

## Letter to Parents for School Meal Programs

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Elmira Heights CSD** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **\$1.35 for grades 9-12**; Lunch costs **\$1.70 grades 9-12**. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Beginning July 1, 2019, students in New York State that are approved for reduced price meals will receive breakfast and lunch meals at no charge.

\*\*We are pleased to inform you that **Nathan Cohen Elementary & Middle School** in the Elmira Heights CSD will implement the meal certification option available to schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs for 2021-2022.

**What does this mean for your child(ren) attending the school(s) identified above?** All students enrolled at Cohen Elementary & Middle School are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at school at **no charge** to your household each day of the 2021-2022 school year. No further action is required of you. Your child(ren) will be able to participate in these meal programs without having to pay a fee or submit an application.

**What if I have students in elementary grades and in the High School grades?** Please fill out the Free & Reduced application. Be sure your application lists ALL students and household members, regardless of grade.

1. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. Complete the application to apply for free or reduced price meals. *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: **Jennifer Basch, Food Service Office, 100 Robinwood Ave., Elmira Heights, NY 14903**
2. WHO CAN GET FREE MEALS? All children in households receiving benefits from **SNAP, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations** or **TANF**, can get free meals regardless of your income. Categorical eligibility for free meal benefits is extended to all children in a household when the application lists an Assistance Program's case number for any household member. Also, your children can get free meals if your household's gross income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Households with children who are categorically eligible through an Other Source Categorically Eligible designation, as defined by law, may be eligible for free benefits and should contact the SFA for assistance in receiving benefits.
3. CAN FOSTER CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Yes, foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court, are eligible for free meals. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free meals regardless of income. Foster children may also be included as a member of the foster family if the foster family chooses to also apply for benefits for other children. If non-foster children in a foster family are not eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits, an eligible foster child will still receive free benefits.
4. CAN HOMELESS, RUNAWAY, AND MIGRANT CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Yes, children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant qualify for free meals. If you haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail **Andy Lutz at 607-734-7132** or **Tom Boyanowski at 607-733-5604** to see if they qualify.
5. WHO CAN GET REDUCED PRICE MEALS? Your children may be approved as reduced price eligible if your household income is within the reduced-price limits on the Federal Eligibility Income Chart, shown on this letter. Beginning July 1, 2019, students in New York State that are approved for reduced price meals will receive breakfast and lunch meals at no charge.
6. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? Please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. Call the school at **607-733-5854** if you have questions.
7. MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT ANOTHER ONE? Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first 30 operating 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.
8. 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 a FREE/REDUCED PRICE MEAL application.
9. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes and we may also ask you to send written proof.
10. 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 reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.
11. 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: **[Michael Gill, Superintendent of Schools, Elmira Heights CSD, 607-734-7114]**.
12. 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 U.S. citizens to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
13. 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) who share income and expenses. You must include yourself and all children living with you. If you live with other people who are economically independent (for example, people who you do not support, who do not share income with you or your children, and who pay a pro-rated share of expenses), do not include them.
14. WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME? List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1000 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.

15. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE INCLUDE OUR HOUSING ALLOWANCE AS INCOME? If you get an off-base housing allowance, it must be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income.
16. MY SPOUSE IS DEPLOYED TO A COMBAT ZONE. IS HER COMBAT PAY COUNTED AS INCOME? No, if the combat pay is received in addition to her basic pay because of her deployment and it wasn't received before she was deployed, combat pay is not counted as income. Contact your school for more information.
17. 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, contact your local assistance office or call **1-800-342-3009**.

