

www.bearcreekschool.com

July 1, 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Bear Creek Community Charter School offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs \$1.05; lunch costs \$3.30. Your child(ren) may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Reduced price is \$0.30 for breakfast and \$0.40 for lunch. This packet includes an application for free and reduced price meal benefits, and a set of detailed instructions. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

If you have received a NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION letter for free meals, do not complete the application. But do let the school know if any children in your household are not listed on the NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION letter you received.

1. Who can get free or reduced priced meals or Special Milk?

- All children in households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly the Food Stamp Program) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits are eligible for free meals.
- Foster children who are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.
- Children participating in their school's Head Start program are eligible for free meals.
- Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
- Children may receive free or reduced price meals if your household's 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.

INC	INCOME ELIGIBILITY REDUCED PRICE GUIDELINES JULY 1, 2023 - JUNE 30, 2024									
Family Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly					
1	\$26,973	\$2,248	\$1,124	\$1,038	\$519					
2	\$36,482	\$3,041	\$1,521	\$1,404	\$702					
3	\$45,991	\$3,833	\$1,917	\$1,769	\$885					
4	\$55,500	\$4,625	\$2,313	\$2,135	\$1,068					
5	\$65,009	\$5,418	\$2,709	\$2,501	\$1,251					
6	\$74,518	\$6,210	\$3,105	\$2,867	\$1,434					
7	\$84,027	\$7,003	\$3,502	\$3,232	\$1,616					
8	\$93,536	\$7,795	\$3,898	\$3,598	\$1,799					
Each additional family member add:	+\$9,509	+\$793	+\$397	+\$366	+\$183					

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, call or email Melanie Leo at Melanie.leo@bearcreekschool.com or 570-820-4070.

- 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: Jerry Weihbrecht, Bear Creek Community Charter School, 30 Charter School Way, Bear Creek Township, PA 18702.
- 4. Should I fill out an application if I received a letter this school year saying my children are already approved for free meals? No, but read the letter you received carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification letter, contact Jerry Weihbrecht at jerry.weihbrecht@bearcreekschool.com immediately.
- 5. **Can I apply online?** Yes! You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application if you are able. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. Visit www.bearcreekschool.com or visit the PA Department of Human Services website at www.compass.state.pa.us.
- 6. **My child's application was approved last year. Do I need to fill out a new application?** Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first 30 operating school 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.
- 7. **I get WIC.** Can my children get free meals? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Send in 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/or 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 Jim Smith at jim.smith@bearcreekschool.com or 570-820-4070.
- 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.
- 12. What if my income is not always the same? List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make \$1,000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1,000 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, write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zeroes. 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, or receive Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance payments, 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 Jerry Weihbrecht at jerry.weihbbrecht@bearcreekschool.com or 570-820-4070 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, visit www.compass.state.pa.us, contact your local county assistance office, or call 1-800-692-7462.

If you have other questions or need help, call 570-820-4070.

Sincerely,

Jerry Weihbrecht

Food Service Director

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:

 Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture - Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

18. Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

19. E-mail: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

ATTENTION: If you speak Spanish, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Contact your child's school. ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Comuníquese con la escuela de su niño.

How To Apply for Free and Reduced Price School Meals

Please use these instructions to help you fill out the application for free and reduced price school meals. You only need to submit one application per household

The application must be filled out completely to determine the eligibility of your child(ren) for free or reduced price school meals. Please follow these instructions in order! Each step of the instructions is the same as the steps on your application. If at any time you are not sure what to do next, please contact Jerry Weihbrecht at (570) 820-4070, extension 6108 or jerry.weihbrecht@bearcreekschool.com

Please use a pen (not a pencil) when filling out the application and do your best to print clearly.

Step 1: List ALL children, infants, and students up to and including grade 12

Tell us how many infants/toddlers, children not in school, and elementary/middle/high school students live in your household. They do NOT have to be related to you to be a part of your household.

Who should I list here? When filling out this section, please include ALL members in your household who are:

- Children age 18 or under AND are supported with the household's income;
- In your care under a formal foster arrangement through a court or state/local agency, or qualify as homeless, migrant, or runaway youth;
- Students attending (regardless of age)

A) List each child's name. Print each child's name. Use one line of the application for each child. When printing names, write one letter in each box. Stop if you run out of space. If there are more children present than lines on the application, attach a second piece of paper (or a second application if completing electronically) with all required information for the additional children. This also applies to adults in Step 3. "MI" is short for middle initial. Print the first letter of each child's middle name in the box.

