

# ODEBOLT-ARTHUR & BATTLE CREEK-IDA GROVE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

## Frequently Asked Questions About Free and Reduced Price School Meals

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Odebolt-Arthur and Battle Creek-Ida Grove Community School Districts** offer healthy meals every school day. PK-5 Breakfast costs \$1.30; 6-8 grades Breakfast costs \$1.40, 9-12 grades Breakfast costs \$1.50 and Adult Breakfasts cost \$1.75. PK-5 Lunch costs \$2.00; 6-8 grades Lunch costs \$2.25, 9-12 grades Lunch costs \$2.50 and Adult Lunches cost \$3.45. **Your children may qualify for free meals/milk or for reduced-price meals.** Reduced price is **[\$.30]** for breakfast and **[\$.40]** for lunch. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?

- All children in households receiving benefits from **Food Assistance, or the Family Investment Program (FIP)**, are eligible for free meals.
- Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.
- Children participating in their school's Head Start program are eligible for free meals.
- Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
- Children may receive free or reduced price meals if your household's income is at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines below. (Requires submitting an Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals/Milk.)

FEDERAL INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES for School Year 2016-2017

Household Size	Yearly	Monthly	Twice per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	21,978	1,832	916	846	423
2	29,637	2,470	1,235	1,140	570
3	37,296	3,108	1,554	1,435	718
4	44,955	3,747	1,874	1,730	865
5	52,614	4,385	2,193	2,024	1,012
6	60,273	5,023	2,512	2,319	1,160
7	67,951	5,663	2,832	2,614	1,307
8	75,647	6,304	3,152	2,910	1,455
Each additional person:	7,696	642	321	296	148

2. WHO CAN GET FREE MILK? If your school participates in the Special Milk Program for half day kindergarteners, your kindergarten child may be eligible for free milk. Children who buy extra milk with a meal or if they eat breakfast or lunch and have an afternoon milk break, they are **not** eligible to receive free milk.
3. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN QUALIFY AS HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY? Do the members of your household lack a permanent address? Are you staying together in a shelter, hotel, or other temporary housing arrangement? Does your family relocate on a seasonal basis? Are any children living with you who have chosen to leave their prior family or household? If you believe children in your household meet these descriptions and haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or **e-mail Alan Henderson, homeless liaison or migrant coordinator, 712-364-2360 or ahenderson@oabcig.org**
4. WHAT IF WE HAVE FOSTER CHILDREN? Households with foster and non-foster children may choose to include the foster child as a household member, as this may help other children in the household qualify for benefits. If the foster family is not eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits, that does not prevent a foster child from receiving free meal benefits.
5. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. *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: Wanda Schiernbeck, 900 John Montgomery Drive, Ida Grove, IA 51445 or electronically to [wschiernbeck@oabcig.org](mailto:wschiernbeck@oabcig.org). Call Wanda at 712-364-3687 if you have any questions or need help.
6. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? No, but please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact: Wanda Schiernbeck, 900 John Montgomery Drive, Ida Grove, IA 51445, 712-364-3687 or [wschiernbeck@oabcig.org](mailto:wschiernbeck@oabcig.org) immediately as eligibility for free meals is extended to all school age children in a household. If you did not receive a letter from the school, but received a Free Lunch Notice from DHS, submit this letter to your children's school. You may add any students living in your household who are not listed.
7. CAN I APPLY ONLINE? Yes, if your school offers this option. You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application if you are able. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. Visit [www.oabcig.org](http://www.oabcig.org) to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact **Julie Weeda, 712-364-3371 or [jweeda@oabcig.org](mailto:jweeda@oabcig.org)** if you have any questions about the online application.
8. MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT A NEW ONE? Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first few days of this school year, through September 30, 2016. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. When the carry-over period ends, unless you are notified that your children will receive free meals or you submit an application that is approved, the children must pay full price for school meals.
9. I GET WIC. CAN MY CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please send in an application.

10. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report. You are not required to provide proof with your application.
11. 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 or reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit, if your household size goes up, or if you start getting Food Assistance, FIP or other benefits.
12. 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: **Superintendent Terry Kenealy, 900 John Montgomery Drive, Ida Grove, IA 51445, 712-364-3687, [tkenealy@oabcig.org](mailto:tkenealy@oabcig.org).**
13. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? Yes. You, your children, or other household members do not have to be U.S. citizens to apply for free or reduced price meals.
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. WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT? Household members may not receive some types of income we ask you to report on the application, or may not receive income at all. Whenever this happens please write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zeroes. Please be careful when leaving income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.
16. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE REPORT OUR INCOME DIFFERENTLY? Your basic pay and cash bonuses must be reported as income. If you get any cash value allowances for off-base housing, food, or clothing, or receive Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance payments, it must also be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income. There are currently no active Military Housing Projects in Iowa as found on [Active Military Housing Projects](#). Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.
17. WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? List any additional household members on a Supplemental Worksheet, and attach it to your application. Contact **Wanda Schiernbeck at 900 John Montgomery Drive, Ida Grove, IA 51445, 712-364-3687 or [wschiernbeck@oabcig.org](mailto:wschiernbeck@oabcig.org)** to receive a Supplemental Worksheet.
18. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for Food Assistance or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call **1-877-347-5678**. Your children may be eligible for *hawk-i* (children's health insurance) or a waiver of school fees. Read the information on the back of the Application for *hawk-i* information. A school waiver form is available from your school.
19. CAN CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES GET FOOD SUBSTITUTIONS? If a child has a disability, as determined by a licensed medical professional, and the disability prevents the child from eating the regular school meal, the school will make substitutions prescribed by the licensed medical professional. If a substitution is needed, there will be no extra charge for the meal. Please note, however, that the school is not required to make a substitution for a food allergy, unless it meets the definition of disability. Please call the school for further information.

If you have other questions or need help, call **Wanda Schiernbeck at 712-364-3687; email me at [wschiernbeck@oabcig.org](mailto:wschiernbeck@oabcig.org) or stop by my office at 900 John Montgomery Drive in Ida Grove.**

Sincerely,

*Wanda Schiernbeck*

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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*, (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 3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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**OA-BCIG NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:** It is the policy of the Odebolt-Arthur and the Battle Creek-Ida Grove Community School Districts not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the

district's Equity Coordinator, Alan Henderson, BCIG Elementary Principal, 403 Barnes Street, Ida Grove, Iowa 51445, phone: 712-364-2360, or email address: [ahenderson@oabcig.org](mailto:ahenderson@oabcig.org).