

Child Nutrition Department

2026-2027 Letter to Household

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We'd like to share an important update about Reduced-Price Meals, made possible by new funding from the 89th Texas Legislature.

At Uplift Education, we know that healthy meals are essential for learning. That's why we're proud to offer nutritious meals to all scholars every school day. For the current school year, meal prices are:

- **Breakfast:** \$0 (Free for all scholars)
- **Lunch:** \$3.05 (Full price)
- **Reduced-price lunch:** \$0.00

Your scholar(s) may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals based on your household income and family size, according to the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.

Why it matters:

When families complete the Free & Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL) application, it not only supports individual scholars but also brings critical resources to our schools. This additional funding helps provide:

- After-school academic and enrichment programs
- State and federal funding for school operations
- Reduced internet costs for campuses
- Fee waivers for college applications and admissions tests

We encourage all families to complete the FRL application—even if your scholar brings lunch from home or you're unsure if you qualify. Your participation helps ensure we can continue providing valuable support and opportunities to all Uplift scholars.

The application takes less than 10 minutes to complete at <https://lingconnect.com> Even if your child does not eat from our cafés daily, submitting the application still helps our schools.

Please note: If your application is not approved for free meals, you can still add funds to your child's account. If you're unable to add funds online, your scholar may bring the money to school, and a cashier will assist in depositing it into their LING Connect account.

- 1. Do I need to fill out an application for each child?** No. Please complete **one** Free and Reduced-Price School Meals Application for all students in your household. Incomplete applications cannot be approved, so be sure to include all required information. Applications can be submitted online at <https://linqconnect.com>.
- 2. Who can get free meals?** Children in households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Food Distribution Program for Households on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), (TANF), and (WIC) are eligible for free meals regardless of income. Children may also qualify based on household income within federal guidelines. You must complete and submit the application to the Child Nutrition Department.
- 3. Who should I include as members of my household?** Include yourself and all people living in your household, related or not—such as children, grandparents, other relatives, or friends.
- 4. Should I fill out an application if I got a letter this school year saying my children are approved for free or reduced-price meals?** Yes. An application is only good for that school year and for the first few days of this school year. Send a new application unless the school has told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.
- 5. Can homeless, runaway and migrant children get free meals?** Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrants qualify for free meals. If you haven't been told about a child's status as homeless, runaway, or migrant or you feel a child may qualify for one of these programs, please email cnp@uplifteducation.org.
- 6. Will the information I give be checked?** Yes, you may be asked to submit proof of income or other documentation.
- 7. 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 increases, income decreases, or you begin receiving SNAP, TANF, or other benefits. If you lose your job, your children may become eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
- 8. What if my income is not always the same?** List your **normal** monthly income. For example, if you usually earn \$1,000 but earned only \$900 last month, report \$1,000. If you regularly receive overtime, include it; if not, do not count it.
- 9. May I apply if someone in my household is not a U.S. citizen?** Yes. U.S. citizenship is not required to qualify for free or reduced-price meals.
- 10. Who can get reduced priced meals?** Children in households with income within the reduced-price limits on the Federal Income Chart are eligible.

Income Eligibility Guidelines					
Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Monthly	Bi-Weekly	Weekly
1	\$29,526	\$2,461	\$1,231	\$1,136	\$568
2	\$40,034	\$3,337	\$1,669	\$1,540	\$770
3	\$50,542	\$4,212	\$2,106	\$1,944	\$972
4	\$61,050	\$5,088	\$2,544	\$2,349	\$1,175
5	\$71,558	\$5,964	\$2,982	\$2,753	\$1,377
6	\$82,066	\$6,839	\$3,420	\$3,157	\$1,579
7	\$92,574	\$7,715	\$3,858	\$3,561	\$1,781
8	\$103,082	\$8,591	\$4,296	\$3,965	\$1,983
For each person, add	\$10,508	\$876	\$438	\$405	\$203

*The **income eligibility guidelines** (right) are based on 185% (reduced) of the federal poverty guidelines and are effective July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027.*

- 11. What if I disagree with the school's decision about my application?** You may speak with school officials or request a hearing by emailing Vanessa Jimenez at vjimenez@uplifteducation.org.
- 12. We are in the military; do we include our housing allowance as income?** If your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, **do not** include the housing allowance. All other allowances must be included in your gross income (Food, Clothing or Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance).

If you have any questions or need help, please feel free to contact us at cnp@uplifteducation.org.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Jimenez

Senior Director of Child Nutrition/ Uplift Education

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Dallas, Texas 75247

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, 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/ad-3027.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; or

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

3. Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

STEP 1: LIST ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WHO ARE INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND STUDENTS UP TO AND INCLUDING GRADE 12.

- **List** each child's name.
 - **Print** first name, middle initial, and last name for each child in the household in the spaces. If there are more children than lines, use the back of the application to record additional names.
 - **Include** all household members who are age 18 or under and are supported with the household's income including children who are not enrolled in the district. Children do NOT have to be related to anyone in the household to be a part of the household.
- **Mark** the box following the child's name to show if the child is a student in the school district.
- **Record** the child's grade if the child is in school.
- **Check** the appropriate box if a child qualifies for free meals as participant in the foster care system, Head Start (including Early Head Start) or if a child meets the criteria for homeless, migrant, or runaway.

