# Public Media Release
# for Connecticut School Nutrition Programs

## School Year 2025-26

The **Sharon Center School** announced today its policy for determining eligibility of children who may receive free or reduced-price meals served under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), or free milk served under the Special Milk Program (SMP).

Local school officials have adopted the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs) for family size and income criteria for determining eligibility. The following income guidelines will be used in Connecticut from **July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026,** for determining participant's eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals and free milk in the Child Nutrition Programs (CNP).

**Income Guidelines for Child Nutrition Programs: July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026**

**Free Meals**

| Household Size | Annual gross income | Monthly gross income | Twice per month | Every two weeks gross income | Weekly gross income |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 20,345 | 1,696 | 848 | 783 | 392 |
| 2 | 27,495 | 2,292 | 1,146 | 1,058 | 529 |
| 3 | 34,645 | 2,888 | 1,444 | 1,333 | 667 |
| 4 | 41,795 | 3,483 | 1,742 | 1,608 | 804 |
| 5 | 48,945 | 4,079 | 2,040 | 1,883 | 942 |
| 6 | 56,095 | 4,675 | 2,338 | 2,158 | 1,079 |
| 7 | 63,245 | 5,271 | 2,636 | 2,433 | 1,217 |
| 8 | 70,395 | 5,867 | 2,934 | 2,708 | 1,354 |
| Each additional family member | 7,150 | 596 | 298 | 275 | 138 |

**Reduced-price Meals**

| Household Size | Annual gross income | Monthly gross income | Twice per month | Every two weeks gross income | Weekly gross income |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 28,953 | 2,413 | 1,207 | 1,114 | 557 |
| 2 | 39,128 | 3,261 | 1,631 | 1,505 | 753 |
| 3 | 49,303 | 4,109 | 2,055 | 1,897 | 949 |
| 4 | 59,478 | 4,957 | 2,479 | 2,288 | 1,144 |
| 5 | 69,653 | 5,805 | 2,903 | 2,679 | 1,340 |
| 6 | 79,828 | 6,653 | 3,327 | 3,071 | 1,536 |
| 7 | 90,003 | 7,501 | 3,751 | 3,462 | 1,731 |
| 8 | 100,178 | 8,349 | 4,175 | 3,853 | 1,927 |
| Each additional family member | 10,175 | 848 | 424 | 392 | 196 |

The income calculations above are based on the following formulas:

- monthly income is calculated by dividing the annual income by 12;
- twice monthly income is computed by dividing annual income by 24;
- income received every two weeks is calculated by dividing annual income by 26; and
- weekly income is computed by dividing annual income by 52.

All numbers are rounded upward to the next whole dollar.

Students residing in households with income at or below the levels shown in the chart above are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals or free milk through SMP. **All forms will be sent to parents via email and posted on Sharon Center School website.** To apply for free or reduced-price school meals or free milk through SMP, households should fill out the application and return it to the school. **The application is available on our school website, was sent home via email and there are additional copies in the main office.** Only one application is required per household and an application for free or reduced-price school meals cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions.

The information provided on the application is confidential and will be used only for the purposes of determining eligibility and for administration and enforcement of the lunch, breakfast, and milk programs through SMP. Additionally, all school-aged students in income-eligible households can receive school meal benefits regardless of a student's immigration status and the district/school does not release information for immigration-related purposes in the usual course of operating the CNPs. Note that the district *may* share your eligibility information with education, health, social service, 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. This information may also be verified at any time during the school year by school or other program officials. Applications may be submitted at any time during the year.

No application is required if the district directly certifies a student based on a household member receiving assistance from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or the Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) program. All students in these households are eligible for free school meals or free milk through SMP. The school district will notify households receiving assistance under the SNAP/TFA programs of their eligibility and all enrolled students residing in the household will be offered free school meals or free milk through SMP unless the household notifies the determining official that it chooses to decline benefits. If any students were not listed on the eligibility notice, the household should contact the district or school to have free meals or milk benefits extended to those students. Households receiving SNAP or TFA benefits for their children should only submit an application if they are **not** notified of their eligibility by **9/23/25.**

Some students *may* be directly certified for free or reduced-price meals or milk through SMP based on HUSKY A (Medicaid). No application is required if the district directly certifies a student based on participation in HUSKY A (Medicaid). Students in these households are likely eligible for free or reduced-priced meal or milk benefits and will be notified of their eligibility and their children will be offered free or reduced-price school meals or milk through the SMP, unless the household notifies the determining official that it chooses to decline benefits. If any students were not listed on the eligibility notice, the household should contact the district or school to have free or reduced-price school meals or milk benefits extended to those students.

