

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Our Helena School District offers healthy meals every school day. Elementary breakfast costs \$1.20; lunch costs \$2.35. High school breakfast costs \$1.20; lunch costs \$2.45. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals; price is \$.30 for breakfast and \$.40 for lunch.

1. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. *Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals 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. Return the completed application to: *Lea Little, 55 S. Rodney St., Helena, MT 59601, 406-324-2039.*
2. WHO CAN GET FREE MEALS? All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) or, in some States, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (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.

**STOP** If you have received a NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION for free meals from your child's school, **DO NOT** complete the application. But do let the school know if any children in your household are not listed on the Notice of Direct Certification letter you received.

3. 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.
4. CAN HOMELESS, RUNAWAY, HEAD START AND MIGRANT CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Yes, children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals. If you believe children in your household meet these descriptions and haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail your child's school.
5. WHO CAN GET REDUCED PRICE MEALS? Your children can get reduced price meals if your household income is within the reduced price limits on the Federal Eligibility Income Chart, shown on this application.
6. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? No, but please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. Call your child's school if you have questions.
7. 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 that school year and for the first few days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.
8. I GET WIC. CAN MY CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please send in an application.
9. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes and we may also ask you to send written proof. 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.
10. WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION? You should talk to school officials. You also may ask for a hearing to have the decision reviewed. You may call or write: *Kim Harris, 55 So. Rodney St., Helena, MT 59601, 406-324-2040, [kharris@helena.k12.mt.us](mailto:kharris@helena.k12.mt.us)*
11. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? Yes. You or your children do not have to be U.S. citizens to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE INCLUDE OUR HOUSING ALLOWANCE AS INCOME? If you get an off-base housing allowance, it must be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income.
15. MY SPOUSE IS DEPLOYED TO A COMBAT ZONE. IS HER COMBAT PAY COUNTED AS INCOME? No, if the combat pay is received in addition to her basic pay because of her deployment and it wasn't received before she was deployed, combat pay is not counted as income. Contact your child's school for more information.
16. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office.

If you have other questions or need help, call 406-324-2039.

Lea Little

Helena School District 1

P (406) 324-2039

Fax: (406) 324-2045

Households that qualify for SNAP benefits in Montana automatically receive FREE school meals. Check out the information below to see if your household may qualify for SNAP.

# Buying Good Food is a SNAP!

## What is SNAP?

SNAP is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, designed to help Montanans afford healthy food.  
(Formerly the Food Stamp Program)

**NEW! Online application and pre-screening tool:**

[www.apply.mt.gov](http://www.apply.mt.gov)



## How can I participate?

SNAP is available to people living on a low or fixed income including single people, families, students, seniors, and people with disabilities.

For many applicants, gross income limits have increased and there is no longer a resource limit!

## Applying is easy!

Apply in person, online, or by mail or fax -

- Apply at any Office of Public Assistance or call to request an application by mail
- Apply online at [www.apply.mt.gov](http://www.apply.mt.gov)
- Mail or fax in your application to the Office of Public Assistance
- You may be able to do your interview by phone
- Have another adult apply on your behalf

## SNAP Income Guidelines

(Effective Oct. 1, 2013)

1. If you meet the Gross Guideline turn in an application to see if you also meet the Net Guideline.

2. When you apply, a case worker will deduct a portion of your living expenses from your income to see if you meet the Net Guideline. Your Net Income for SNAP cannot be calculated until you submit an application.

Household Size	Gross Monthly Income*	Net Monthly Income
1	\$1,916	\$958
2	\$2,586	\$1,293
3	\$3,256	\$1,628
Addl Members	+ 670	+ \$335

\*Households with a previously disqualified member will need to meet a lower Gross Guideline. Call for details.



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## INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING

**A HOUSEHOLD MEMBER IS ANY CHILD OR ADULT LIVING WITH YOU.**

### IF YOUR HOUSEHOLD RECEIVES BENEFITS FROM State SNAP OR State TANF, FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

- Part 1:** List all children in the household and the name of each child's school (if known).
- Part 2:** List the case number for any household member (including adults) receiving **State SNAP or State TANF** benefits.
- Part 3:** Skip this part.
- Part 4:** Fill out this section and sign the form. The last four digits of a Social Security Number are **not** necessary.
- Part 5:** Answer this question if you choose.

