

# COCHISE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 26

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Cochise School offers healthy meals every school day. Lunch costs \$2.50. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals. Reduced-price is \$.40 for lunch. This packet includes a school meal application for free or reduced-price meal benefits, application directions. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

**1. WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE MEALS?**

- a. All children in households receiving benefits from **SNAP, FDPIR (Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations) or TANF** can get free meals regardless of your income.
- b. Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.
- c. Children participating in their school's Head Start Program are eligible for free meals.
- d. Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
- e. Children can get free or reduced-price meals if your household's gross income is within the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify for free or reduced-price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

Federal Eligibility Income Chart for School Year 2022-2023			
Household Size	Yearly Income	Monthly Income	Weekly Income
1	\$25,142	\$2,096	\$484
2	\$33,874	\$2,823	\$652
3	\$42,606	\$3,551	\$820
4	\$51,338	\$4,279	\$988
5	\$60,070	\$5,006	\$1,156
6	\$68,802	\$5,734	\$1,324
7	\$77,534	\$6,462	\$1,492
8	\$86,266	\$7,189	\$1,659
Each additional person:	+\$8,732	+\$728	+\$168

- 2. **HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN QUALIFY AS HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY?** Do the members of your household lack a permanent address? Are you staying together in a shelter, hotel, or other temporary housing arrangement? Does your family relocate on a seasonal basis? Are any children living with you who have chosen to leave their prior family or household? If you believe children in your household meet these descriptions and haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail Karl Uterhardt, Superintendent.
- 3. **DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD?** No. *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: Candy Acuña, PO Box 1088, Cochise, AZ 85606, (520) 384-2540.
- 4. **SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS?** No, but please read the letter you got carefully. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact Candy Acuña immediately.
- 5. **CAN I APPLY ONLINE?**  
No. Our district does not have the option to apply for free or reduced-price meals online at this time. Please contact Candy Acuña, PO Box 1088, Cochise, AZ 85606, (520) 384-2540, [cacuna@cochiseschool.org](mailto:cacuna@cochiseschool.org) and refer to the information above to complete a paper application.
- 6. **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 through September 1, 2022. **You must send in a new application** unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. If you do not send in a new application that is approved by the school or you have not been notified that your child is eligible for free meals, your child **will be charged the full price for meals.**
- 7. **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.
- 8. **WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED?** Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
- 9. **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.

10. 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: Karl Uterhardt, PO Box 1088, Cochise, AZ 85606, (520) 384-2540, [kuterhardt@cochiseschool.org](mailto:kuterhardt@cochiseschool.org).
11. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? Yes. You, your children, or other household members do not have to be U.S. citizens to apply for free or reduced-price meals. Our organization does not release information for immigration-related purposes in the usual course of operating the School Nutrition Programs.
12. 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.
13. WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT? Household members may not receive some types of income we ask you to report on the application or may not receive income at all. Whenever this happens, please write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zeroes. Please be careful when leaving income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.
14. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE REPORT OUR INCOME DIFFERENTLY? Your basic pay and cash bonuses must be reported as income. If you get any cash value allowances for off-base housing, food, or clothing, it must also be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income. Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.
15. WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? List any additional household members on a separate piece of paper and attach it to your application. Contact Candy Acuña, PO Box 1088, Cochise, AZ 85606, (520) 384-2540, [cacuna@cochiseschool.org](mailto:cacuna@cochiseschool.org) to receive a second application.
16. 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 1-800-352-8401.

If you have other questions or need help, call (520) 384-2540.

Sincerely,

*Candy Acuña*

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*In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.*

*Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.*

*To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:*

1. *mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;*
2. *fax: (202) 690-7442; or*
3. *email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).*

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*



**INSTRUCTIONS Sources of Income**

Sources of Income for Children	
Type of Income	Examples
Earnings from work	A child has a job where they earn a salary or wages.
Social Security - Disability payments	A child is blind or disabled and receives Social Security benefits.
- Survivor Benefits	A parent is disabled, retired, or deceased and their child receives social security benefits.
Income from persons <u>outside</u> the household	A friend or extended family member <u>regularly</u> gives a child spending money.
Income from any other source	A child receives income from a private pension fund, annuity or trust.

Sources of Income for Adults		
Earnings from Work	Public Assistance/ Alimony/Child Support	Pensions/Retirement/All Other Income
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Salary, wages, cash bonuses</li> <li>- Net income from self-employment (farm or business)</li> </ul> <p><b>If you are in the U.S. Military:</b> - Basic pay and cash bonuses (do not include combat pay, FSSA, or privatized housing allowances)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allowances for off-base housing, food and clothing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unemployment benefits</li> <li>- Workers Compensation</li> <li>- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</li> <li>- Cash Assistance from State or local government</li> <li>- Alimony payments</li> <li>- Child support payments</li> <li>- Veteran's benefits</li> <li>- Strike benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social Security (including railroad retirement and black lung benefits)</li> <li>- Private Pensions or disability</li> <li>- Regular income from trusts or estates</li> <li>- Annuities</li> <li>- Investment income</li> <li>- Eamed Interest</li> <li>- Rental Income</li> <li>- Regular cash payments from outside household</li> </ul>

**OPTIONAL 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.

**Ethnicity (check one):**

- Hispanic or Latino       Not Hispanic or Latino

**Race (check one or more):**

- American Indian or Alaskan Native     Asian     Black or African American  
 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander     White

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), 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.

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