

August 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

South Colonie CSD Food Service Department would like to remind you that the school participates every year in the USDA free/reduced meal program. In view of the trying economic times we are all facing, **we strongly encourage each household to review this booklet to see if your household qualifies for the school meals program.** Take advantage of the possible opportunity of your children receiving breakfast and lunch for **free or at a reduced price (\$.25)** if your household qualifies.

As part of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of June 2004, USDA has now mandated that schools use household applications for the free/reduced meal program at school. **This is the only application that you will receive for the 2009-2010 school year.** You **will not** be receiving an application for every child on the first day of school.

Please complete this SINGLE household application in its entirety, making sure that you included ALL of your school aged children in Section #1 and return it to the Food Service office located at the South Colonie District Offices, 102 Loralee Drive, Albany 12205 or the school (or one of the schools) that your child (children) attend. Please feel free to send this in **early before school starts** or remember to send it in with your child on September 9th. **Please allow 4-5 business days to process your application.** You will be notified by mail or telephone the outcome of your application.

If you have received a **Direct Certification Letter** from the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (*mailed directly to you in August), you **DO NOT NEED TO COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION.** Just fill the name of school building next to your child's name on the bottom of that Direct Certification letter and return the letter to the food service office at the address printed below or to your student's school building. **(NOTE: If ALL of the children in your household ARE NOT listed on that Direct Certification Letter then you DO need to complete this application for the other children not included on the letter that reside in your household).**

Please remember – this is the **ONLY** free/reduced meal application that you will receive this year and that it is to be used for your **entire household (ALL children to be listed on this one application).**

Please call the Food Service office if you have any questions @ 869-3576 x2452/ x2467.

Sincerely,

Renée A. Hanks, SNS

SOUTH COLONIE CENTRAL SCHOOLS

102 LORALEE DRIVE
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12205
(518) 869-3576 x2452

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The South Colonie School District believes that one of the most important ways in which we can help our children perform better in their classrooms is to provide them with the nutrition necessary for the healthy growth of their minds and bodies. Therefore, we provide breakfast and lunch in our school every day.

We invite all students to participate in our school food service program. Students may buy lunch for \$1.75 in elementary schools, \$2.00 in the middle schools and \$2.00 in the high school. Students may buy breakfast for \$1.00 in the elementary schools, \$1.25 in middle schools and \$1.25 in high school.

Children from households that meet Federal income guidelines (outlined below) are eligible for free meals or reduced price meals. Reduced price meals cost each eligible student \$.25 for lunch and \$.25 for breakfast. To apply for free or reduced price meals, submit a **Direct Certification letter from the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance OR complete the enclosed application**, sign it, and return it to the District Food Service Office or your school **as soon as possible**. Please refer to the guidelines contained in this letter when completing the application. **WE CANNOT APPROVE AN APPLICATION THAT IS NOT COMPLETE, SO BE SURE TO FILL OUT ALL THE REQUIRED INFORMATION.**

- 1. Do I need to fill out an application for each child?** No. Complete the application to apply for free or reduced price meals. Do not fill out more than one application for your household.
- 2. Who can get free meals?** Children in households getting food stamps or TANF and most foster children can get free meals regardless of your income. Also, your children can get free price meals if your household income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Guidelines. Each foster child must be listed on a separate application, with Part 2 completed and include an adult signature.
- 3. Can homeless, runaway and migrant children get free meals?** Please call *Dave Pace, Central Registration, at 869-3576 x2454* to see if your child(ren) qualify, if you have not been informed that they will get free meals.
- 4. 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 Income Chart, shown on this application.
- 5. Should I fill out an application if I received a letter this school year saying my children are approved for free or reduced price meals?** Please read the letter you received carefully and follow the instructions. Call the school at **869-3576 x2452** if you have questions.
- 6. 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.
- 7. Will the information I give be checked?** The school may ask you at any time during the school year to verify your eligibility. You will be notified, in writing, if you have been selected for Verification. School officials may ask you to send papers showing that your child should receive free or reduced price meals at the time you applied.
- 8. If I don't qualify now, may I apply later?** Yes. You may apply **at any time** during the school year if your household size goes up, income goes down, or if you start getting Food stamps, TANF or other benefits. If you lose your job, your children may be able to get free or reduced price meals.
- 9. What if I disagree with the school's decision about my application?** You should talk to school officials at **869-3576 x2452**
- 10. 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 a U.S. citizen to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
- 11. 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). You must include yourself and all children who live with you.
- 12. What if my income is not always the same?** List the amount that you normally get. For example, if you normally get \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only got \$900, put down that you get \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but not if you get it only sometimes.

