

# Free and Reduced Meal Application FAQ's – 2019-2020

## **Do I need to fill out an application for each child?**

No. Complete one application for all Hemet Unified 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 the Nutrition Services office, the school cafeteria manager, or the School Office.

## **Who can receive free meals?**

Your child can get free meals if your household income is within the free limits on the current years Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.

Also, free meals are available to most foster children and to children in households receiving benefits from Food Stamps (CalFresh), CalWorks, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).

## **Can homeless, runaway and migrant children get free meals?**

Yes. If you have or are are homeless, runaway or migrant child and have not been informed that your child will get free meals, please contact the Nutrition Services Department.

## **I got a letter saying my children are approved for free meals for this school year. Should I fill out an application?**

All applications must be renewed every new school year. Please carefully read the letter you received and follow the instructions. Call the Nutrition Services Department if you have any questions.

## **Who can receive Reduced Price meals?**

Your child can get reduced price meals if your household income is within the reduced price limits on the current years Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.

**Hemet Unified School District waives the copayment for Reduced Price meals, therefore students who qualify in this category will receive their meals at no cost.**

## **I receive WIC (Women, Infants and Children) benefits. Can my child get free meals?**

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

## **Will the information I give be verified?**

Yes, we may ask you to send written proof of the information you give.

## **If I don't qualify now, may I apply later?**

You may apply at any time during the school year if your household size goes up, or if you income goes up or down by \$50 or more a month, or if you start receiving Food Stamps

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(CalFresh), CalWorks, or other benefits. If you lose your job, you child may be able to get reduced price or free meals.

## **What if I disagree with the district's decision about my application?**

Please contact the Nutrition Service office. You also may ask for a fair hearing by calling or writing to the Business Services Department.

## **May I apply if someone in my household is not a U.S. citizen?**

You or your child do not have to be a U.S. citizen to qualify your child to receive reduced price or free meals.

## **Who should I include as members of my household?**

Include yourself, spouse, all children who live with you and all other people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends).

## **What if my income is not always the same?**

Please contact the Nutrition Services Office for further instructions. Normally you would list the amount that you normally receive BEFORE deductions. For example, if you would normally receive \$1000 each month, but missed some work last month and only received \$900, put down that you get \$1000 per month.

## **Are applications available in other languages?**

Applications are currently available in English and Spanish.

## **Why do you list all other Household Members?**

The consideration of approval of an applications is based on income and household size. Therefore, it is advantageous to list all members of the household.

## **Why do I need to provide the last four digits of my Social Security Number and sign the application?**

These two sections are required fields and it is very important that these sections be completed. If this information is not completed, **the application will be returned to the applicant.**

## **If I have more than one student going to school in the Hemet Unified School District do I need to fill out more than one application?**

No, only complete one application per family. List all Hemet Unified students.

## **If I have a student living at home that goes to a private school, charter school, or attends school in another district, should I include them on the application?**

Yes, include them in Step #3b, the Household Member section of your application.

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## **DIRECT CERTIFICATION**

### **What is Direct Certification?**

Under direct certification, Hemet Unified receives information from the County of Riverside for participants of Food Stamp (CalFresh) and CalWorks programs to certify these children to automatically qualify for free meals. To qualify, the childrens' family must receive either Food Stamps (CalFresh), CalWorks, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations assistance.

### **How do you know if your student is Direct Certified?**

Direct Certification Letters are sent to the homes of students who have been pre-approved. Direct Certification occurs annually so if you receive public assistance and do not receive a letter, please contact the Nutrition Services Office.

### **If one student is Direct Certified, in a household, are the remaining students also directly certified?**

Yes, a recent change made by the USDA has advised that students in households where one child is directly certified are also eligible to receive the direct certification.