVT or Reach-Up households are not notified by their school of their eligibility, they will need to submit an application.

A list of schools participating in the programs is available upon request.

For more information about school meals programs, eligibility, or complaint procedures, please contact: Laurie Colgan, Director, Child Nutrition Programs. (802) 479-1187 or Laurie.Colgan@vermont.gov

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