Income Chart:

The following chart lists income levels according to household size and income levels received either yearly, monthly or weekly. If your total household income is the same or less than the amounts on the Income Chart below, your children may be eligible to receive free or reduced price meals.

REDUCED PRICE ELIGIBILITY SCALE
Reduced Price Lunch, Breakfast
Effective from July 1, 20099 to June 30, 2010

Household Size	Annual	Month	Twice-Monthly	Bi-Weekly	Weekly
1	\$20,036	\$1,670	\$835	\$771	\$386
2	26,955	2,247	1,124	1,037	519
3	33,874	2,823	1,412	1,303	652
4	40,793	3,400	1,700	1,569	785
5	47,712	3,976	1,988	1,836	918
6	54,631	4,553	2,277	2,102	1,051
7	61,550	5,130	2,565	2,368	1,184
8	68,469	5,706	2,853	2,634	1,317
For each additional family member add	+6,919	+577	+289	+267	+134

How to Apply:

To get free or reduced price meals for your children you may submit a **Direct Certification letter received from the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, OR carefully complete one application** for your household and return it to the designated office. If you now receive food stamps, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for any children, or participate in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), the application must include the children's names, the household food stamp, TANF or FDPIR number and the signature of an adult household member. All children with the same case number may be listed on the same application. Separate applications are required for children with different case numbers. If you do not list a food stamp, TANF or FDPIR number for all the children for whom you are applying, the application must include the names of everyone in the household, the amount of income of each household member, and how often it is received and where it comes from. It must include the signature of an adult household member and that adult's social security number, or the word "**none**" if the adult does not have a social security number. An application that is not complete cannot be approved. Contact your local Department of Social Services for your food stamp or TANF number or complete the income portion of the application.

Reporting Changes:

The benefits that you are approved for at the time of application are effective for the entire school year. **You no longer need to report changes for an increase in income or decrease in household size, or if you no longer receive food stamps.**

Income Exclusions:

The value of any child care provided or arranged, or any amount received as payment for such child care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care under the Child Care Development (Block Grant) Fund should not be considered as income for this program.

Nondiscrimination 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 to *USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410* or call 1(800) 795-3272 or 1 (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Meal Service to Children with Disabilities:

Federal regulations require schools and institutions to serve meals at no extra charge to children with a disability which may restrict their diet. A student with a disability is defined in 7CFR Part 15b.3 of Federal regulations, as one who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities are defined to include functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. You must request the special meals from the school and provide the school with medical certification from a medical doctor. If you believe your child needs substitutions because of a disability, please get in touch with us for further information, as there is specific information that the medical certification must contain.

Confidentiality:

The United States Department of Agriculture has approved the release of students names and eligibility status, without parent/guardian consent, to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of federal education programs such as Title I and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which are United States Department of Education programs used to determine areas such as the allocation of funds to schools, to evaluate socioeconomic status of the school's attendance area, and to assess educational progress. Information may also be released to State health or State education programs administered by the State agency or local education agency, provided the State or local education agency administers the program, and federal, State or local nutrition programs similar to the National School Lunch Program. Additionally, *all* information contained in the free and reduced price application may be released to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of programs authorized under the National School Lunch Act (NSLA) or Child Nutrition Act (CNA); including the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, the Special Milk Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC); the Comptroller General of the United States for audit purposes, and federal, State or local law enforcement officials investigating alleged violation of the programs under the NSLA or CNA.

