

Ventura Community School District

300 South Main Street P.O. Box 18
Ventura, Iowa 50482
641/829-4484
Fax: 641/829-3995

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Ventura Community School offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs \$1.45 and lunch costs \$2.25. Your child(ren) may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Reduced price is \$.30 for breakfast, and \$.40 for lunch.

1. **Do I need to fill out an application for each child?** Complete the Iowa Eligibility Application for your household with all children listed. We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. **Return the completed application to:** Ventura Community School, PO Box 18, Ventura, IA 50482.
2. **Who can get free meals?** Children in households getting Food Assistance or FIP and most foster children can get free meals regardless of household income. Children enrolled in Head Start can get free meals regardless of income. Also, your children can get free meals if your household income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Guidelines.
3. **Can foster children get free meals?** Yes, foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court, are eligible for free meals. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free meals regardless of income.
4. **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 have an afternoon milk break are not eligible to receive free milk.
5. **Can homeless, runaway and migrant children get free meals?** Yes. Please call Ventura Community School to see if your child(ren) qualifies, if you have not been informed that they will get free meals.
6. **Who can get reduced price meals?** Your child(ren) can get low cost meals if your household income is within the reduced price limits on the Federal Income Chart on the back of this page.
7. **I currently receive Food Assistance or Family Investment Program (FIP) benefits; do I need to fill out an application?** Perhaps. School enrollment records have been compared to records from the Department of Human Services to identify children who are members of households receiving Food Assistance or FIP benefits. If ANY of your child(ren) are identified during this process all your children will be directly certified as eligible to receive free meal benefits and you will be notified of their eligibility by the school. Parents need to do nothing more for their children to receive free meal benefits.

Some eligible children may not be identified in this process. Households with children who were not identified should receive a letter of direct certification from DHS. Children on these letters will receive free meal benefits only if parents provide the letter to the school. Instructions to parents are included on the letter.

If you receive a notice from EITHER THE SCHOOL OR DHS that only SOME of your children are eligible because of direct certification, CONTACT THE SCHOOL. You may need to complete an application for the children who were not identified or provide additional information to the school.

8. **What if my income is not always the same?** List the amount that you normally get. For example, if you normally get \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only got \$900, put down that you get \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but do not include overtime if you get it only sometimes.
9. **Will the information I give be checked?** Yes, we may ask you to send written proof. You are not required to provide proof with your application.
10. **If I don't qualify now, may I apply later?** Yes. You may apply at any time during the school year if your household size goes up, income goes down, or if you start getting Food Assistance, FIP, or other benefits. If you lose your job, your children may be able to get free or reduced price meals.
11. **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, Ventura Community School, PO Box 18, Ventura, IA 50482
12. **May I apply if someone in my household is not a U.S. citizen?** Yes. You or your child(ren) do not have to be U.S. citizens to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
13. **Who should I include as members of my household?** You must include all people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends), who share income and expenses. You must include yourself and all children who live with you. Households with foster and non-foster children may choose to include the foster child as a household member, as well as any personal income earned by the foster child.
14. **I get WIC. Can my child(ren) get free meals?** Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please fill out an application.

15. **We are in the military; do we include our housing allowance as income?** If your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income. All other allowances must be included in your gross income. There are currently no active Military Housing Projects in Iowa. For a listing of the Military Housing Projects by state visit the following web site: <http://www.acq.osd.mil/housing/mhpi.htm>.
16. **What other benefits might I be eligible for?** Your child may be eligible for other benefits including *hawk-i* (children's health insurance) or for a waiver of school fees. Read the information on the back of the Iowa Eligibility Application for *hawk-i* information. A school fee waiver form is on the bottom of the Iowa Eligibility Application.
17. **Can children with disabilities get food substitutions?** If a child has a disability, as determined by a licensed physician, and the disability prevents the child from eating the regular school meal, the school will make substitutions prescribed by the licensed physician. 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.
18. **Income Guidelines effective July 1, 2011.**

If you have other questions or need help, call 641-829-4484 (Ventura High School Office)

Household Size	Federal Income Chart				
	Yearly	Monthly	Twice per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	20,147	1,679	840	775	388
2	27,214	2,268	1,134	1,047	524
3	34,281	2,857	1,429	1,319	660
4	41,348	3,446	1,723	1,591	796
5	48,415	4,035	2,018	1,863	932
6	55,482	4,624	2,312	2,134	1,067
7	62,549	5,213	2,607	2,406	1,203
8	69,616	5,802	2,901	2,678	1,339
For each additional person:	7,067	589	295	272	136

Households: Your children may qualify for reduced or free price meals if your household income falls within the limits on this chart.

Privacy Act Statement: This explains how we will use the information you give us.

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the last four digits of the social security number of the adult household member who signs the application. The last four digits of the social security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs. We MAY share your eligibility information with education, health, 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.

Non-discrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly. "In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to *USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410* or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). *Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).* USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

Iowa Non-Discrimination Notice: "It is the policy of this CNP provider not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or religion in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code section 216.7 and 216.9. If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by this CNP Provider, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E. 14th St., Des Moines, IA 50319-1004; phone number 515-281-4121, 800-457-4416; web site: <http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc/index.html>."