



MealBenefits

SIMPLIFY APPLICATIONS. | SUPPORT STUDENTS. | STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES.

Parent User Guide

MealBenefits is a secure, web-based application designed to simplify the process of applying for free and reduced-price school meal benefits. Developed with both families and school districts in mind, MealBenefits provides an intuitive, step-by-step experience that helps parents complete applications accurately while reducing common errors that can delay eligibility determinations.

Instead of requiring families to navigate lengthy paper forms, MealBenefits guides applicants through a series of simple questions tailored to their household's circumstances. As information is entered, the application provides helpful explanations and prompts to ensure all required information is included before submission.

Parents can securely create an account using their email address, complete an application at their own pace, save their progress, and return later if needed. Once submitted, families can log in at any time to view the status of their application, review previous submissions, and receive updates throughout the determination process.

MealBenefits is fully responsive and can be accessed from a computer, tablet, or smartphone, allowing families to complete an application whenever and wherever it is most convenient.

Welcome!

This is your sponsorship's electronic application for free and reduced-price meals through the USDA's National School Lunch & School Breakfast Programs.

This interactive application will guide you through the application process. Sign in below to begin or continue an application.

Before you begin, please have the following ready:

- ✓ Student ID numbers for each student who attends the school
- ✓ Names of children who live in the household but do not attend the school
- ✓ Last 4 digits of Social Security Number of the certifying adult (if available)
- ✓ Income information for all household members
- ✓ Case numbers for SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR (if applicable)



Your information is secure and confidential. All data is protected according to federal privacy requirements.

Remember: include all children who live in your household, even if they do not attend this school.

Important: If you need to complete this application on paper, contact your school's Lunch Services Department.

Available in English, Spanish, Portuguese (Brazil), and Haitian Creole. You can switch languages at any time using the language selector.

[Sign in](#)

- **Step 1 – Visit the Website**
- Open your preferred web browser and go to:
- www.MealBenefits.com
- The MealBenefits home page provides access to sign in using only your email address.

Language Selection

MealBenefits is designed to serve families from diverse backgrounds by offering the application in multiple languages. Before you begin, select your preferred language using the **Language** menu located at the top of the page.

Once selected, the application, instructions, and navigation will automatically display in your chosen language, allowing you to complete your application with confidence. You may change the language at any time without losing your progress.

[Home](#) [Apply](#) [My Applications](#) English ▼ [Sign in](#)

Sign in

Enter your email address. We will send you a secure sign-in link. No password is needed.

Send sign-in link

New or returning parents can use the same email link process.

MealBenefits uses a **secure email sign-in system** to help protect your personal information. Instead of requiring you to remember a password, the system sends a unique, one-time sign-in link directly to your email address each time you log in.

When you enter your email address and select **Continue**, MealBenefits will immediately send a secure login link to your email. Simply open the email and click the **Sign In to MealBenefits** button or link to securely access your Parent Dashboard.

This verification process helps ensure that only you can access your account and your family's application information.

A QUICK, SECURE PROCESS

Start your application

This step will create your application record.

Most families finish in about 10–15 minutes. Your progress is saved as you go.

Application steps

1

School

2

Household

3

Benefits

4

Income

5

Review

What you'll do

- ✓ Select your district and school
- ✓ Add the children and adults in your household
- ✓ Provide benefit case information or household income



Your information is private and secure

Your application is used only to determine eligibility for meal benefits.

Prefer a paper application? Contact your school's Lunch Services office for a printed form.

Start application

• Before You Begin

- Before starting your application, please have the following information available:
- **Student ID Number** for each student **(Required)**
- Student's full name, school, and grade
- Names of everyone living in your household
- SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR case number (if applicable)
- Gross income (before taxes) for all household members with income (if applicable)
- Current email address, phone number, and home address
- **Important:** A Student ID is required for every student listed on the application. If you do not know your child's Student ID, please contact your child's school before beginning your application.

Select Your School District

The first step in the application process is selecting the school your student attends. This ensures your application is submitted to the correct school district for processing.

- Select your **State** from the drop-down menu.
- Choose your **School District**.
 - (Optional) Use the **Search Schools** box to quickly locate your school by entering the **school name, site number, city, ZIP code, principal's name, or phone number**.
- Select your student's **School** from the list.
 - **Important:** If you have students attending **different schools**, you must complete a **separate MealBenefits application for each school**. Applications can only include students enrolled at the school selected at the beginning of the application.