Additionally, some students may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals or free milk through SMP if the students were determined to be eligible for Summer Electronic Benefits (S-EBT). No application is required if the district determines that a student is eligible for free or reduced-price meals or free milk due to participation in S-EBT. Students in these households are likely eligible for free or reduced-priced meal benefits and will be notified of their eligibility and their children will be offered free or reduced-price school meals or free milk accordingly, unless the household notifies the determining official that it chooses to decline benefits. If any students were not listed on the eligibility notice, the household should contact the district or school to have free or reduced-price school meals or milk benefits extended to those students.

If a student is not directly certified, the household should complete and submit a free and reduced-price meal application form. The application for households receiving SNAP or TFA benefits require the SNAP or TFA client ID number and the households may be asked to provide proof of the SNAP or TFA client ID number. The signature of an adult household member is also required.

Students in households participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) may be eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Please complete and submit a free and reduced-price meal application or contact the determining official for more information. For a tutorial on how to complete the application, visit *How to fill out the Application for Free and Reduced-price Meals or Free Milk and Summer EBT.*

When known to the district/school, households will be notified of any student's eligibility for free school meals if the individual student is "Other Source Categorically Eligible" because the student is categorized as either: homeless; runaway as defined by law and determined by the district's or school's homeless liaison; or enrolled in an eligible Head Start or pre-kindergarten class as defined by law. Households with students who are categorically eligible under Other Source Categorically Eligible Programs should complete and submit a free and reduced-price meal application and check-off the relevant box. Questions should be directed to the determining official. For any student not listed on the eligibility notice, the households should contact the school or determining official about any student also eligible under one of these programs or should submit an income application for the other students.

Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact the determining official or school if it chooses to decline the free school meal benefits. If households/students are **not** notified by the district/school of their free meal benefits and they receive benefits under qualifying public assistance programs or under Other Source Categorically Eligible Programs, the parent/guardian should contact the determining official for their school.

Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court, are categorically eligible for free school meals. A foster parent does not have to complete a

free/reduced-price school meal application if they can submit a copy of the legal document or legal court order showing that the student is a foster child. Additionally, a foster child may be included as a member of the foster family if the foster family chooses to also apply for benefits. If the foster family is not eligible for free or reduced-price school meal benefits, it does not prevent a foster child from receiving free school meals. A foster child's eligibility for free school meals does not automatically extend to all students in the household.

Free and reduced-price school meals application forms for all other households require a statement of total household income, household size, and names of all household members. The last four digits of the social security number of an adult household member must be included or a statement that the household member does not have one. The adult household member must also sign the application certifying that the information provided is correct.

Under the provisions of the policy for determining eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals, the school secretary and **Determining Official, Abigail Passini** will review applications and determine students' eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals. If a parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the ruling of the determining official, they may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. If they wish to make a formal appeal, a request either orally or in writing, may be made to **Carol Tomkalski, 80 Hilltop Rd, Sharon, CT 06069, 860-364-5153 ext. 303,** for a hearing to appeal the decision.

The policy contains an outline of the hearing procedure. Each school and the central office of the school district has a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by an interested party.

If a household member becomes unemployed or if household size changes at any time, the household should contact the school to file a new free and reduced-price school meals application. Such changes may make the students of the household eligible for reduced-price school meals, free school meals, or free milk, if the household income falls at or below the levels shown in the Income Eligibility Guidelines.

Questions regarding the free and reduced-price school meals application process may be directed to the determining official at **860-364-5153 ext. 302**. A video tutorial on how to complete a free and reduced-price school meals application can be viewed at *How to fill out the Application for Free and Reduced-price Meals or Free Milk and Summer EBT*.

# Public Media Release
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This is the Public Release we will send on **8/28/25** to the following news media outlets, the local unemployment office, major employers contemplating layoffs, etc.

1. Sharon Center School Website
2. Lakeville Journal

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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; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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