**2021-2022 INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES  
FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS OR FREE MILK**

**2021-2022 FREE ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART**

Total Family Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$ 16,744	\$ 1,396	\$ 698	\$ 644	\$ 322
2	\$ 22,646	\$1,888	\$ 944	\$ 871	\$ 436
3	\$ 28,548	\$ 2,379	\$ 1,190	\$ 1,098	\$ 549
4	\$ 34,450	\$ 2,871	\$ 1,436	\$ 1,325	\$ 663
5	\$ 40,352	\$ 3,363	\$ 1,682	\$ 1,552	\$ 776
6	\$ 46,254	\$ 3,855	\$ 1,928	\$ 1,779	\$ 890
7	\$ 52,156	\$ 4,347	\$ 2,174	\$ 2,006	\$ 1,003
8	\$ 58,058	\$ 4,839	\$ 2,420	\$ 2,233	\$ 1,117
*Each Add'l person add	\$ 5,902	\$ 492	\$ 246	\$ 227	\$ 114

How to Apply: To get free or reduced price meals for your children carefully complete one application following the instructions for your household and return it to the designated office listed on the application. If you now receive SNAP, 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 SNAP, TANF or FDPIR case number and the signature of an adult household member. All children should be listed on the same application. If you do not list a SNAP, TANF or FDPIR case number for any household member, the application must include the names of everyone in the household, the amount of income 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 the last four digits of that adult's social security number or check the box if the adult does not have a social security number.

**An application for free and reduced price benefits cannot be approved unless complete eligibility information is submitted, as indicated on the application and in the instructions.** Contact your local Department of Social Services for your SNAP or TANF case number or complete the income portion of the application. No application is necessary if the household was notified by the SFA their children have been directly certified. If the household is not sure if their children have been directly certified, the household should contact the school.

Reporting Changes: The benefits that you are approved for at the time of application are effective for the entire school year and up to 30 operating days into the new school year (or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first). You no longer need to report changes for an increase in income or decrease in household size, or if you no longer receive SNAP.

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.

Reduced Price Eligible Students: **Beginning July 1, 2019, students in New York State that are approved for reduced price meals will receive breakfast and lunch meals at no charge.**

In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age or disability

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 of such individual, a record of such an impairment or being regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include but are not limited to: functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working. You must request meal modifications from the school and provide the school with medical statement from a State licensed healthcare professional. 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 statement 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.

Reapplication: You may apply for benefits any time during the school year. Also, if you are not eligible now, but during the school year become unemployed, have a decrease in household income, or an increase in family size you may request and complete an application at that time.

The disclosure of eligibility information not specifically authorized by the NSLA requires a written consent statement from the parent/guardian. We will let you know when your application is approved or denied.

Sincerely,

**Joseph Kilmer**  
GST BOCES Regional Food Service Director

**Nondiscrimination Statement:** This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

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, audiotope, 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](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), 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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Date Withdrew \_\_\_\_\_

F \_\_\_ R \_\_\_ D \_\_\_

### 2021-2022 Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals

To apply for free and reduced price meals for your children, read the instructions on the back, complete **only one** form for your household, sign your name and **return it to the address listed below**. Call 607-733-5854, if you need help. Additional names may be listed on a separate paper.

**Return Completed Applications to:** Jennifer Basch, Elmira Heights Food Service Office  
100 Robinwood Ave.  
Elmira Heights, NY 14903

1. List all children in your household who attend school:

Student Name	School	Grade/Teacher	Foster Child	Homeless Migrant, Runaway
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. SNAP/TANF/FDPIR Benefits:

If anyone in your household receives either SNAP, TANF or FDPIR benefits, list their name and CASE # here. **Skip to Part 4, and sign the application.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ CASE #: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Report all income for ALL Household Members (Skip this step if you answered 'yes' to step 2)

**All Household Members (including yourself and all children that have income).**

List all Household members not listed in Step 1 (including yourself) **even if they do not receive income**. For each Household Member listed, if they do receive income, report total income for each source in whole dollars only. If they do not receive income from any other source, write '0'. If you enter '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report.

Name of household member	Earnings from work before deductions <i>Amount / How Often</i>	Child Support, Alimony <i>Amount / How Often</i>	Pensions, Retirement Payments <i>Amount / How Often</i>	Other Income, Social Security <i>Amount / How Often</i>	No Income
	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Total Household Members (Children and Adults)

\*Last Four Digits of Social Security Number: XXX-XX-\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_

I do not have a SS#

\*When completing section 3, an adult household member must provide the last four digits of their Social Security Number (SS#), or mark the "I do not have a SS#" box" before the application can be approved.