B) Is the child a student?
If "Yes," write the grade
level of the student in the
"Grade" column to the right.

C) Do you have any foster children? If any children listed are foster children, mark the "Foster Child" box next to the child's name. If you are ONLY applying for foster children, after finishing Step 1, go to Step 4.

Foster children who live with you may count as members of your household and should be listed on your application. If you are applying for both foster and non-foster children, go to Step 3. Note: Adopted children are not considered foster children. A foster child is a minor child who has been taken into state custody and placed with a state-licensed adult, who cares for the child in place of their parent or guardian.

D) Are any children homeless, migrant, or runaway? If you believe any child listed in this section meets this description, mark the "Homeless, Migrant, Runaway" box next to the child's name and complete all steps of the application. Homeless, Migrant, Runaway status must be confirmed with the appropriate program staff. If the school district cannot confirm your student's homeless, migrant, or runaway status, then the school district will contact you to complete an income-based application. You may choose to provide income information now in order to prevent the school district from potentially needing to contact you later.

Step 2: Do any household members currently participate in SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR?

If anyone in your household (including you) currently participates in one or more of the assistance programs listed below, your children are eligible for free school meals:

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or
- The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).

A) If no one in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:

• Check "No" in Step 2 and go to Step 3.

B) If anyone in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:

- Write a case number for SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR. You only need to provide one case number. If you participate in one of these programs and do not know your case number, contact:
- Go to **Step 4**.

Step 3: List ALL household members and income for each member

How do I report my income?

- Use the lists titled "Sources of Income" & "Examples of Income for Children," on the back side of the application form to determine if your household has income to report.
- Report all amounts in GROSS INCOME ONLY. Report all income in whole dollars. Do not include cents.
 - o Gross income is the total income received **before** taxes and deductions.
 - Many people think of income as the amount they "take home" and not the total, "gross" amount. Make sure that the income you report on this application
 has NOT been reduced to pay for taxes, insurance premiums, or any other amounts taken from your pay.
- Write a "0" in any fields where there is no income to report. Any income fields left empty or blank will also be counted as a zero. If you write "0" or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report. If local officials suspect that your household income was reported incorrectly, your application will be investigated.
- Mark how often each type of income is received using the check boxes to the right of each field.

3.A. Report income earned by adults

Who should I list here?

- When filling out this section, please include ALL adult members in your household who are living with you and share income and expenses, even if they are not related and even if they do not receive income of their own.
- Do NOT include:
 - People who live with you but are not supported by your household's income AND do not contribute income to your household.
 - o Infants, children and students already listed in Step 1.

Step 3: List ALL household members and income for each member

1) List adult household members' names.

Print the name of each household member in the boxes marked "Names of Adult Household Members (First and Last)." Include college students, unless they are declared independently on taxes (all college students are considered adults). Do not list any household members you listed in **Step 1**.

2) List earnings from work.

List all income from work in the "Earnings from Work" field on the application. This is usually the money received from working at jobs. If you are a self-employed business or farm owner, you will report your net income. Net income is your income after taxes and deductions have been subtracted.

- What if I have multiple jobs? List each job separately by entering your name and income from each job on a new line. Add an additional sheet of paper if necessary.
- What if I am self-employed? List income from your business as a net amount. This net amount is calculated by subtracting the total operating expenses of your business from its gross receipts (revenue). Gross receipts or revenue are all the income earned from the sale of any products or services offered.

If a child listed in Step 1 has income, follow the instructions in Step 3, Part B.

3) List income from public assistance/child support/alimony.

List all income that applies in the "Public Assistance/Child Support/Alimony" field on the application. <u>Do not report the cash value of any public assistance benefits NOT listed on the chart</u>. If income is received from child support or alimony, only report court-ordered payments. Informal but regular payments should be reported as "other" income in the next part.

4) List income from pensions/retirement/all other income.

List all income that applies in the "Pensions/Retirement/All Other Income" field on the application.

• What if I receive income from multiple sources in this category? List each source separately by entering your name and income from each source on a new line. Add an additional sheet of paper if necessary.

5) List total household size.

Enter the total number of household members in the field "Total Household Members (Children and Adults)." This number MUST be equal to the number of household members listed in **Step 1** and **Step 3**. If there are any members of your household that you have not listed on the application, go back and add them. It is very important to list all household members, as the size of your household affects your eligibility for free and reduced price meals.