The disclosure of eligibility information not specifically authorized by the NSLA requires a written consent statement from the parent/guardian.

Please allow 4-5 business days to process your application. We will let you know when your application is approved or denied by mail or telephone. **Due to high volume of applications received, we encourage you to submit your application upon receipt to the District Office or your school building main office.**

Sincerely,

Renée A. Hanks, SNS
Food Service Director
South Colonie School District



APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

To apply for free and reduced price meals, **submit a Direct Certification letter** received from the Office of Temporary and disability Assistance OR complete **only one application for your household** using the instructions. Sign the application and return the application to **District Food Service Office or School**. Please complete a separate application for **each** foster child. Call the school if you need help: 869-3576 x2452/2467. Ensure that all information is provided. Failure to do so may result in denial of benefits for your child or unnecessary delay in approving your application.

PART 1 ALL HOUSEHOLDS MUST COMPLETE STUDENT INFORMATION. DO NOT FILL OUT MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION FOR YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

- (1) Print the names of the children for whom you are applying on one application. (For Foster Children, see Part 2.)
- (2) List their grade and school.

PART 2 HOUSEHOLDS WITH A FOSTER CHILD SHOULD COMPLETE THIS PART AND SIGN PART 5.

A foster child is the legal responsibility of a welfare agency or court. A separate application must be completed for each foster child.

- (1) List the foster child's monthly "personal use" income. ("Personal Use" income is money given by the welfare office identified by category for the child's personal use, such as an allowance, and all other money the child gets, such as money from his/her family or money from the child's employment.) Write "0" if the foster child does not get "personal use" income. SKIP PART 4. Do not list any other children, household members or income, or a social security number.
- (2) A foster parent or other official representing the child must sign the application in PART 5.

PART 3 HOUSEHOLDS GETTING FOOD STAMPS, TANF OR FDPIR SHOULD COMPLETE THIS PART AND SIGN PART 5. COMPLETE A SEPARATE APPLICATION FOR A CHILD/CHILDREN WITH A DIFFERENT CASE NUMBER.

- (1) List a current food stamp case number, TANF or FDPIR (Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations) number. Do not use the number on your benefit card. The case number is provided on your benefit letter.
- (2) An adult household member must sign the application in PART 5. SKIP PART 4. Do not list names of household members or income if you list a food stamp case number, TANF or FDPIR number.

PARTS 4 & 5 ALL OTHER HOUSEHOLDS MUST COMPLETE THESE PARTS AND ALL OF PART 5.

- (1) Write the names of **everyone** in your household, whether or not they get income. Include yourself, the children you are applying for, all other children, your spouse, grandparents, **and other related and unrelated people in your household**. Use another piece of paper if you need more space.
- (2) Write the amount of current income each household member receives, before taxes or anything else is taken out, and indicate where it came from, such as earnings, welfare, pensions and other income. If the current income was more or less than usual, write that person's usual income. **Specify how often this income amount is received: weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, 2 x per month**. Changes in income during the school year no longer need to be reported.
- (3) The value of any child care provided or arranged, or any amount received as payment for such child care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care under the Child Care and Development Block Grant, TANF and At Risk Child Care Programs should **not** be considered as income for this program.
- (4) The application must include the social security number of the adult who signs **PART 5** if part 4 is completed. If the adult does not have a social security number, write "none". If you listed a food stamp, TANF or FDPIR number, or if you are applying for a foster child, a social security number is not needed.

OTHER BENEFITS: Your child may be eligible for benefits such as Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In order to determine if your child is eligible, program officials need information from your free and reduced price meal application. Your written consent is required before any information may be released. Please refer to the attached parent Disclosure Letter and Consent Statement for information about other benefits.

