



For immediate release  
 July 28, 2009

## USDA Releases 2009-10 Policy on Free and Reduced-Price Meals; National School Lunch Program Ensures Students Have Access to Nutritious Diet

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction today announced the 2009-10 United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) policy on free and reduced-price meals for children enrolled in the state’s public schools. The USDA’s National School Lunch Program helps ensure all students have access to a nutritious diet by offering students an affordable, high quality, nutritious breakfast, lunch and after school snack.

“Research indicates that eating habits affect students’ academic performance and health,” State Superintendent June Atkinson said. “Children who are hungry have trouble concentrating and do not perform as well in the classroom as students who are well-nourished.”

The federal income eligibility guidelines for July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010 are as follows:

Household Size	Federal Poverty Guidelines	Reduced-Price Meals					Free Meals				
	Annual Income	Annual Income	Monthly Income	Income Twice Per Month	Income Every Two Weeks	Weekly Income	Annual Income	Monthly Income	Income Twice Per Month	Income Every Two Weeks	Weekly Income
1	10,830	20,036	1,670	835	771	386	14,079	1,174	587	542	271
2	14,570	26,955	2,247	1,124	1,037	519	18,941	1,579	790	729	365
3	18,310	33,874	2,823	1,412	1,303	652	23,803	1,984	992	916	458
4	22,050	40,793	3,400	1,700	1,569	785	28,665	2,389	1,195	1,103	552
5	25,790	47,712	3,976	1,988	1,836	918	33,527	2,794	1,397	1,290	645
6	29,530	54,631	4,553	2,277	2,102	1,051	38,389	3,200	1,600	1,477	739
7	33,270	61,550	5,130	2,565	2,368	1,184	43,251	3,605	1,803	1,664	832
8	37,010	68,469	5,706	2,853	2,634	1,317	48,113	4,010	2,005	1,851	926
For each additional family member, add	3,740	6,919	577	289	267	134	4,862	406	203	187	94

The household size and income criteria identified above will be used to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price meal benefits. Children from households whose income is at or below the levels shown are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Children who are members of households that are eligible to receive Food Stamp or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) are automatically eligible for free

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meals. Food Stamp/TANF families will be certified by the determining official by Direct Certification. Foster children who are the legal responsibility of a welfare agency or court also may be eligible for benefits regardless of the income of the family with whom they reside. Eligibility for the foster child is based on the child's income.

Application forms are being made available to all households. Applications also are available in the principal's office of every school. To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households must complete the application and return it to the school or to the Child Nutrition Office within the school district. The information households provide on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and verification of data. Applications may be verified at any time during the school year by school or other program officials.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price policy, the Child Nutrition Director in each school district will review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling may discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to the school district.

If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make children eligible for additional benefits.

A list of some of the most commonly asked questions and answers is available on the NCDPI Child Nutrition Services Web site at [www.ncpublicschools.org/childnutrition](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/childnutrition). For more information, please contact the child nutrition services director in the school district in which your child is enrolled or contact the NCDPI Communications division at 919.807.3450.