



GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

70 WATERFORD STREET, GARDNER, MA 01440
TELEPHONE: 978.632.1000 FAX: 978.632.1164

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Gardner Public Schools offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **\$1.25**; Elementary lunch costs **\$2.35**; Secondary lunch costs **\$2.60**; Milk only costs **\$0.40**. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Reduced price is **\$.30** for breakfast and **\$0.40** for lunch.

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: **Business Office, 70 Waterford Street, Gardner, MA 01440.**
2. **WHO CAN GET FREE MEALS?** All children in households receiving benefits from MA SNAP, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations or **MA TAFDC**, 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 **our homeless liaison or migrant coordinator 978-630-4076** 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 on 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 Business office at **978-632-1000 ext 5802** if you have questions.
7. **MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. 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.
8. **I GET 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 and we may also 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 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 school officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: **Catherine Goguen, Business Administrator, 70 Waterford Street, Gardner MA 01440, 978-632-1000,**
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 made \$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 her basic pay because of her deployment and it wasn't received before she was deployed, combat pay is not counted 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 assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call the SNAP Hotline **1-866-950-3663**

If you have other questions or need help, call **978-632-1000**

Sincerely,
Catherine Goguen
Business Administrator

MASSACHUSETTS FREE OR REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS
FAMILY HOUSEHOLD MEAL BENEFIT APPLICATION
SY 2011 - 2012



If you have received a NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION from the school district for free meals, **do not** complete this application. But **do** let the school know if any children in the household are not listed on the **Notice of Direct Certification** letter you received.

PART 1: List all household members including children seeking school meals, siblings and both parents of children living in home. Also, include other relatives and friends living in home if you live as a single economic unit. (See instructions)

NAME OF ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS (FIRST, M.I, LAST)	SCHOOL NAME FOR EACH CHILD ATTENDING A SCHOOL	CHECK IF A FOSTER CHILD (LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF WELFARE AGENCY OR COURT) * IF ALL CHILDREN LISTED BELOW ARE FOSTER CHILDREN, SKIP TO PART 5.	CHECK IF NO INCOME
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PART 2: If any member of your household receives SNAP (food stamp), FDPIR or TAFDC benefits, please provide the Agency Identification Number located on the upper right side of the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) benefit letter. Please skip to Part 5 and sign this form if you have provided an Agency Identification Number.

Agency ID: _____ **** Do not provide your EBT card number.**

PART 3: Is any school age child living with you a migrant child, homeless or a runaway? Yes No
 If yes, please call the homeless liaison or migrant coordinator for free meals: 978-630-4076

PART 4: TOTAL HOUSEHOLD GROSS INCOME: You must tell us how much income, and **how often** in the chart below.

NAME (LIST ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WITH INCOME)	EARNED INCOME- BEFORE TAXES/DEDUCTIONS	CHILD SUPPORT OR ALIMONY	PENSIONS, RETIREMENT, SOCIAL SECURITY, SSI, VA BENEFITS	ALL OTHER INCOME
<i>(EXAMPLE) Jane Smith</i>	<i>\$199.99 weekly</i>	<i>\$149.99 every other week</i>	<i>\$99.99 monthly</i>	<i>None</i>
	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____
	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____
	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____
	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____
	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____	\$ ____ / ____

PART 5: SIGNATURE. A parent or caretaker adult must sign the application (see Privacy Act Statement on the back of this page). I certify (promise) that all information on this application is true and that all income is reported. I understand that the school will get Federal funds based on the information that I give. I understand that school officials may verify (check) the information. I understand that if I purposely give false information, my children may lose meal benefits, and I may be prosecuted. An adult household member must sign the application. If Part 4 is completed, the adult signing the form also must list the last 4 digits of his or her Social Security Number or mark the "Check here if you do not have a Social Security Number" box. (See Privacy Act Statement on the back of this page.)

SIGN HERE: _____ PRINT NAME _____ DATE: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE #: _____

LAST 4 DIGITS OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: * * * - * * - ____ ____ Check here if you do not have a Social Security Number

Part 6: CHILDREN'S ETHNIC AND RACIAL IDENTITIES (OPTIONAL)	
Choose one ethnicity:	Choose one or more (regardless of ethnicity):
<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic/Latino	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
DO NOT FILL OUT THIS PART. THIS IS FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Annual Income Conversion: Weekly x 52, Every 2 Weeks x 26, Twice A Month x 24, Monthly x 12	
Total Income: _____ Per: <input type="checkbox"/> Week, <input type="checkbox"/> Every 2 Weeks, <input type="checkbox"/> Twice A Month, <input type="checkbox"/> Month, <input type="checkbox"/> Year Household size: _____	
Categorical Eligibility: _____ Date Withdrawn: _____ Eligibility: Free _____ Reduced _____ Denied _____ Reason: _____	
Temporary: Free _____ Reduced _____ Time Period: _____ (expires after <u>45</u> days)	
Determining Official's Signature: _____ Date: _____	
Confirming Official's Signature: _____ Date: _____	
Verifying Official's Signature: _____ Date: _____	

Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart. Your children may also qualify for free meals if any person in the household receives SNAP (food stamps) or TAFDC (cash assistance) regardless of the income limits on this chart.

FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART SCHOOL YEAR 2011-2012			
HOUSEHOLD SIZE	YEARLY	MONTHLY	WEEKLY
1	20,147	1,679	388
2	27,214	2,268	524
3	34,281	2,857	660
4	41,348	3,446	796
5	48,415	4,035	932
6	55,482	4,624	1,067
7	62,549	5,213	1,203
8	69,616	5,802	1,339
EACH ADDITIONAL PERSON:	7,067	589	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 is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Transitional Aid for Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) 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 Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, 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."



If your child is eligible for free or reduced school meals, your child may also be eligible for
free or low cost health insurance
through MassHealth.

To learn more call: 1-800-841-2900

MassHealth



Si su niño es eligible para almuerzo gratis o reducido, su niño pueda ser eligible para
seguro de salud gratis o de bajo costo
por medio de MassHealth.

Para saber mas, llame al: 1-800-841-2900

**covering
kids**