6) Provide the last four digits of your Social Security Number.

An adult household member must enter the last four digits of their Social Security Number in the space provided. You are eligible to apply for benefits even if you do not have a Social Security Number. If no adult household members have a Social Security Number, leave this space blank and mark the box to the right labeled "Check if no Social Security Number."

3.B List income earned by children

List all income earned or received by children.

List the combined gross income for ALL children listed in **Step 1** in your household in the box marked "Child Income." Only count foster children's income if you are applying for them together with the rest of your household.

• What is Child Income? Child income is money received from outside your household that is paid DIRECTLY to your children. Many households do not have any child income.

Step 4: Contact information and adult signature

All applications must be signed by an adult member of the household. By signing the application, that household member is promising that all information has been truthfully and completely reported. Before completing this section, please also make sure you have read the statements on the back of the application.

- A) Provide your contact information. Write your current mailing address in the fields provided, if this information is available. If you have no permanent address, that is okay. Sharing a phone number, email address, or both is optional, but helps us reach you quickly if we need to contact you.
- B) Print and sign your name and write today's date. Print the name of the adult signing the application and that person signs in the box "Signature of adult."
- C) Mail completed application to:

Jerry Weihbrecht, Food Service Director Bear Creek Community Charter School 30 Charter School Way Bear Creek Township, PA 18702

Optional

Share children's racial and ethnic identities (optional). On the back of the application, we ask you to share information about your children's race and ethnicity. This field is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility for free or reduced price school meals. This information is requested solely for the purpose of determining the State's compliance with Federal civil rights laws, and your response will not affect consideration of your application, and may be protected by the Privacy Act. By providing this information, you will assist us in assuring that this program is administered in a nondiscriminatory manner.

Please return the application directly to your child's SCHOOL. DO <u>NOT</u> mail, fax, or email completed applications or questions about applications to the USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights or your child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals will be delayed.

Pennsylvania Household Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals

Complete one application per household. Please use a pen (not a pencil).

APPLY ONLINE: www.compass.state.pa.us

RETURN TO (School/District Name): Bear Creek Community Charter School

ADDRESS: 30 Charter School Way, Bear Creek Township, PA 18702

STEP 1 List ALL children, infants, and students u	p to and including	grade :	12. Attach	another s	heet of p	aper if yo	ou need space f	or more n	ames.							
List ALL children in the household. Do not forget to lis	t infants, children	attendir	ng other sch	ools, child	lren not in	school, a	and children not	applying fo	or benef	its. This include	s children no	t related to you	in your h	ousehold.		
Child's First Name		МІ	Child's Last	Name				Grade		Foster Child	Migrant	Runawa	у Н	omeless		
									<u>}</u>						, ,	checked f these
									at app						boxes refer t	, please
									all tha						Applic	cation
									Check all that apply							ction's L: Part C
									٥	Ш	Ш	Ш		Ш	& Par	t D.
STEP 2 Do any household members (including ye	ou) participate in:	SNAP,	TANF, or Fl	DPIR?												
O NO Go to STEP 3. O YES	Write case num	ber here	e and procee	ed to STEP	4.	CASE	NUMBER (NOT E	BT NUMBE	R):			Write only one	case num	nber in this	space.	
STEP 3 List ALL household members and income	for each member	(befor	e taxes and	d deductio	ons)											
A. All Adult Household Members (Anyone who is I List all Adult Household Members not listed in S' deductions) for each source in whole dollars (no	TEP 1 (including yo	urself)	even if the t receive in	ey do not i	receive in m any sou	come. Fo	or each Househo	old Membe	ave any	-	u are certify Pension Social	-		ere is no in		report.
Name of Adult Household Members (First and Last)	from Work	Weekly		2x Month	Monthly	Annual	Alimony	Weekly	2 Weeks	2x Month Mo	onthly Incom		Weekly	2 Weeks	2x Month	Monthly
	\$	0	0		0	0	\$	0	0	0 0	\$			C	0	C
	\$	C	0	Q	0	0	\$	0	0	0 0)			Q	0	O.
	\$	C	0	0	0	C	\$	0	0	0 0	\$		O	C	0	0
	\$	0	0	O	0	0	\$	0	0	0 0	\$		0	C	0	0
	\$	O	0	O	0	0	\$	0	0	0 0	\$			C	0	0
Total Household Members (Children and Adults) Last Four Numbers of Social Security Number of Primary Wage Earner or other Adult Household Member (If Applicable)						ck if no S Irity Num	ber 🗌		Please see			ck				
B. Child Income Sometimes children in the household earn or receive Include the TOTAL income (before taxes and deduction)		L childre	en listed in S	STEP 1 here	e.	\$	Child Income	Wee	2	How often rece every 2X Month Weeks	Monthly	Annual				
STEP 4 Contact information and adult signature.	RETURN COM	PLETEC	FORM TO	YOUR CH	IILD'S SCH	HOOL:	Insert sc	hool addre	ess here							
"I certify (promise) that all information on this appl (confirm) the information. I am aware that if I purp Print Name of Adult Signing the Form				dren may				•			e and Federa	-	d that sc	hool offic	ials may v	rerify
										·		Ē	11/ .:			
Mailing Address (if available)		Stat	ie .			Zip			Ph	one (optional)		En	nail (option	nal)		

