
RED CLAY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

FREE AND REDUCED MEAL BENEFIT PROGRAM

1. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT A MEAL BENEFIT FORM (MBF) FOR EACH CHILD? No. Complete the MBF to apply for free or reduced price meals. *Use one Free and Reduced Price School MBF for all students in your household.* We cannot approve a MBF that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. Return the completed application to the school cafeteria.
2. WHAT IF MY CHILD ATTENDS A SCHOOL THAT IS PARTICIPATING IN THE NEW **COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION (CEP)** PROGRAM? Several Red Clay schools will be implementing a new option available through USDA called the Community Eligibility Provision where all students in the participating school will receive meals at no charge regardless of eligibility. Families with students attending a Community Eligibility Provision school will not be required to complete a household meal benefit form to receive these benefits. If you have another child in the household that attends a Red Clay school that is not participating in the Community Eligibility Provision Program and you would like to apply for free or reduced priced meals for that child, you will need to complete a Meal Benefit Form. Please do not forget to list all children in the household on this Meal Benefit form.
3. WHO CAN GET FREE MEALS? All children in households receiving benefits from DE-SNAP or DE-TANF, can get free meals regardless of your income. Also, your children can get free meals if your household's gross income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.
4. CAN FOSTER CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Yes, foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court, are eligible for free meals. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free meals regardless of income.
5. CAN HOMELESS, RUNAWAY, AND MIGRANT CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Yes, children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant qualify for free meals. If you haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call Christine Miller, Homeless Liaison for Red Clay at 552-3815 to see if they qualify.
6. WHO CAN GET REDUCED PRICE MEALS? Your children can get low cost meals if your household income is within the reduced price limits on the Federal Eligibility Income Chart, shown on this application.
7. SHOULD I FILL OUT A MBF IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? Please read the letter you received carefully and follow the instructions. If you received a letter stating one of your children will receive free meals because they attend a school participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), you will still need to submit a MBF if you have a child who does not attend a CEP school. Call Nutrition Services at 992-5580 if you have questions.
8. MY CHILD'S MBF WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT ANOTHER ONE? Yes. Your child's MBF is only good for that school year and for the first few days of this school year. You must send in a new MBF unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.
9. I GET WIC. CAN MY CHILD(REN) GET FREE MEALS? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please fill out a MBF.
10. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes and we may also ask you to send written proof.

11. 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.
12. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? Yes. You or your child(ren) do not have to be U.S. citizens to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
13. WHO SHOULD I INCLUDE AS MEMBERS OF MY HOUSEHOLD? You must include all people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends) who share income and expenses. You must include yourself and all children living with you. If you live with other people who are economically independent (for example, people who you do not support, who do not share income with you or your children, and who pay a pro-rated share of expenses), do not include them.
14. 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.
15. MY SPOUSE IS DEPLOYED TO A COMBAT ZONE. IS HIS/HER COMBAT PAY COUNTED AS INCOME? No, if the combat pay is received in addition to his/her basic pay because of his/her deployment and it wasn't received before he/she was deployed, combat pay is not counted as income.
16. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for **DE-SNAP** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1-800-464-4357 (DE-SNAP office).
17. HOW SOON AFTER I SUBMIT THE FORM CAN MY CHILDREN BEGIN RECEIVING FREE OR REDUCED BENEFITS? Generally forms are processed within ten (10) business days. Delays may occur at the start of the school year due to the large volume of forms or if form has missing information. Feel free to call our office if an immediate response is needed. You will receive a notification letter in the mail when your form has been processed. **PLEASE NOTE: You must pay for meals until you receive notification your form has been processed.**

If you have other questions or need help, call **Nutrition Services at 992-5580.**

For additional information regarding Red Clay Nutrition Services, please visit our interactive website at www.RedClayCafe.com to learn all about the great happenings in our school cafeterias, along with helpful information about our department. You will find links to school menus, nutrition facts for our menus, information about pre-payment options, our District Wellness Policy, meal benefit applications, valuable information about nutrition & exercise both at school and home, tools for nutrition education, contact information, plus much more!