4. Signature: An adult household member must sign this application before it can be approved.

I certify (promise) that all the information on this application is true and that all income is reported. I understand that the information is being given so the school will get federal funds; the school officials may verify the information and if I purposely give false information, I may be prosecuted under applicable State and federal laws, and my children may lose meal benefits.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Ethnicity and Race are optional; responding to this section does not affect your children's eligibility for free or reduced price meals.

Ethnicity:  Hispanic or Latino  Not Hispanic or Latino

Race:  American Indian or Alaskan Native  Asian  Black or African American  Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Island  White

#### DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE – FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

Annual Income Conversion (Only convert when multiple income frequencies are reported on application)

Weekly X 52; Every Two Weeks (bi-weekly) X 26; Twice Per Month X 24; Monthly X 12

SNAP/TANF/Foster

Income Household: Total Household Income/How Often: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Household Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Free Meals  Reduced Price Meals  Denied/Paid

Signature of Reviewing Official \_\_\_\_\_

Date Notice Sent: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

To apply for free and reduced price meals, complete only one application for your household using the instructions below. Sign the application and return the application to the person listed on the front of this application.

If you have a foster child in your household, you may include them on your application. A separate application is not needed. Call the school if you need help. 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, including foster children, for whom you are applying on one application.
- (2) List their grade and school.
- (3) Check the box to indicate a foster child living in your household, or if you believe any child meets the description for homeless, migrant, runaway (a school staff will confirm this eligibility).

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### **PART 2 HOUSEHOLDS GETTING SNAP, TANF OR FDPIR SHOULD COMPLETE PART 2 AND SIGN PART 4.**

- (1) List a current SNAP, TANF or FDPIR (Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations) case number of anyone living in your household. The case number is provided on your benefit letter.
- (2) An adult household member must sign the application in PART 4. SKIP PART 3. Do not list names of household members or income if you list a SNAP case number, TANF or FDPIR number.

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### **PART 3 ALL OTHER HOUSEHOLDS MUST COMPLETE THESE PARTS AND ALL OF PART 4.**

- (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, every other week (bi-weekly), 2 x per month, monthly. If no income, check the box.** 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.
- (3) Enter the total number of household members in the box provided. This number should include all adults and children in the household and should reflect the members listed in PART 1 and PART 3.
- (4) The application must include the last four digits only of the social security number of the adult who signs **PART 4** if Part 3 is completed. If the adult does not have a social security number, check the box. **If you listed a SNAP, TANF or FDPIR number, a social security number is not needed.**
- (5) An adult household member must sign the application in PART 4.

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**OTHER BENEFITS:** Your child may be eligible for benefits such as Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). 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.

### **USE OF INFORMATION STATEMENT**

Use of Information Statement: The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not submit all needed information, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the last four digits of the social security number of the primary wage earner or other adult household member who signs the application. The social security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals, and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs.

We may share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews, and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules.

### **DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS**

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](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), 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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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## FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEAL APPLICATION FACT SHEET

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

**SNAP/TANF/FDPIR case number:** This must be the complete valid case number supplied to you by the agency including all numbers and letters, for example, E123456, or whatever combination is used in your county. Refer to a letter you received from your local Department of Social Services for your case number or contact them for your number.

**Foster Child:** A child who is living with a family but who is under the legal care of the welfare agency or court may be listed on your family application. 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. Separate economic units in the same residence are characterized by prorating expenses and by economic independence from one another.

**Current Gross Income:** Money earned or received at the present time by each member of your household before deductions. Examples of deductions are federal tax, State tax, and Social Security deductions. 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. Only farmers, self-employed workers, migrant workers, and other seasonal employees may use their income for the past 12 months reported from their 1040 Tax Forms.

Examples of gross income are:

- Wages, salaries, tips, commissions, or income from self-employment
- Net farm income – gross sales minus expenses only – not losses
- Pensions, annuities, or other retirement income including Social Security retirement benefits
- Unemployment compensation
- Welfare payments (does not include value of SNAP)
- Public Assistance payments
- Adoption assistance
- 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

**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:

Jennifer Basch, Food Service Management  
607-733-5854