

Help Your School Have Access to Grants and Funding by Completing this Application



412 Webster Street
Traverse City, MI 49686

Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS) proudly offers healthy and delicious breakfast and lunch meals to our students every school day in all of our buildings. Our children need these healthy meals to fuel their daily learning. This year, we are pleased to announce that all TCAPS students will receive free breakfast and lunch each school day, due to new State of Michigan legislation.

Even though all students will receive free meals, we kindly request that all TCAPS families complete the meal application. This request is critical as the information obtained from these applications allows TCAPS to apply for grants and state and federal funds for programs that support all students. These programs are essential to TCAPS ability to continue offering all students a world-class education. Completing this form also will help reduce the amount of paid meals that the State of Michigan would have to cover by identifying more students who are eligible for the free and reduced meals program. Our hope is that reducing the costs for the State of Michigan would result in a long-term free meal program for public school students.

Completing this application is vital to district funding. Please complete the application online at traversecity.familyportal.cloud. You can also print and deliver the application to your school or mail it to:

TCAPS Food Service
1180 Cass Road
Traverse City, Michigan 49685

If you have additional questions, contact TCAPS Food and Nutrition Services at 231-933-1910.

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) 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; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL MEALS AND SUMMER EBT

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Traverse City Area Public Schools** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **\$0.00**; lunch costs **\$0.00**. **Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals.** Reduced-price is **\$0.00** for breakfast and **\$0.00** for lunch. This packet includes an application for free or reduced-price meal benefits, and a set of detailed instructions. 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 the **Food Assistance Program (FAP)**, **Family Independence Program (FIP)**, or **Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)** 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 within the limits of the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify for free or reduced-price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

FEDERAL INCOME ELIGIBILITY CHART for School Year 2023-2024

Household Size	Annually	Monthly	Weekly
1	26,973	2,248	519
2	36,482	3,041	702
3	45,991	3,833	885
4	55,500	4,625	1,068
5	65,009	5,418	1,251
6	74,518	6,210	1,434
7	84,027	7,003	1,616
8	93,536	7,795	1,799
Each additional person:	9,509	793	183

2. 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 **TCAPS STEP office 231-933-5901**.
3. 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: **TCAPS Food and Nutrition Services, 1180 Cass Rd., Traverse City, MI 49685, 231-933-1910**, or Apply online at: traversecity.familyportal.cloud.
4. 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 received carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact **TCAPS Food and Nutrition Services, 1180 Cass Rd., Traverse City, MI 49685, 231-933-1910** immediately.
5. CAN I APPLY ONLINE? Yes! 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 **traversecity.familyportal.cloud** to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact **TCAPS Food and Nutrition Services, 1180 Cass Rd., Traverse City, MI 49685, 231-933-1910, wilsonst@tcaps.net**, if you have any questions about the online application.

6. 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 **10/17/2023**. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. If you do not send in a new application that is approved by the school or you have not been notified that your child is eligible for free meals, your child will be charged the full price for meals.
7. 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.
8. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
9. 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 and reduced-price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.
10. 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: **Christine Thomas-Hill, 412 Webster St., Traverse City, MI 49686, 231-933-1730**.
11. 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.
12. 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 occasionally. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.
13. 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.
14. 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, 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. Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.
15. WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? List any additional household members on a separate piece of paper and attach it to your application. Contact **TCAPS Food and Nutrition Services, 1180 Cass Rd., Traverse City, MI 49685, 231-933-1910, wilsonst@tcaps.net** to receive a second application.
16. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for **Food Assistance Program (FAP)** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office https://newmibridges.michigan.gov/s/isd-partnershiplanding?language=en_US.

If you have other questions or need help, call **231-933-1910**.

Sincerely,

Steven L. Wilson

TCAPS Food and Nutrition Services District Manager

HOW TO APPLY FOR SCHOOL MEALS AND SUMMER EBT

Please use these instructions to help you fill out the School Meals and Summer EBT application. You only need to submit one application per household, even if your children attend more than one school in Traverse City Area Public Schools. The application must be filled out completely to certify your children for school meals and summer EBT. Please follow these instructions in order. Each step of the instructions is the same as the steps on your application. If at any time you are not sure what to do next, please contact **TCAPS Food and Nutrition Services, 1180 Cass Rd., Traverse City, MI 49685, 231-933-1910, wilsonst@tcaps.net**.

PLEASE USE A PEN (NOT A PENCIL) WHEN FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION AND DO YOUR BEST TO PRINT CLEARLY.

STEP 1: LIST ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WHO ARE INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND STUDENTS UP TO AND INCLUDING GRADE 12

Tell us how many infants, children, and school students live in your household. They do NOT have to be related to you to be a part of your household.

