[Print on District Letterhead]

To all families in the [district name] community:

As you may know, school meals in this district are free and available for all students, and this will continue into the 2021-22 school year. This past school year has certainly had its challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and remote and hybrid learning models. We are thrilled that despite these challenges, all Maine children have been able to access free healthy school meals on a daily basis. We would like to extend our gratitude to the parents and caregivers who have participated in our meal programs, despite the many changes to the program.

We are calling on you to take action this school year by taking the time to complete the Economic Status Form. Any family can benefit from participating in school nutrition programs, and this application is important for a number of reasons. Since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic in March 2020, when school meals became complementary, there has been a significant drop in Economic Status Form returns.

You may be wondering: why is completing the Economic Status Form necessary if meals in my school/district are free anyway? Even though any family in your district can participate in school meal programs at no cost, the family income data provided by completing the application informs key funding for academic resources. This application is one way you as a parent or caregiver can invest in your student’s education. Completing an Economic Status Form can help you connect to other important benefits. These benefits include ––––––.

The Economic Status Form for the 2021-22 school year can be completed at any point starting July 1, 2021 or after. Your district’s Food Service Director will provide application information then. More information, including application assistance and other materials, are forthcoming. On behalf of the [school district] Nutrition team: we wish you a happy and healthy Maine Summer!

For questions or comments, please contact Caroline Bennett: Ending Hunger in Maine AmeriCorps VISTA (caroline.bennett@maine.gov).