
MEMORANDUM

TO: Vermont Superintendents & Independent School Heads
FROM: Heather A. Bouchey, Ph.D. Interim Secretary of Education
SUBJECT: Household Income Form
DATE: June 30, 2023

Purpose

As the school year winds down, it is critical that supervisory unions/school districts (SU/SDs) be prepared to encourage and support families to “fill the form,” and provide their household income information in the coming school year.

Depending on the type of school meals program your school is operating, you will be using one of two forms – the School Meals Application or the Household Income Form (HIF). Your work to distribute and educate your school communities about the importance of these forms will have cascading positive effects for your SU/SD.

Today we are providing you with the English language version of the HIF in time for you to include the form in your enrollment packets at the beginning of the year. This form has been extensively revised for SY23-24 to make it simpler and easier for households to complete. There are now two versions of the form: a [digital form](#) that families can complete on their phone or computer, and a paper version of the form that you can distribute and collect. The [paper version](#) will be available in multiple languages.

Background

The passage of Act 64 (H.165), an act relating to school food programs and universal meals, enables all public schools to continue to offer free breakfast and lunch to all students, regardless of household income. Even though meals are free, schools still need to gather household income data for other educational purposes.

Household income information is critical for determining which schools and students qualify for a multitude of programs and benefits that are related to students’ income-status and enables the Agency to report important student data.

In the past, families who were seeking free or reduced-price school meals completed a School Meals Application (also called a Free and Reduced Lunch application or form). The come data was primary used for school



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meals programs, as well as other educational purposes. However, with the advent of Universal School Meals, fewer schools will be allowed to use the School Meals Application in the coming years and will need to rely on the HIF to collect this information. Only schools operating a base year of Provision 2 are allowed to collect School Meals Applications. All other schools will need to use the HIF to gather household income data. All families are being asked to complete the appropriate form, regardless of their income level and whether their students eat meals at school.

Using the Form

The [Household Income Form](#) should be used by the following programs/schools to collect household income information for education reporting purposes:

- Independent schools that do not participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs (NSLP)
- Pre-Kindergarten programs if their students do not have access to a school meals program
- Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools
- Provision 2 schools, *except in a “base year” when they must use the [School Meals Application](#)*

Income information provided on the HIF may not be used to establish student eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals. However, it may be used in determining eligibility for other state and federal education programs that benefit the student (e.g., SAT waivers), as well as the school.

Please see the [FAQ](#) for information on which form to use and how impactful the information provided is. You also may contact AOE.SLDSSupportGroup@vermont.gov for further information.

Outreach and Training

We strongly encourage school officials to make every effort to ensure that all households complete the appropriate form. To support your outreach efforts, templates communications materials will be provided later in the summer.

The Agency will offer specific trainings for Data Managers and Registrars on using the HIF form and reconciling household income data from different sources. It is important that relevant staff members attend these trainings.

By working together to encourage families to complete the form, we can ensure the program's sustainability and determine eligibility for important programs and benefits.