



South Pasadena Unified School District

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The South Pasadena Unified School District participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers healthy meals every school day. **The California Universal Meals Program, AB 130, requires public school districts serving students in grades K–12 to provide two meals free of charge (breakfast and lunch) during each school day to students requesting a meal, regardless of their free or reduced-price meal eligibility.**

Although meals will be free for all, the state continues to require school districts to distribute and collect Benefit applications. The benefit application results will determine if the State or Federal government will reimburse Nutrition Services for the meals served. Benefit, or also known as Free/reduced-price applications allow the district to collect essential data needed to qualify for additional school funding intended to support academic programs for your student. Additionally, free/reduced eligibility can qualify households for things such as discounted internet services, P-EBT benefits, discounted rates on your energy bill, and more. Households are encouraged to apply online at <https://linqconnect.com/public/meal-application/new>.

Below are some frequently asked questions and answers to help you with the application process.

1. WHO MAY BENEFIT FROM COMPLETING THIS APPLICATION?

- Foster children under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court.
- Children participating in their school's Head Start program.
- Children who meet the definition of homeless, migrant, or runaway.
- Children may receive benefits if your household's income is within the limits of the federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify if your household income falls at or below the income limits.

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 answered yes to any of these questions you may qualify for benefits.

3. DO I NEED TO COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. Complete one 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. Apply on-line for benefits at <https://southpasadena.healtheliving.net/what-we-do/meal-applications/>. Or turn in a paper application to your school site office

4. SHOULD I COMPLETE AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS?

No, students who participate in CalFresh, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, or FDPIR are prequalified and do not need to complete an application. If you do not receive a benefit letter in July reach out to Nutrition Services for a duplicate. Please read the letter carefully and follow any instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, please contact Judy Willard or Jenifer Smith immediately. jwillard@spusd.net or Jenifersmith@spusd.net

5. CAN I APPLY ONLINE? Yes! You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application if you are able. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. The process is easy and the results are often received quicker than the paper application process. Visit <https://southpasadena.healtheliving.net/what-we-do/meal-applications/> to learn more about the online application process. Please note applications will only be processed after July 1.

6. 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 one school year at a time and for the first 30 days of the following school year. You must send in a new application by September 14th unless Nutrition Services has notified you that your child is eligible for the new school year.

7. I RECEIVE WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC) BENEFITS. CAN MY CHILDREN RECEIVE FREE MEALS?

Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Please complete an application.

8. WILL THE INFORMATION I PROVIDE BE CHECKED? Yes. School officials may verify the information on the application at any time during the school year. The CDE requires random verification every school year. You may be asked to send additional information to prove your income, or current eligibility for CalFresh, CalWORKS, Medi-Cal or FDPIR.

9. IF I DO NOT QUALIFY NOW, MAY I APPLY LATER? Yes, you can apply at any time during the school year. For example, if the income in a household changes, family's may be eligible for Federal Benefits if the household income has dropped below the income limit.

10. WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION REGARDING MY APPLICATION? You should talk to the school officials. You may also ask for a hearing by calling or writing to Dave Lubs at DLubs@spusd.net, or 626-441-5810 ext. 1110

11. 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.

12. 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, enter on the Application that you made \$1,000 per month. If you normally receive overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only occasionally work overtime. If you have lost your job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.

13. WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT? All household members must be included on the Application even if the individual does not receive income. Whenever this happens, please write a "0" in the income field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, the income will be counted as zero. Please be careful when leaving the income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.

14. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. 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.

15. WHAT IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH SPACE ON THE PAPER APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? List any additional household members on a separate piece of paper and attach it to your application.

16. MY FAMILY NEEDS ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE CAN APPLY FOR? Yes. For information on CalFresh and CalWORKs, contact your county welfare department by reviewing the CalFresh Web page at <http://www.calfresh.ca.gov/PG839.htm> or by phone at 877-847-3663. For additional assistance in your local area, contact the California referral hotline by phone at 211.

If you have other questions or need help, please contact Jenifer Smith or Judy Willard at 626-441-5820 ext. 2950

Jenifer Smith, SNS
Director of Nutrition Services
South Pasadena Unified