

STERLING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

250 Main Street, P.O. Box 39
STERLING, NEBRASKA 68443
Phone (402) 866-4761 Fax (402) 866-4771



LARRY HARNISCH
SUPERINTENDENT

RYUN THEOBALD
PRINCIPAL

7/28/2011

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Sterling Public Schools offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **\$1.30**; Elementary lunch costs **\$2.05**; Middle/High School lunch costs **\$2.30**. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals. Reduced-price is **\$0.30** for breakfast and **\$0.40** for lunch.

If your child(ren) qualified for free or reduced-price meals at the end of last school year, you must submit a new application by **September 23, 2011**, in order to avoid an interruption in meal benefits.

Frequently asked questions and answers:

1. Do I need to fill out an application for each child?

No. Complete the application to apply for free or reduced-price meals. *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. **Return the completed application to: Larry Harnisch, Sterling Public Schools, PO Box 39, Sterling, NE 68443.**

2. Who can get free meals?

All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) can get free meals regardless of your income. Also, your children can get free meals if your household's gross income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.

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. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free meals regardless of income.

4. Can homeless, runaway and migrant children get free meals?

Yes, children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway or migrant qualify for free meals. If you haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call **Larry Harnisch, homeless liaison/ migrant coordinator (402) 866-4761** to see if they qualify.

5. Who can get reduced price meals?

Your children can get low cost meals if your household income is within the reduced price limits on the Federal Eligibility Income Chart shown with this application.

6. 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 school at **(402) 866-4761** if you have questions.

7. My child's application was approved last year for meal benefits. Do I need to fill out another one?

Yes, your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first few days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.

Instructions for Completing the Free & Reduced Priced School Meals Family Application

If your household receives benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), follow these instructions:

- Part 1:** List each child's name, the school they attend and their grade.
Part 2: Enter household's Master Case Number if the household qualifies for SNAP, TANF or FDPIR.
Part 3: Skip this part.
Part 4: Sign the form. The last four digits of a Social Security Number do not need to be reported.
Part 5: Answer this question if you choose to.

If you are applying for a FOSTER CHILD, follow these instructions:

If all children in the household are foster children:

- Part 1:** List all foster children, the school they attend and their grade. Check the box indicating the child is a foster child.
Part 2: Skip this part.
Part 3: Skip this part.
Part 4: Sign the form. The last four digits of a Social Security Number do not need to be reported.
Part 5: Answer this question if you choose to.

If some of the children in the household are foster children:

- Part 1:** List all children, including foster children, the school they attend and their grade. Check the box if the child is a foster child.
Part 2: If the household does not have a Master Case Number, skip this part.
Part 3: Follow these instructions to report total household income from last month.
Column 1 – Household Names: List the first and last name of **each** person living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives or friends) who share income and expenses. Attach another sheet of paper if necessary.
Column 2 - Gross Income and How Often it was Received: For each household member, list each type of income received for the month. You must also report how often the money is received – weekly, every other week, twice a month, or monthly. For earnings, be sure to list the **gross income**, not the take-home pay. **Gross income is the amount earned before taxes and other deductions.** You should be able to find it on your pay stub or your boss can tell you. For other income, list the amount each person received for the month from welfare, child support, alimony, pensions, retirement, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veteran's benefits (VA benefits) and disability benefits. Under *All Other Income*, list Worker's Compensation, unemployment or strike benefits, regular contributions from people who do not live in your household and any other income. For individuals who are self-employed, report income after expenses from business, farm or rental property. **Do not include income** from SNAP, FDPIR, WIC, Federal education benefits and foster payments received by the family from the placing agency. If you are in the Military Privatization Housing Initiative or receive combat pay, do not include these allowances as income.
Column 3–Check if NO income: If the person does not have any income, check this box.
Part 4: An adult household member must sign the form and list the last four digits of their Social Security Number OR mark the box if he/she doesn't have one.
Part 5: Answer this question if you choose to.

8. I receive WIC. Can my child(ren) get free meals?

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

9. Will the information I give be checked?

Yes, we may ask you to send written proof.

10. If I don't qualify now, may I apply later?

Yes, 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 or 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 school officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: **Tom Nieveen, 550 Depot, Sterling, NE 68443. (402) 866-2013**

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

Yes. You or your child(ren) 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-rated 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 \$1000 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 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 his combat pay counted as income?

No, if the combat pay is received in addition to his basic pay because of his deployment and it wasn't received before he was deployed, combat pay is not included as income. Contact your school for more information.