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

Section 9 of the National School Lunch Act requires that unless your children's food stamp, TANF or FDPIR case number is provided, you must include the social security number of the adult household member signing the application, or indicate that the household member does not have a social security number. If a social security number is not given or an indication is not made that the signer does not have such a number, the application cannot be approved. The social security number may be used to identify the household member in carrying out efforts to verify the correctness of information stated on the application. These verification efforts may be carried out through program reviews, audits and investigations and may include contacting employers to determine income, contacting a food stamp or welfare office to determine current certification for receipt of food stamps or other benefits, contacting the State employment security office to determine the amount of benefits received and checking the documentation produced by household members to prove the amount of income received. These efforts may result in a loss or reduction of benefits, administrative claims, or legal actions if incorrect information is reported.

DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS

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, write to *USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410* or call **1 (800) 795-3272 or 1 (202) 720-6382 (TTY)**. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEAL APPLICATION FACT SHEET

When filling out the application form, please pay careful attention to these helpful hints.

Food Stamp/TANF/FDPIR Case Number:

This must be the **complete** number supplied to you by the agency including all numbers **and** letters, for example, E 123456, or whatever combination is used in your county. **Refer to a letter you received from your local Department of Social Services for your number or contact them for your number. This number is not on your benefit card.** All children with the same case number may be listed on the same application. Separate applications are required for children with different case numbers.

Direct Certification:

If you receive food stamps or Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), you may receive a letter in August from the Department of Social Services that will simplify the process for your child or children to receive free meals at school.

If you take or send the letter to one of the schools your child/children attend, your children will receive free meals without your having to complete an application.

You will only receive one letter. If you lose it, it will not be replaced. If you do not return the letter to the school, you must fill out the Free and Reduced Price Application in order for your children to get free meals.

Foster Child:

A child who is living with a family but who is under the legal care of the welfare agency or court. List the child's "personal use" income. This includes only those funds provided by the agency which are identified for the **personal** use of the child, such as personal spending allowances, money received by his/her family, or from a job. Funds provided for housing, food and care, medical, and therapeutic needs are **not** considered income to the foster child. Write "0" if the child has no personal use income.

Household:

A group of related or non-related people who are living in one house and share income and expenses.

Adult Family Members:

All related and non-related people who are 21 years of age and older living in your house.

Financially Independent:

A person is financially independent and a separate economic unit/household when his or her earnings and expenses are not shared by the family/household.

Gross Income:

Is money earned or received by each member of your household **before deductions**. Examples of deductions are federal tax, State tax, and Social Security deductions.

Examples of gross income are:

- Wages, salaries, tips, commissions, or income from self-employment
- Net farm income
- Pensions, annuities, or other retirement income including Social Security retirement benefits
- Unemployment compensation
- Welfare payments (*does not include value of food stamps*)
- Public Assistance payments
- Adoption assistance
- Strike benefits
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Survivor's Benefits
- Alimony or child support payments
- Disability benefits, including workman's compensation
- Veteran's subsistence benefits
- Interest or dividend income
- Cash withdrawn from savings, investments, trusts, and other resources which would be available to pay for a child's meals
- Other cash income

If you have more than one job, you must list the income from all jobs.

If you receive income from more than one source (*wage, alimony, child support, etc.*), you must list the income from all sources.

Current Income:

Your income at the present time **before deductions**. Farmers, self-employed workers, migrant workers, and other seasonal employees may use their income for the past 12 months.

Income Exclusions:

The value of any child care provided or arranged, or any amount received as payment for such child care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care under the Child Care Development (Block Grant) Fund should not be considered as income for this program.

If you have any questions or need help in filling out the application form, please contact:

Renée A. Hanks, Food Service Director, Phone: (518) 869-3576 x2452 or x2467

South Colonie Central Schools
School Food Service
102 Lorelee Drive
Albany, New York 12205-2223