

# Free and Reduced Meals Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What is the Free and Reduced Meal Program?

The FARM program is a USDA sponsored program that enables qualified children to get free or reduced priced meals. This includes breakfast and lunch.

## 2. Can anyone apply?

Yes. All households with students in FCPS can apply.

## 3. How does someone apply?

You can complete a paper application, which can be downloaded off the FCPS website, or you can get an application from the school. You can also access our new electronic on-line system.

## 4. Does an application have to be completed for each student?

No. Only one application is necessary per household. Make sure to list all student names, grades and their FCPS schools. It is very important to include the student's full registered name, their grade and their school.

## 5. Who is responsible for paying for meals until the application is processed?

It is the family's responsibility to pay for their student's meals until the application is processed. Our office has ten business days to process an application.

## 6. How will I know if we qualify to receive free or reduced meals?

Once the application is processed, families will receive a letter via US Mail informing them of the decision. So it is important that the school system has their current address. Also, they should make sure to keep the letter in case they have to reference it during the school year. Duplications cannot be guaranteed.

## 7. Do I have to complete an application each school year?

Yes, an application needs to be completed at the beginning of each school year. However, should a family be directly certified by the state for free meals - typically because they receive food stamps - they do not have to complete an application. Those families will receive a letter in August informing them of their status. It is very important to read the letter and follow its instructions.

## 8. Do benefits continue from one year to the next?

A student's benefits will continue for 30 school days into the next school year. At which time, if a qualifying application has not been received then the student's status will go to full price.

## 9. What happens if an application is illegible or incomplete?

If the application cannot be read or is incomplete it will be sent back to the school to be sent home with the student.