17. My family needs more help. Are there other programs we might apply for?

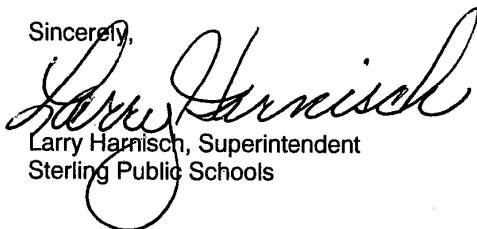
To find out how to apply for SNAP or other economic assistance benefits, please go online at ACCESSNebraska.ne.gov or call 1-800-383-4278.

If you have other questions or need help, call **(402) 866-4761**.

*Si necesita ayuda, por favor llame al teléfono **(402) 866-4761**.*

*Si vous voudriez d'aide, contactez nous au numero: **(402) 866-4761**.*

Sincerely,



Larry Harnisch, Superintendent
Sterling Public Schools

For ALL OTHER HOUSEHOLDS, including WIC households, follow these instructions:

- Part 1:** List all children, including foster children, the school they attend and their grade. Check the box if the child is a foster child.
- Part 2:** If the household does not have a Master Case Number, skip this part.
- Part 3:** Follow these instructions to report total household income from last month.
Column 1 – Household Names: List the first and last name of **each** person living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives or friends) who share income and expenses. Attach another sheet of paper if necessary.
Column 2 - Gross Income and How Often it was Received: For each household member, list each type of income received for the month. You must also report how often the money is received – weekly, every other week, twice a month, or monthly. For earnings, be sure to list the **gross income**, not the take-home pay. **Gross income is the amount earned before taxes and other deductions.** You should be able to find it on your pay stub or your boss can tell you. For other income, list the amount each person received for the month from welfare, child support, alimony, pensions, retirement, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veteran's benefits (VA benefits) and disability benefits. Under *All Other Income*, list Worker's Compensation, unemployment or strike benefits, regular contributions from people who do not live in your household and any other income. For individuals who are self-employed, report income after expenses from business, farm or rental property. **Do not include income** from SNAP, FDPIR, WIC, Federal education benefits and foster payments received by the family from the placing agency. If you are in the Military Privatization Housing Initiative or receive combat pay, do not include these allowances as income.
Column 3–Check if NO income: If the person does not have any income, check this box.
- Part 4:** An adult household member must sign the form and list the last four digits of their Social Security Number OR mark the box if he/she doesn't have one.
- Part 5:** Answer this question if you choose to.

Computing Income for Self-Employed Individuals

Individuals who are self-employed or engaged in farming may experience variations in cash flow and cannot easily report a monthly income. These individuals may use their 2010 U.S. Individual Income Tax Return Form 1040 to report self-employment income for the free and reduced price meal application. The income to be recorded is income derived from the business venture less operating costs incurred in the generation of that income. Deductions for personal expenses, such as interest on home mortgages, medical expenses, and other similar non-business items are not allowed in reducing gross business income.

USDA has announced that **losses** (negative numbers) on the lines listed below can be used to determine the **total** income for this attachment. If the total income is a negative number, it must then be recorded as zero on the application in the category labeled "All Other Income".

Zero income resulting from the use of Form 1040 does not require follow-up.

Please note: Line 7 cannot be reported as current income. Income from wages or salaries must be reported on the application for the most recent month.

Line 22 (total income) and line 37 (adjusted gross income) may not be used for purposes of applying for free and reduced-price meals.

The required information for determining the allowable income from self-employment is to be taken from the **2010 U.S. Individual Income Tax Return Form 1040**.

Line 12, Business Income (or loss)	_____
Line 13, Capital Gain (or loss)	_____
Line 14, Other Gains (or losses)	_____
Line 17, Rental Real Estate, etc.	_____
Line 18, Farm Income (or loss)	_____

NOTE: If any members of the household have income from wages or salary, the gross income from last month must be reported on the application form.

This attachment is used only to report income from self-employment and/or farming.

Total of above lines: _____ **equals annual self-employed income***

If the total of the above lines is a negative number, it must be changed to zero before it is transferred to the application.

* This figure is to be reported on the application under "All Other Income".

Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

FEDERAL INCOME CHART for School Year 2011-12					
Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Twice per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	20,147	1,679	840	775	388
2	27,214	2,268	1,134	1,047	524
3	34,281	2,857	1,429	1,319	660
4	41,348	3,446	1,723	1,591	796
5	48,415	4,035	2,018	1,863	932
6	55,482	4,624	2,312	2,134	1,067
7	62,549	5,213	2,607	2,406	1,203
8	69,616	5,802	2,901	2,678	1,339
Each additional person:	7,067	589	295	272	136

Privacy Act Statement: This explains how we will use the information you give us.

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the last four digits of the social security number of the adult household member who signs the application. The last four digits of the social security number are not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs. We MAY share your eligibility information with education, health and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules.

Non-Discrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

"In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

