

# MONTEZUMA-CORTEZ SCHOOL DISTRICT FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL MEALS POLICY 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

Starting this 2023-2024 school year, Montezuma-Cortez School District is excited to announce the participation in the Healthy School Meals for All program for Breakfast and Lunch. **All students enrolled at, Montezuma-Cortez School District may participate in the breakfast and Lunch at no cost!**

Studies have shown that students who are not hungry perform better in school. By providing Breakfast and Lunch to all students at no cost, we are hoping to create a better learning environment for our students.

As in previous years, it's important for households to still provide their household income information when requested via an application. While meals will be provided at no cost to all students in participating schools, it's important for Montezuma-Cortez School District to continue gathering this information to receive full access to state and federal funding. Additional funds will go directly to schools to help cover the cost of meals, support after-school activities and other nutritional programs for students. Plus, households who qualify may receive discounted school fees, class materials, bus passes, utilities support and more.

The following policy contains more information on eligibility determination for free and reduced-price meals. Please note that, while the following pages may reference eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals, Breakfast and Lunch will be provided free to all students in the 2023-2024 school year regardless of your household income.

Montezuma-Cortez School District announced its policy for determining eligibility of children who may receive free and reduced-price meals served under the National School Lunch (NSLP) and School Breakfast Programs (SBP). Local school officials will use the following household size and income criteria for determining eligibility.

Household Size	Free Guidelines – Annual Income	Reduced-Price Guidelines – Annual Income
1	\$18,954	\$26,973
2	\$25,636	\$36,482
3	\$32,318	\$45,991
4	\$39,000	\$55,500
5	\$45,682	\$65,009
6	\$52,364	\$74,518
7	\$59,046	\$84,027
8	\$65,728	\$93,536
For each additional person:	\$6,682	\$9,509

Children from families whose income is at or below the levels shown are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

The school meals that Montezuma-Cortez School District serves follows U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines for healthy school meals.

For information on where to find an application and how to apply, please read the attached letter. To learn more about the Healthy School Meals for All program visit [www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/healthy-school-meals-for-all-program](http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/healthy-school-meals-for-all-program).

Applications for free and reduced-price school meals, instructions and an informational letter to households are available at your child/children's school or [www.cortez.k12.co.us](http://www.cortez.k12.co.us). Only one application is required for all children in the household. The information provided on the application is confidential and will be used only for the purpose of determining eligibility and verifying data.

Applications from households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) benefits or Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF/Colorado Works, Basic Cash Assistance or State Diversion) benefits need to provide the respective case number and the signature of an adult household member. Eligibility for free school meals is extended to all children in the household when the application provides a case number for any household member.

Households that qualify based upon income must provide the names of all household members related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives or friends), the amount of gross income each household member receives, the frequency and source of pay, the signature of an adult household member and the last four digits of that adult household member's Social Security number—or check the box if the adult household member does not have a social security number. **Montezuma-Cortez School District** or program officials may verify the information on the application at any time during the school year.

Households with children who are eligible under the Head Start, homeless, migrant, or runaway programs should contact your child/children's school for assistance in receiving meal benefits. To complete an application, the household must mark the relevant box to indicate their appropriate eligibility and the signature of an adult household member is required.

Foster children who are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free school meals. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free school meals regardless of income. If a household has only foster children in the home and wishes to apply for free school meals, the application should be completed using the instructions for *households with foster children only*. If a household has foster and non-foster children living with them and wishes to apply for free school meals, the application should be completed using the instructions for *households with foster and non-foster children residing in the home*. Including foster children as household members may help other children in the household qualify for meal benefits. If the foster family is not eligible to receive meal benefits, it does not prevent a foster child from receiving free school meals.

An application cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions.

When determined by **Montezuma-Cortez School District**, that members of a household are receiving assistance from SNAP, TANF, Medicaid or FDPIR, households will be notified of their children's eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals. If the household receives such notice, no application is required for free or reduced-price school meal benefits. If any children in the household were not listed on the eligibility notice or not listed on the application, the household should contact **Montezuma-Cortez School District** to have benefits extended to all children in the household.

When determined by **Montezuma-Cortez School District**, that an individual child is categorized as homeless, migrant, or runaway or is enrolled in an eligible Head Start program, households will be notified of the child's eligibility for free school meals. For any children not listed on the eligibility notice, the household should contact **Montezuma-Cortez School District** about eligibility under one of these programs or should submit an application for other children.

**Montezuma-Cortez School District** will notify households of their children's eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals. The eligibility is valid for the current school year and a carryover period of up to 30 operating days into the next school year. When the carryover period ends, unless the household is notified that their children are directly certified or the household submits an application that is approved, **Montezuma-Cortez School District** will not send a reminder, or a notice of expired eligibility and the children must pay full price for school meals. Households notified of their children's eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals must contact **Montezuma-Cortez School District** if they choose to decline meal benefits.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) participants may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Please contact your school district.

Under the provision of the free and reduced-price school meal policy, **Montezuma-Cortez School District** Nutrition Services will review applications and determine eligibility. If a parent is dissatisfied with the decision, a request may be made to discuss it with the determining official. A formal appeal may be made either orally or in writing to Superintendent of Schools, 400 North Elm Street Cortez CO 81321, 970-565-7522 for a hearing to appeal the decision. **Montezuma-Cortez School District** has a copy of the complete free and reduced-price school meal policy, which may be reviewed by any interested party. The policy contains an outline of the hearing procedure.

Applications may be submitted at any time during the school year. The household may complete an application if any household member(s) have a decrease in income, become unemployed, have an increase in family size, become eligible for SNAP, TANF or FDPIR benefits or become categorically eligible.

If you are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals you may be eligible for SNAP, TANF, Medicaid or FDPIR.

For more information about the above assistance programs please visit: <https://coloradopeak.secure.force.com>.

#### **Non-discrimination statement**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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; or
2. **fax:**  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**  
[program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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