

# Income Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) School Nutrition Programs

The income guidelines below are from the USDA’s annual adjustments to the Income Guidelines (7CFR Part 245.3(a)). They will be used in Connecticut from **July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020**, for determining the eligibility of participants for free and reduced-price meals and milk in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. These income guidelines must be used by all individuals who review applications, and should be distributed to all schools/sites for use by determining officials.

Before approving any free/reduced-price meal/milk applications, the determining official must:

- refer to and review the USDA *Eligibility Manual for School Meals* manual;
- review the 2018-19 Application for Free and Reduced-price School Meals or Free Milk, and accompanying instructions; and
- review the 2018-19 Parent/Guardian Letter to Households for Meals and Snacks and Parent/Guardian Letter to Households for Special Milk Program.

These documents are available in the “Documents/Forms” section of the Connecticut State Department of Education’s [Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Milk in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

<b>2019-20 Income Guidelines for Child Nutrition Programs</b>											
<b>Free meals/milk</b>						<b>Reduced-price meals</b>					
<b>Number in Family</b>	<b>Annual Gross Income</b>	<b>Monthly Gross Income</b>	<b>Twice Per Month</b>	<b>Every Two Weeks Gross Income</b>	<b>Weekly Gross Income</b>	<b>Number in Family</b>	<b>Annual Gross Income</b>	<b>Monthly Gross Income</b>	<b>Twice Per Month</b>	<b>Every Two Weeks Gross Income</b>	<b>Weekly Gross Income</b>
1	16,237	1,354	677	625	313	1	23,107	1,926	963	889	445
2	21,983	1,832	916	846	423	2	31,284	2,607	1,304	1,204	602
3	27,729	2,311	1,156	1,067	534	3	39,461	3,289	1,645	1,518	759
4	33,475	2,790	1,395	1,288	644	4	47,638	3,970	1,985	1,833	917
5	39,221	3,269	1,635	1,509	755	5	55,815	4,652	2,326	2,147	1,074
6	44,967	3,748	1,874	1,730	865	6	63,992	5,333	2,667	2,462	1,231
7	50,713	4,227	2,114	1,951	976	7	72,169	6,015	3,008	2,776	1,388
8	56,459	4,705	2,353	2,172	1,086	8	80,346	6,696	3,348	3,091	1,546
<b>Each additional family member</b>	<b>+ 5,746</b>	<b>+ 479</b>	<b>+ 240</b>	<b>+ 221</b>	<b>+ 111</b>	<b>Each additional family member</b>	<b>+ 8,177</b>	<b>+ 682</b>	<b>+ 341</b>	<b>+ 315</b>	<b>+ 158</b>

\* Income means income before deductions such as income taxes, Social Security taxes, insurance premiums, charitable contributions and bonds. It includes the following: 1) Monetary compensation for services, including wages, salary, commissions or fees; 2) net income from non-farm self-employment; 3) net income from farm self-employment; 4) Social Security; 5) dividends or interest on savings or bonds or income from estates or trusts; 6) net rental income; 7) public assistance or welfare payments; 8) unemployment compensation; 9) government civilian employee or military retirement, or pensions or veterans’ payments; 10) private pension or annuities; 11) alimony or child support payments; 12) regular contributions from persons not living in the household; 13) net royalties; and 14) other cash income. Other cash income would include cash amounts received or withdrawn from any source including savings, investments, trust accounts and other resources. “Income” as used here does not include any income or benefits received under any federal programs, which are excluded from consideration as income by any legislative prohibition, for example, the value of benefits received under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

## Income Guidelines for School Nutrition Programs

If a household has only one source of income, or if all sources of income are the same frequency, do **not** use conversion factors. Compare the income or sum of the incomes to the chart above for the appropriate frequency and household size to make the eligibility determination. Many households have different sources of income coming into the home at different frequencies, such as weekly or bi-weekly wages and monthly social security benefits. In these situations, convert all sources of income to an annual amount using the calculations below.

- **Weekly:** Multiply by 52
- **Every two weeks:** Multiply by 26
- **Twice per month:** Multiply by 24
- **Monthly:** Multiply by 12

In applying the guidelines, the school food authority/institution **must** compare the household's size and total household income to the income guidelines to determine eligibility for free or reduced-price meals. Children of parents or guardians who become unemployed may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals or for free milk during the period of unemployment.

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- (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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