

Completing the Meal Benefit Application

What is it?

The Meal Benefit Application is a confidential application to determine a student's eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals. Local schools ask parents/guardians to fill it out at the beginning of each school year to help determine household income for students and the community.

Why does it matter?

Completing a meal benefit application for your household is an easy way to invest in education in your community, even if you don't think you qualify. The family income data provided by the application informs key academic funding resources and helps direct other benefits to families that may need them.

How to complete it:

The application is available through your local school district's school nutrition program. Many districts have the application available to be completed online. A printed version of the application will also be available—it will often be part of beginning of year paperwork that comes home with your child.

Programs Funded Using Data from the Meal Benefit Application:

Federal reimbursements from school meals fund many academic resources. This benefits *all* Maine children. These programs include:

- Title 1 schools
- Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
- Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)
- State funding for schools
- Before/after school programs
- Summer school programs
- Academic programming and grant opportunities initiated by the Maine DOE
- Teacher student loan forgiveness



Getting Connected to Important Family Services

If your family falls under the guidelines for free/reduced meals, you can receive additional nutrition benefits through the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) Program! By completing the application by August 31, 2021, you may be eligible to receive the summer issuance of P-EBT benefits and any future issuances during the 2021/2022 school year.

