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SDE announces updated income guidelines for free and reduced price meals

(BOISE) – The U.S. Department of Agriculture has set new income guidelines for the free and reduced price meals provided to students in schools operating the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, and for free milk in schools operating the Special Milk Program.

Free and reduced price meals are available for eligible students throughout the state and are announced each year by Idaho State Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs. Qualifying Idaho schools may offer the Special Milk Program. Eligibility is determined by household size and income. Qualifying students receive meals or milk without charge or may pay a reduced price of no more than 40 cents for lunch and 30 cents for breakfast.

Children from households with incomes at or below the following levels are eligible for free or reduced price meals or the Special Milk Program if meals are not offered:

| Household Size | <i>Reduced Price Meals</i> | | | | |
|----------------|---|---------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|
| | Participants may qualify for reduced price meals if the household income falls at or below the limits on this chart | | | | |
| | Annual | Monthly | Twice Per Month | Every Two Weeks | Weekly |
| 1 | 23,107 | 1,926 | 963 | 889 | 445 |
| 2 | 31,284 | 2,607 | 1,304 | 1,204 | 602 |
| 3 | 39,461 | 3,289 | 1,645 | 1,518 | 759 |
| 4 | 47,638 | 3,970 | 1,985 | 1,833 | 917 |
| 5 | 55,815 | 4,652 | 2,326 | 2,147 | 1,074 |
| 6 | 63,992 | 5,333 | 2,667 | 2,462 | 1,231 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 7 | 72,169 | 6,015 | 3,008 | 2,776 | 1,388 |
| 8 | 80,346 | 6,696 | 3,348 | 3,091 | 1,546 |
| For each additional family member add | 8,177 | 682 | 341 | 315 | 158 |

Free Meals

Participants may qualify for free meals if the household income falls at or below the limits on this chart

| Household Size | Annual | Monthly | Twice Per Month | Every Two Weeks | Weekly |
|---------------------------------------|--------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|
| 1 | 16,237 | 1,354 | 677 | 625 | 313 |
| 2 | 21,983 | 1,832 | 916 | 846 | 423 |
| 3 | 27,729 | 2,311 | 1,156 | 1,067 | 534 |
| 4 | 33,475 | 2,790 | 1,395 | 1,288 | 644 |
| 5 | 39,221 | 3,269 | 1,635 | 1,509 | 755 |
| 6 | 44,967 | 3,748 | 1,874 | 1,730 | 865 |
| 7 | 50,713 | 4,227 | 2,114 | 1,951 | 976 |
| 8 | 56,459 | 4,705 | 2,353 | 2,172 | 1,086 |
| For each additional family member add | 5,746 | 479 | 240 | 221 | 111 |

Children in households receiving Food Stamps or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance to Families in Idaho (TAFI) or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) are eligible for free meals. Additionally, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) participants may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. In August, households receiving SNAP or TAFI benefits will be directly certified to receive free meal or milk benefits by a letter from their school advising them of their eligibility for free meal or milk benefits. No other application or verification of eligibility is required for students directly certified.

The household will be notified of any child’s eligibility for free meals if the individual child is known to be receiving educational support through migrant, homeless or runaway education, Head Start or in court ordered foster care.

Households notified of their children’s eligibility must contact the school if they choose to decline the free meal benefits.

The household will be notified by the district if the school is operating a Special Provision Option (Provision 2 or CEP) that provides free breakfasts and/or lunches to all students.

Households not receiving notification of eligibility for free meals may complete a confidential application for free or reduced price meals or free milk. An official at the school will review the confidential application and determine eligibility. Children in eligible households may receive meal benefits regardless of immigration status.

Applications may be submitted any time during the year. Children of parents or guardians who become unemployed are eligible for free or reduced price meals or for free milk during the period of unemployment, provided that the loss of income causes household income to be within the eligibility criteria. Information provided on an application may be verified at any time during the school year.

An application cannot be approved unless it contains the following information:

- A Food Stamp, SNAP or TAFI case number (not Medicaid) for each child or an indication that the household is receiving FDPIR and the signature of an adult household member.

OR

- The names of all household members, the amount and source of income received by each household member in the prior month, the signature of an adult household member, the actual number of household members, and the last four digits of the Social Security number of the adult household member who signs the application (or an indication that the signer has no Social Security number).

Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the school official who determines eligibility may discuss the decision with the official. Parents wishing to make a formal appeal may make a written or oral request to the school's food service hearing officer (contact the school food service office for the name, address, and phone number of the officer) for a hearing on the decision.

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(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.

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