Checking **Foster indicates that a foster care agency or court has placed the child in your home.** If the application is being submitted for foster children only, complete Step 1, skip Steps 2-3, and complete Step 4.

STEP 2: PARTICIPATING IN A CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY PROGRAM

- **Do any household members (including you) currently participate in SNAP, TANF, and/or FDPIR?**
 - If a child or adult in the household participates in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), record the Eligibility Determination Group (EDG) number in the space.
 - If a child or adult in the household is a participant in Food Distribution Program for Households on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), circle YES to indicate participation. The school district will contact you to obtain documentation of FDPIR participation.
- **If the students in the household are eligible based on SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR, skip Steps 3, and complete Step 4.**
- **If any children in the household are participants in one of the following programs—Foster, Head Start, Homeless, Migrant, or Runaway, skip Steps 3 and complete Step 4.**

STEP 3: REPORT ON INCOME FOR ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

Part A. Last Four Digits of Social Security Number (SSN) of an Adult Household Member

- **Provide** the last four digits of the Social Security number (SSN) of an adult in the household or check the box for no SSN. *A social security number is not required to apply for these programs.*

Part B. Income for All Adult Household Members (including yourself)

- **Record** the first and last name of each adult in the household in the space provided.
 - If there are more adults in the household than available spaces, use the back of the application.
 - Include all adults living in the household that share income and expenses, even if the adult is not related to anyone in the household and does not receive any income. Do not include adults that are not supported by the household's income and do not contribute income to the household.
- **Record** the amount of income the adult receives under the type of income: Working Earnings; Public Assistance/Child Support/Alimony; Pensions/ Retirement/Social Security/Supplemental Security Income (SSI); and All Other.

Adult Income Information

Earnings from Work

General Types of Income

- Salary, wages, cash bonuses
- Strike benefits
- U.S. Military

- Allowances for off-base housing, food, and clothing
- Basic pay and cash bonuses (do NOT include combat pay, FSSA, or privatized housing allowances)
- Self-Employed Worker

- Net income from self-employment (farm or business)—calculated by subtracting the total operating expenses of the business from its gross receipts or revenue.

Public Assistance/ Child Support/Alimony

(Do not report the value of any cash value public assistance benefits NOT listed on the chart.)

- Alimony payments
- Cash assistance from State or local government
- Child support payments from court-ordered child support or alimony decree should be reported here. Informal but regular payments should be reported as *other* income in the next part.
- Unemployment benefits
- Worker's compensation

Pensions/Retirement/ Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Annuities
- Income from trusts or estates
- Private Pensions or disability
- Social Security (including railroad retirement and black lung benefits)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Veteran's benefits

All Other Income

- Earned interest
- Investment income
- Regular cash payments from outside household
- Rental income

- **Report** all amounts in gross income only and in whole dollars. Gross income is the total income received before taxes or deductions. Ensure that the income reported has not been reduced by the amounts deducted for taxes, insurance premiums, or any other purpose. The Adult Income Information Box (next page) provides additional information on the types of income that need to be reported. Foster children may be included as a member of the household or may be included on a separate application.
- **Write** a 0 in any field where there is no income to report. If you write 0 or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report. If local officials have known or available information that the household income was reported incorrectly, the application will be verified for cause.
 - **Select** how often each type of income is received (frequency).
W = Weekly, E = Every 2 Weeks, T = Twice per Month, M = Monthly, A = Annually

Part C. Income for Children in the Household

- **Record** total income for all children in the household who receive regular income by how often income is received (frequency). *The Child Income Information Box (below) provides additional information on the types of income that needs to be reported for children in the household.*
- Do not annualize income to determine eligibility unless more than one income frequency is listed. Annual Income Conversion: weekly x 52, every two weeks x 26, twice a month x 24, monthly x 12.

Part D. Total Household Members

- **Record** the total number of children and adults in the household in the appropriate box. This number MUST be equal to the number of household members listed in Step 1 and Step 3. It is very important to list all household members as the size of the household determines the household eligibility.

Child Income Information
<u>Earnings from Work</u> For Example: A child has a job where she or he earns a salary or wages.
<u>Social Security, Disability Payments</u> For Example: A child is blind or disabled and receives Social Security benefits.
<u>Social Security, Survivor's Benefits</u> For Example: A parent is disabled, retired, or deceased, and their child receives social security benefits.
<u>Income from any other source</u> For Example: A child receives income from a private pension fund, annuity, or trust.

STEP 4: PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION AND ADULT SIGNATURE

- **Read** the certification statement.
- **Write** your current address and contact information in the space provided. Sharing a phone number, email address, or both is optional, but helps us reach you quickly if we need to contact you. *If you have no permanent address, this does not make your children ineligible for free or reduced-price school meals.*
- **Print** the name of the adult signing the form, **sign** the form, and **record** today's date in the appropriate spaces.
- All applications must be signed by an adult household member. *By signing the application, the household member is promising that all information has been truthfully and completely reported. Before completing this section, please read the privacy and civil rights statements on the back of the application.*