Step 1 of 6

Select District & School

Select your school district and school site to begin your application.

Start by choosing your state. Then choose the district and select your school from the list below. Use the search box if you know the site number, school name, city, ZIP code, principal, or phone number.

1. Choose your state

Select your state ▼

2. Choose your district

Choose a state first ▼

3. Search schools

Choose a state first

4. Select your school

Choose a state to begin.

Back

Continue

Certifier

Instructions
Enter your name, phone, and address. Your email is locked to your verified account.
You must check the USDA Certification statement and review the USDA Non-Discrimination Statement to continue.

First name Last name

Email (locked to your verified account)

Phone

We'll contact you if verification is needed. (555) 555-1234 You'll sign again on the Review & Sign step.

Street

City State

ZIP

USDA Certification Statement (Required)
I certify (promise) that all information on this application is true, and that all income is reported. I understand that the school will get Federal funds based on the information I give. I understand that school officials may verify (check) the information. I understand that if I purposely give false information, my children may lose meal benefits, and I may be prosecuted.

☐ I have read and agree to the USDA Certification Statement above.

Required: You must review the USDA Non-Discrimination Statement. Open and read the statement, then acknowledge to continue. *Not yet acknowledged*

[Open Non-Discrimination Statement](#)

[Back](#) [Save draft](#) [Continue](#)

Certifier Information

- Enter the contact information for the adult completing the application. Your email address is automatically linked to your verified MealBenefits account and cannot be changed.
- Before continuing, you must:
 - Complete all required fields.
 - Read and agree to the **USDA Certification Statement**.
 - Review and acknowledge the **USDA Non-Discrimination Statement**.
- Click **Continue** to proceed to the next step.

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[View all my applications](#)

Children in your household

Instructions

Instructions

List every child in your household. At least one child must be a student at this school and include a Student ID.

If your child is Foster, Homeless, Migrant, or Runaway, select the option. These statuses may be verified by the district or state.

Each child will appear as a separate card below. Complete every card before continuing.

How many children live in your household?

Child details

Complete one card for each child in the household.

Enter the number of children in your household above. The child cards will appear here.

[+ Add another child](#)

[Back](#)

[Save draft](#)

[Continue: Benefits](#)

- Enter the **total number of children** living in your household, then complete a profile for each child.
 - Include **all children who live in your household**, even if they:
 - Do not attend school
 - Attend a different school
 - Are too young to attend school
 - For each child, provide the requested information, including whether the child is **Foster, Homeless, Migrant, or Runaway**, if applicable.
 - **Important:** If your household has students attending different schools, you must submit a **separate MealBenefits application for each school**. Be sure to list **all children in your household** on each application.
 - After all children have been added, click **Continue: Benefits** to proceed.

Benefits (SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR)

If **anyone in your household** receives benefits through **SNAP**, **TANF**, or **FDPIR**, select **Yes** and enter your **case number** when prompted.

If you select **Yes** and enter a **valid case number**, you will skip the Household Adults and Household Income sections and be taken directly to the final **Review & Submit** screen.

If you select **No**, or you do not have a valid case number, you will continue to the **Household Adults** and **Household Income** sections to determine your household's eligibility based on income.

Important: Enter your **case number**, **not** your EBT card number. If you are unsure whether you have a valid case number, select **No** and continue with the income section of the application.
Click **Continue** to proceed.

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[View all my applications](#)

Benefits (SNAP/TANF/FDPIR)

Instructions

If anyone in your household receives SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR, select Yes and enter your case number.

Does anyone in your household receive SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Back

Save draft

Continue

Adults

Instructions

List adult household members (first and last names).

If an adult has no income, check 'No income'. You'll enter earnings on the next screen.

Who to include as adults

- All adults living in your household who share income and expenses (related or not), including college students.
- Self-employed adults (report net income on the next screen).
- Do not list children here; you added them on the Children step.

Add adult

Adult #1 Certifier

First name

Last name

☐ No income

Last 4 digits of Social Security Number

☐ No SSN

The certifier will provide last 4 of SSN (or check No SSN) on this step; income (if any) is entered on the next screen.

