



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Income Eligibility Guidelines for Free or Reduced-Price Meals, Milk Announced**

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) has announced the Income Eligibility Guidelines for free or reduced-price meals or free milk for the 2009-10 school year:

| HOUSEHOLD SIZE                           | FREE MEALS OR MILK |         |        | REDUCED PRICE MEALS |         |        |
|--|--------------------|---------|--------|---------------------|---------|--------|
|  | YEARLY             | MONTHLY | WEEKLY | YEARLY              | MONTHLY | WEEKLY |
| 1  | 14,079             | 1,174   | 271    | 20,036              | 1,670   | 386    |
| 2  | 18,941             | 1,579   | 365    | 26,955              | 2,247   | 519    |
| 3  | 23,803             | 1,984   | 458    | 33,874              | 2,823   | 652    |
| 4  | 28,665             | 2,389   | 552    | 40,793              | 3,400   | 785    |
| 5  | 33,527             | 2,794   | 645    | 47,712              | 3,976   | 918    |
| 6  | 38,389             | 3,200   | 739    | 54,631              | 4,553   | 1,051  |
| 7  | 43,251             | 3,605   | 832    | 61,550              | 5,130   | 1,184  |
| 8  | 48,113             | 4,010   | 926    | 68,469              | 5,706   | 1,317  |
| For each Additional family member Add... | +4,862             | +406    | +94    | +6,919              | +577    | +134   |

Schools have sent application forms for free and reduced-price meals and free milk to all households; additional copies are available at the principal's office at each school. Families may submit applications to the school at any time during the school year. The information provided on the application by a household is confidential, and schools will use this information only to determine eligibility for school-meal benefits.

Applications must contain complete documentation of the eligibility information requested, including (1) names of all household members, (2) Social Security number of the adult household member who signs the application, (3) amount and source of income that each household member receives, and (4) the signature of an adult household member certifying that the information provided is correct.

There are several ways in which children can be eligible for school-meal benefits. Foster children may be eligible for meal benefits regardless of the income of the household with whom they reside.

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The Board of Regents does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, or disability.

Children in households receiving Special Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or FIP (Family Independence Program) benefits may be automatically eligible for school-meal benefits. RIDE and the Department of Human Services (DHS) have worked together to automate the Direct Certification process that certifies students for free school-meal benefits. This process is called Electronic Direct Certification. These families will receive an informational letter from DHS indicating that the children are automatically eligible for meal benefits and that no further action is needed.

Households receiving SNAP or FIP that have not received electronic Direct Certification will receive a letter from DHS instructing them to bring the letter to school and that they do not need to apply for meal benefits. Households receiving SNAP or FIP that have not received letters may report their SNAP or FIP number on the meal-benefit application in place of household and income information.

School officials may check meal-benefit applications for accuracy. School officials may ask for documentation to verify the information provided on the application.

If the household adult applying for meal benefits for children does not agree with a decision of a school official as to eligibility, he or she should discuss the decision with the school official on an informal basis. Applicants may also request a formal appeal to the school superintendent for a hearing on the decision.

In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy, the USDA and RIDE may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to *USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410*, or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

In addition, Rhode Island does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or religion. To file a complaint of discrimination in the food program on the basis of sexual orientation or religion, write to the R.I. Department of Education, Office of Equity and Access, 255 Westminster Street, Providence, R.I. 02903, or call (401) 222-8437.