SOURCES AND EXAMPLES OF INCOME For additional information on income, please refer to the instructions that accompany this application.

Sources of Income									
Earnings from Work	Public Assistance/Alimony/	Pensions/Retirement/							
	Child Support	All other sources of income							
 Salary, wages, cash bonuses, tips, commissions Net income from self-employment (farm or business) 	Unemployment benefits Workers' compensation Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Social Security/Disability (including railroad retirement and black lung benefits) Private Pensions or disability benefits							
If you are in the U.S. Military:	 Cash assistance from State or local government 	Income from trusts or estates Annuities							
 Basic pay and cash bonuses (do NOT include combat pay, FSSA, or privatized housing allowances) Allowances for off-base housing, food, and clothing 	Alimony payments Child support payments Veterans' benefits Strike benefits	Investment income Earned interest Rental income Regular cash payments from outside househo							

Examples of income for Children									
•	A child has a regular full or part-time job where they earn a salary or wages								
	A child is blind or disabled and receives Social Security benefits A parent is disabled, retired, or deceased, and their child receives Social Security benefits								
•	A friend or extended family member regularly gives a child spending money								
•	A child receives regular income from a private pension fund, annuity, or trust								

OPTIONAL Children's ethnic and rac	ial identities. This information	on is kept confidentia	I and may be prot	tected by the Privac	y Act of 1974.				
We are required to ask for information and does not affect your children's elig	•	•	ormation is impor	tant and helps to n	nake sure we are fully ser	ving our community. Resp	onding to this see	ction is option	nal
Ethnicity (check one): Hispanic or Latir	no (A person of Cuban, Mexican,	Puerto Rican, South or Co	entral American, or o	other Spanish Culture o	or origin, regardless of race)	☐ Not Hispanic or Latino			
Race (check one or more): American I	ndian or Alaska Native	Asian Black or Af	rican American	☐ Native Hawaiiar	or Other Pacific Islander	☐ White			
Return this completed form to your chi	ild's school. *Do <u>not</u> mail, fa	κ, or email completed	d applications to th	he U.S. Department	t of Agriculture Office of t	he Assistant Secretary for	Civil Rights.		
DO NOT FILL OUT For school use of	only.								
Annual Income Conversion: Weekly × 5	52, Every 2 Weeks × 26, Twice	e a Month × 24, Mon	thly × 12. Do not a	nnualize income to	determine eligibility unle	ss more than one income fi	equency is listed		
Total Income	How o	ften?	Household siz	ze	Categorical I	Fligibility 🗌		Eligibilit	ty
	Weekly Every 2x N	Monthly Annual				6	Free	Reduced	Denied
							0	0	0
			4						
Determining Official's Signature [ate	Confirming	Official's Signati	ure Date		Verifying Official's Sign	ature Dat	te	

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires that we use information from this application to see who qualifies for free or reduced price meals. We can only approve complete forms. We may share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them deliver program benefits to your household. Inspectors and law enforcement may also use your information to make sure that program rules are

Use of Information Statement

Please be sure to provide the last four numbers of the Social Security number of the adult household member who signs the application. If the adult does not have one, 'Check if no Social Security Number'. Applications for a foster child do not need to list a Social Security number. Applications for children in households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) do not need to list a Social Security

Some children qualify for free meals without an application. Please contact your school to get free meals for a foster child, and children who are homeless, migrant, or runaway.

Return completed form to your child's school.

The contact information below is solely to file a complaint of discrimination

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.

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* MAIL: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

FAX: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or EMAIL: Program.Intake@usda.gov

* Do not mail applications to this address, only complaints of discrimination.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.