### IF NO ONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD GETS State SNAP or State TANF BENEFITS AND IF ANY CHILD IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD IS HOMELESS, A MIGRANT OR RUNAWAY, OR IN HEAD START FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

- Part 1:** List all children in the household and the name of each child's school (if known). If any child you are applying for is homeless, migrant, in Head Start or a runaway check the appropriate box and call your school **homeless liaison, runaway, head start or migrant coordinator**.
- Part 2:** Skip this part.
- Part 3:** Complete only if a child in your household isn't eligible under Part 1. See instructions for All Other Households.
- Part 4:** Fill out and sign the form. The last four digits of a Social Security Number are not necessary if you didn't need to fill in Part 3.
- Part 5:** Answer this question if you choose.

### IF YOU ARE APPLYING FOR A FOSTER CHILD, FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

#### **If all children in the household are foster children:**

- Part 1:** List all foster children and the school name for each child. Check the box indicating the child is a foster child.
- Part 2:** Skip this part.
- Part 3:** Skip this part.
- Part 4:** Fill out and sign the form. The last four digits of a Social Security Number are **not** necessary.
- Part 5:** Answer this question if you choose.

#### **If some of the children in the household are foster children:**

- Part 1:** List all children in the household and the name of each child's school (if known). Check the box for each foster child. If any child you are applying for is homeless, migrant, in Head Start or a runaway check the appropriate box and if you have questions call **your school**.
- Part 2:** If the household does not have a case number, skip this part.
- Part 3:** Complete only if a child in your household isn't eligible under Part 1 or 2. See instructions for All Other Households.
- Part 4:** Adult household member must fill out and sign the form and list the last four digits of their Social Security Number (or mark the box if s/he doesn't have one).
- Part 5:** Answer this question if you choose.

### ALL OTHER HOUSEHOLDS, INCLUDING WIC HOUSEHOLDS, FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

- Part 1:** List all children in the household and the name of each child's school (if known). If any child you are applying for is homeless, migrant, Head Start, a foster child or a runaway check the appropriate box and call **your school** to follow up.
- Part 2:** If the household does not have a case number, skip this part.
- Part 3:** Follow these instructions to report total household income from this month, last month.
  - **Name:** List all household members.
  - **For any person**, including children, with no income, you must check the "No Income" box.
  - **Gross Income and How Often It Was Received:** For each household member listed in section 3, list each type of income received. You must tell us how often the money is received—weekly, every other week, twice a month, monthly or yearly.
    - **Earnings:** Be sure to list the **gross income**, not the take-home pay. Gross income is the amount earned *before* taxes and other deductions. You should be able to find it on your pay stub or your boss can tell you.
    - **Income received from welfare, child support, and alimony:** List the amount each person received.
    - **Income received from retirement benefits, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veteran's benefits (VA benefits), and disability benefits:** List the amount each person received.
    - **All Other Income:** List Worker's Compensation, unemployment or strike benefits, regular contributions from people who do not live in your household, and any other income. Do not include benefits from WIC, Federal education and foster payments received by the family from the placing agency. For **ONLY** the self-employed, under *Earnings from Work*, report income after expenses. This is for your business, farm, or rental property. If you are in the Military Privatized Housing Initiative or get combat pay, do not include these allowances as income.
- Part 4:** Adult household member must fill out and sign the form and list the last four digits of their Social Security Number (or mark the box if s/he doesn't have one).
- Part 5:** Answer this question if you choose.





Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	21,590	1,800	416
2	29,101	2,426	560
3	36,612	3,051	705
4	44,123	3,677	849
5	51,634	4,303	993
6	59,145	4,929	1,138
7	66,656	5,555	1,282
8	74,167	6,181	1,427
Each additional person:	7,511	626	145

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the last four digits of the social security number of the adult household member who signs the application. The last four digits of the social security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals, and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs. We MAY share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews, and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules.

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Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

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