

HOW TO APPLY FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS

Please use these instructions to help you fill out the application for free or reduced price school meals. You only need to submit one application per household, even if your children attend more than one school in the district. The application must be filled out completely to certify your children for free or reduced price school meals. Each step of the instructions is the same as the steps on your application. If at any time you are not sure what to do next, please contact your school.

STEP 1: REVIEW APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Make sure to read and review the following information. You will be required to agree to the terms and conditions listed here prior to completing the online meal application.

STEP 2: LIST ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WHO ARE INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND STUDENTS UP TO AND INCLUDING GRADE 12

STUDENTS IN HOUSEHOLD

This section will automatically populate with the children who are within your household and attend Cresthaven Academy Charter School. Only one form is required per household.

OTHER CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD

Tell us how many infants, children, and school students live in your household. They do NOT have to be related to you to be a part of your household. Each child should be listed separately in their own row.

Who should I list here? When filling out this section, please include ALL members in your household who are:

- Children age 18 or under AND are supported with the household's income;
- In your care under a foster arrangement, or qualify as homeless, migrant, or runaway youth;
- Students attending the school system, regardless of age.

A) Do you have any foster children? If any children listed are foster children, mark the "Foster Child" box next to the child's name. Foster children who live with you may count as members of your household and should be listed on your application.

B) Are any children homeless, migrant, or runaway? If you believe any child listed in this section meets this description, mark the "Homeless, Migrant, Runaway" box next to the child's name and complete all steps of the application.

CHILDREN'S RACIAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITIES

We are required to ask for information about your children's race and ethnicity. This information is important and helps to make sure we are fully serving our community. Responding to this section is *optional* and does not affect your children's eligibility for free or reduced price meals.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

If anyone in your household (including you) currently participates in one or more of the assistance programs listed below, your children are eligible for free school meals:

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or NJ SNAP.
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or NJ TANF/WorkFirst NJ.
- The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).

A) If no one in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:

- please leave this section blank

B) If anyone in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:

- Check the box to the screen and enter a case number for SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR. You only need to provide one case number. If you participate in one of these programs and do not know your case number, contact your local county welfare agency: <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/nisnap/>

STEP 3: REPORT INCOME FOR ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

How do I report my income?

- If you are unsure what is included to report under income, please see the information below or select the green "i" button next to the income categories to see what is included.
 - Earnings from work include: Salary, wages, cash bonuses. Net income from self-employment (farm or business). Military Basic pay and cash bonuses (do NOT include combat pay, FSSA or privatized housing allowances). Military: Allowances for off-base housing, food and clothing.
 - Assistance includes: Unemployment benefits or Worker's compensation. Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Cash assistance from State or local government. Alimony payments or Child support payments. Veteran's or Strike benefit.
 - Other income includes: Social Security (including railroad retirement and black lung benefits). Private pensions or disability benefits. Regular income from trusts or estates. Annuities, Investment Income or Earned Interest. Rental income. Regular cash payments from outside household.
- Report all amounts in GROSS INCOME ONLY. Report all income in whole dollars. Do not include cents. Gross income is the total income received before taxes. Many people think of income as the amount they "take home" and not the total, "gross" amount. Make sure that the income you report on this application has NOT been reduced to pay for taxes, insurance premiums, or any other amounts taken from your pay.

- Type a "0" in any fields where there is no income to report. Any income fields left empty or blank will also be counted as a zero. If you write '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report. **If local officials suspect that your household income was reported incorrectly, your application will be investigated.**

- Mark how often each type of income is received using the drop down to the right of each field.

3.A. REPORT INCOME EARNED BY CHILDREN

Report all income earned or received by children. Report the combined gross income for ALL children listed in STEP 1 in your household in the box marked "Child Income." Only count foster children's income if you are applying for them together with the rest of your household.

What is Child Income? Child income is money received from outside your household that is paid DIRECTLY to your children. Many households do not have any child income.

- Some common sources of income for children are: a full-time or part-time job, Social Security benefits, if the child is disabled, or is the beneficiary of another person's Social Security benefits, money regularly received from extended family or friends outside the household, or money from a pension, annuity, or trust. Do not include infrequent earnings, such as income from occasional baby-sitting or mowing lawns.

3.B REPORT INCOME EARNED BY ADULTS

Who should I list here?

- When filling out this section, please include ALL adult members in your household who are living with you and share income and expenses, even if they are not related and even if they do not receive income of their own.
 - Do NOT include:
 - People who live with you but are not supported by your household's income AND do not contribute income to your household.
 - Infants, Children and students already listed in STEP 1.

B) List adult household members' names in the boxes marked "Names of Adult Household Members (First and Last)." Do not list any household members you listed in STEP 1. If a child listed in STEP 1 has income, follow the instructions in STEP 3, part A.

C) Report earnings from work. Report all income from work in the "Earnings from Work" field on the application. This is usually the money received from working at jobs. If you are a self-employed business or farm owner, you will report your net income.

What if I am self-employed? Report income from that work as a net amount. This is calculated by subtracting the total operating expenses of your business from its gross receipts or revenue.

D) Report income from public assistance/child support/alimony. Report all income that applies in the "Public Assistance/Child Support/Alimony" field on the application. Do not report the cash value of any public assistance benefits NOT listed on the chart. If income is received from child support or alimony, only report court-ordered payments. Informal but regular payments should be reported as "other" income in the next part.

E) Report income from pensions/retirement/all other income. Report all income that applies in the "Pensions/Retirement/ All Other Income" field on the application.

F) Total household size will automatically be calculated using the information you provided in the meal application. If this is in error, return to the previous screens and adjust household members accordingly. It is very important to list all household members, as the size of your household affects your eligibility for free and reduced price meals.

STEP 4: SUMMARY CERTIFICATION AND SUBMISSION

All applications must be certified and submitted by an adult member of the household. You will be asked to provide the last four digits of your Social Security Number. You are eligible to apply for benefits even if you do not have a Social Security Number. If no adult household members have a Social Security Number, leave this space blank and check the box to the right labeled "Check if no SSN."

To officially submit the meal application on behalf of your children please check the final box at the bottom of the page to certify.