

# School City of Hammond

## Food Service Department

41 Williams Street • Hammond, IN 46320 • (219) 933-2400

Fax (219) 554-4502



School City of Hammond


Walter J. Watkins Ph.D., Superintendent

Dear Parent/Guardian of Middle and High School Students:

School City of Hammond offers healthy meals every school day. This year we are pleased to offer more meal benefits to families to ensure that students are prepared to learn. Point of sale lines are going “cashless” this fall. All payments will need to be made in advance either in the café before or after meal service or online through mySchoolBucks at [www.SCHLunch.com](http://www.SCHLunch.com). Parents will no longer be charged a convenience fee for prepayments made online through mySchoolBucks. More information about the “cashless” program may be found on the enclosed flyer.

Middle and high school lunch costs \$2.00. Breakfast will be provided at “no cost” to all middle and high school students to encourage students to start the day with a healthy meal. Your children may qualify for free lunch or for reduced price lunch. The reduced price for lunch is \$.40. Below are some common questions and answers to aid in the process of determining your child’s eligibility.

- 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. The fastest way to apply for free and reduced-price meals is to complete an application online at [www.SCHLunch.com](http://www.SCHLunch.com). The enclosed card contains contact information for the Department of Food and Nutrition for your convenience. You may apply for free and reduced-price meals beginning August 1, 2014 and throughout the school year. If you do not have access to a computer the Hammond Public Library has computers available to the public. The Department of Food and Nutrition Services also has bilingual staff available to help parents complete an application online. Paper meal benefit applications are available at the Administration Building, 41 Williams Street. Return the completed paper application to: Department of Food and Nutrition Services, 41 Williams Street, Hammond, IN 46320.
- 2. Who can get free or reduced price meals?** All children in households receiving benefits from Food Stamps (SNAP) or TANF, can get free meals regardless of your income. Also, if your household’s gross income is within the limits on the Federal Income Chart listed below, your children can get free or reduced price meals.

 If you have received a **Notice of Direct Certification** for free meals, **do not** complete the application. But **do** let the Department of Food and Nutrition know if any children in your household are not listed on the **Notice of Direct Certification** letter you received. Any children not listed do not qualify for meals or textbook assistance and you will be responsible for any charges incurred until you received written notice that the children have been approved.

- 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 email Jurutha Lay, Homeless/Runaway Coordinator 219-313-4958 or Tony Salinas, Director Language Development Program, 219-933-2400 x 1086 to see if they qualify.
- 5. Should I fill out an application if I received a letter this school year saying my children are approved for free meals?** Please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. Call the Department of Food and Nutrition Services at 219-933-2400 x 1055 if you have questions.
- 6. My child’s application was approved last year. Do I need to fill out another one?** Yes if you have a middle or high school student. Your child’s application is only good for that school year. You must send in a new application unless the Department of Food and Nutrition told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.
- 7. My household was approved last school year for benefits. How long do I have once the new school year begins to complete my application in order to continue receiving benefits?** If a household applied last school year, there is a 30 day grace period starting with the first day of school. If an application is not approved for benefits by September 11, 2014, the household will lose their benefits beginning September 12, 2014, and all middle and high school students in the household will go back to a paid status. It can take a few days to process an application especially paper applications. Do not wait until the last day to apply!
- 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, however, not all WIC recipients are eligible. Please fill out an application.
- 9. Will the information I give be checked?** Yes and we may also ask you to send written proof.

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Ms. Teresa Mayerik, *Chief Administrator for Curriculum*  
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10. **If I don't qualify now, may I apply again later?** Yes, if your household size or income changes. 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.
11. **What if I disagree with the school's decision about my application?** You should talk to the school officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: Julie Boettger, Director of Food and Nutrition Services, 41 Williams Street, 219-933-2400 x 1056, [jaboettger@hammond.k12.in.us](mailto:jaboettger@hammond.k12.in.us).
12. **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.
13. **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-rate share of expenses), do not include them.
14. **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, put down that you make \$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.
15. **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.
16. **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 his/her basic pay because of his/her deployment and it wasn't received before he/she was deployed, combat pay is not counted as income. Contact your child's school for more information.
17. **My family needs more help. Are there other programs available?** To find out how to apply for Food Stamps (SNAP) or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office.
18. **Will I receive any reminders to apply for meal benefits?** Yes. Beginning August 1, the School City of Hammond automated call system will call every household weekly that has not been approved for meal benefits for the 2014-15 school-year as a reminder to submit an application if the parent/guardian believes the student(s) may qualify for meal benefits. Beginning September 5, the automated call system will call households daily that have not applied for the 2014-15 school-year and are about to lose free or reduced-price meal benefits.

Apply for meals for middle and high school students online [www.SCHLunch.com](http://www.SCHLunch.com) at any time after August 1, 2014. We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. If you have other questions or need help, stop by the Administration Center at 41 Williams Street, Hammond IN, 46320 or call 219-933-2400 x 1059. Si necesita ayuda, por favor llame al teléfono: 219-933-2400 x 1059.

Sincerely,

Julie Boettger, PhD, RD  
Director of Food and Nutrition Services  
School City of Hammond

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	FEDERAL INCOME CHART FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2014-2015					
	Household Size	Yearly	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls within the limits on this chart.	1.....	21,590	1,800	900	831	416
	2.....	29,101	2,426	1,213	1,120	560
	3.....	36,612	3,051	1,526	1,409	705
	4.....	44,123	3,677	1,839	1,698	849
	5.....	51,634	4,303	2,152	1,986	993
	6.....	59,145	4,929	2,465	2,275	1,138
	7.....	66,656	5,555	2,778	2,564	1,282
	8.....	74,167	6,181	3,091	2,853	1,427
	For each additional person:	+7,511	+626	+313	+289	+145

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