

Public Media Release Statement

EAST LONGMEADOW PUBLIC SCHOOL FOOD SERVICES

East Longmeadow Food Services will be participating in the **National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program Seamless Summer Option**. As part of this program, all of the East Longmeadow Schools will offer healthy meals every school day at NO COST due to the Nationwide Waiver to Allow the Seamless Summer Option through School Year 2021-2022. Students will be able to participate in these programs without having to pay a fee or submit a household application.

Even though meals are free, it is recommended that school districts still collect applications and notify households of the results. Qualifications for children to receive free or reduced price meals include: belonging to a household whose income is at or below the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines, belonging to a household that receives public assistance, or if the child is homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, or participates in a Head Start or Even Start pre-K program.

Household size and income criteria are used to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits if the household does not receive assistance or the children are not in the other categories mentioned above. Children can get free or reduced-price meals if the household's gross income falls at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guideline chart. If you feel you may fall income eligibility guidelines of free or reduced priced meals please complete an application, as there are other benefits/entitlements that may work in conjunction with this eligibility. It may be beneficial to submit an application for your family for this school year SY21-22.

FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2021-2022			
Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$23,828	\$1,986	\$459
2	\$32,227	\$2,686	\$620
3	\$40,626	\$3,386	\$782
4	\$49,025	\$4,086	\$943
5	\$57,424	\$4,786	\$1,105
6	\$65,823	\$5,486	\$1,266
7	\$74,222	\$6,186	\$1,428
8	\$82,621	\$6,886	\$1,589
Each additional person:	+8,399	+700	+162

To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households can fill out the application and return it to the school unless the household has already received notification that their children are approved for free meals this year. Application forms were distributed to all households with a letter informing households of the availability of free and reduced-price meals for their children and what is required to complete on the application. Applications also are available

<https://www.eastlongmeadowma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2843/Free-and-Reduced-Application-2021-2022?bidl=>

Only one application is required for all children in the household and the information provided 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 the school or other program officials. An application for free or reduced-price benefits cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions. In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability.

Families can apply for benefits at any time. If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the Federal Guidelines. Contact the Food Service office (413)525-5450 x 7980 at any time to request an application.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price policy, the Director of Food Services will review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the official may wish to 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 Superintendent Smith, 180 Maple Street, East Longmeadow, MA 01028; 413-525-5450 x7900.

When known to East Longmeadow Public School Food Services, households will be notified of their children's eligibility for free meals if they are members of households receiving assistance from the:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR); or

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), if the State program meets Federal standards.

An application is not required for free meal benefits for Assistance Program participants and all of the children in the household are eligible for free meal benefits. If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, or if a household does not receive a notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school to have free meal benefits extended to them. Participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals, but they will need to turn in an application including household size and total income.

When known East Longmeadow Public School Food Services households will also be notified of any child's eligibility for free meals if the individual child is considered "Other Source Categorically Eligible", because the child is categorized, as defined by law as:

- Foster
- Homeless
- Migrant
- Runaway
- Enrolled in an eligible Head Start, or
- Enrolled in an eligible pre-kindergarten class

If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school about their eligibility through the list above, or should submit an income application.

Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact the school if the household chooses to decline the benefits.

For more information, you may call Lori Pahl in Food Services at 413-525-5450 x7980 or e-mail at lori.pahl@eastlongmeadowma.gov.

Non-Discrimination Statement:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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.

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