Total household members: 2

Edit children

Back

Save draft

Continue

Household Adults

- List **all adults** living in your household who share income and expenses, including the adult completing the application.
- For each adult, enter:
 - First and last name
- Indicate whether the adult has income
- For the **Certifying Applicant** (the adult completing the application), you must also provide:
 - The **last four digits of your Social Security Number**, or
 - Select **No SSN** if you do not have a Social Security Number.
- **Important:** Do **not** list children in this section. If additional adults live in your household, click **Add Adult** to include them before continuing.
- **Before clicking Continue, verify that the Total Household Members count is correct.** This number should equal **everyone living in your household**—including all children and adults. If the total is incorrect, use **Edit Children** or add/remove household adults as needed before proceeding.
- Once all household adults have been entered, click **Continue** to proceed to the Household Income section.

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[View all my applications](#)

Household Income

Instructions

Enter income for each adult who has income. If no adults have income, you can enter total child income.

Adults may list multiple sources. If EVERY adult has no income, enter total child income and frequency below.

Adult income lines detected.

Save Income

MARCUS CUERVO #1

Type

Select a type ▼

Amount

0.00

Frequency

Select frequency ▼

Remove

Add Income line

Cristina Cuervo #2

Type

Select a type ▼

Amount

0.00

Frequency

Select frequency ▼

Remove

Add Income line

Child income (optional)

Child income (total)

0.00

How often?

Select frequency ▼

Save child income

Back

Save draft

Continue

Household Income

- Enter the **gross income (before taxes and deductions)** for **each adult** in your household who receives income.
- For each income source, select:
- **Income Type**
- **Income Amount**
- **How Often the Income is Received**
- If an adult receives more than one type of income, click **Add Income Line** to enter each source separately.
- If children in your household receive income, enter the **total child income** in the **Child Income (Optional)** section.
- **Important:** Enter **gross income** (before taxes, insurance, retirement, or other deductions). Be sure to include all income received by each household member. Once all income has been entered, click **Save Income** before selecting **Continue**.

Race & Ethnicity (optional)

Instructions

This section is optional. If you choose to answer, please select whether the student is of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, and then select one or more races.

☐ Prefer not to answer

Is the student Hispanic or Latino?

☐ Yes, Hispanic/Latino

☐ No, not Hispanic/Latino

Select one or more races

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Black or African American

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

☐ White

Back

Save draft

Continue

Race & Ethnicity (Optional)

- Providing race and ethnicity information is **completely optional** and **does not affect your child's eligibility** for free or reduced-price meal benefits.
- If you choose to respond, first indicate whether the student is **Hispanic or Latino**, then select one or more race categories. You may also choose **Prefer Not to Answer**.
- **Important:** This information is requested only for federal reporting purposes and is kept confidential. Your responses will **not** be used to determine eligibility or benefit levels.

Review & Sign

Review & Sign

- Carefully review all of the information entered in your application before submitting it. If you find any errors, use the **Back** button to make corrections.
- To complete your application:
- Review the application summary for accuracy.
- Read the **USDA Certification Statement**.
- Electronically sign the application by entering your name and confirming the information is true and complete.
- Click **Submit Application**.
- **Important:** Once your application has been submitted, it can no longer be edited. Please make sure all household members, income information, and student information are correct before submitting.



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Checking Your Application Status

After submitting your application, you can check its status at any time by signing in to www.MealBenefits.com.

Select **My Applications** from the navigation menu to view all of your meal benefit applications and their current status.

Your application may display one of the following statuses:

- **Draft** – Your application has been started but has not been submitted.
- **Submitted** – Your application has been successfully submitted and is awaiting review.
- **Under Review** – School officials are reviewing your application.
- **Approved** – Your application has been approved for meal benefits.
- **Denied** – Your application was not approved based on the information provided.
- **Additional Information Requested** – The school needs more information before a determination can be made.

Tip: You can return to **My Applications** at any time to monitor your application's progress, view determination decisions, or respond to requests for additional information.

- **Need Assistance?**

- If you have questions about completing your application, checking your application status, or providing additional information, please contact your **school's Lunch Services Department** for assistance.
- School staff are available to answer questions about the application process, required documentation, and eligibility for school meal benefits.
- For the fastest service, have your student's name and Student ID available when you call.
- Thank you for using **MealBenefits** to apply for your school meal benefits. We are committed to making the application process simple, secure, and convenient for every family.



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