Who should I list here? When filling out this section, please include ALL members in your household who are:

- Children age 18 or under AND are supported with the household's income;
- In your care under a foster arrangement, or qualify as homeless, migrant, or runaway youth;
- Students attending Traverse City Area Public Schools, regardless of age.

A) List each child's name. Print each child's name. Use one line of the application for each child. When printing names, write one letter in each box. Stop if you run out of space. If there are more children present than lines on the application, attach a second piece of paper with all required information for the additional children.

B) Is the child a student at Traverse City Area Public Schools? Mark 'Yes' or 'No' under the column titled "Student" to tell us which children attend Traverse City Area Public Schools. If you marked 'Yes,' write the grade level of the student in the 'Grade' column to the right.

C) Do you have any foster children? If any children listed are foster children, mark the "Foster Child" box next to the child's name. If you are ONLY applying for foster children, after finishing **STEP 1**, go to **STEP 4**.

Foster children who live with you may count as members of your household and should be listed on your application. If you are applying for both foster and non-foster children, go to step 3.

D) Are any children homeless, migrant, or runaway? If you believe any child listed in this section meets this description, mark the "Homeless, Migrant, Runaway" box next to the child's name and complete all steps of the application. Homeless, Migrant, Runaway status must be confirmed with the appropriate program staff. If the school district cannot confirm your student's homeless, migrant, or runaway status, then the school district will contact you to complete an income-based application. You may choose to provide income information now to prevent the school district from potentially needing to contact you later.

STEP 2: DO ANY HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE IN SNAP, TANF, OR FDPIR?

If anyone in your household (including you) currently participates in one or more of the assistance programs listed below, your children are eligible for free school meals:

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Food Assistance Program (FAP).
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Family Independence Program (FIP).
- The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).

A) If no one in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:

- Leave **STEP 2** blank and go to **STEP 3**.

B) If anyone in your household participates in any of the above listed programs:

- Write a case number for SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR. You only need to provide one case number. If you participate in one of these programs and do not know your case number, contact your MDHHS caseworker.
- Go to **STEP 4**.

STEP 3: LIST ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS AND INCOME FOR EACH MEMBER
How do I report my income? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the charts titled "Sources of Income for Adults" and "Sources of Income for Children," printed on the back side of the application form to determine if your household has income to report.• Report all amounts in GROSS INCOME ONLY. Report all income in whole dollars. Do not include cents.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Gross income is the total income received before taxes.◦ Many people think of income as the amount they "take home" and not the total, "gross" amount. Make sure that the income you report on this application has NOT been reduced to pay for taxes, insurance premiums, or any other amounts taken from your pay.• Write a "0" in any fields where there is no income to report. Any income fields left empty or blank will also be counted as a zero. If you write "0" or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report. If local officials suspect that your household income was reported incorrectly, your application will be investigated.• Mark how often each type of income is received using the check boxes to the right of each field.
3.A. REPORT INCOME EARNED BY CHILDREN
A) List all income earned or received by children. Report the combined gross income for ALL children listed in STEP 1 in your household in the box marked "Child Income." Only count foster children's income if you are applying for them together with the rest of your household. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is Child Income? Child income is money received from outside your household that is paid DIRECTLY to your children. Many households do not have any child income.
3.B. REPORT INCOME EARNED BY ADULTS
Who should I list here? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When filling out this section, please include ALL adult members in your household who are living with you and share income and expenses, <u>even if they are not related and even if they do not receive income of their own.</u>• Do NOT include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ People who live with you but are not supported by your household's income AND do not contribute income to your household.◦ Infants, children, and students already listed in STEP 1. B) List adult household members' names. Print the name of each household member in the boxes marked "Names of Adult Household Members (First and Last)." Include college students, unless they are declared independently on taxes (all college students are considered adults). Do not list any household members you listed in Step 1.
C) Report earnings from work. List all income from work in the "Earnings from Work" field on the application. This is usually the money received from working at jobs. If you are a self-employed business or farm owner, you will report your net income. Net income is your income after taxes and deductions have been subtracted. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What if I have multiple jobs? List each job separately by entering your name and income from each job on a new line. Add an additional sheet of paper if necessary.• What if I am self-employed? List income from your business as a net amount. This net amount is calculated by subtracting the total operating expenses of your business from its gross receipts (revenue). Gross receipts or revenue are all the income earned from the sale of any products or services offered.
D) List income from public assistance/child support/alimony. List all income that applies in the "Public Assistance/Child Support/Alimony" field on the application. <u>Do not report the cash value of any public assistance benefits NOT listed on the chart.</u> If income is received from child support or alimony, only report court-ordered payments. Informal but regular payments should be reported as "other" income in the next part.
E) List income from pensions/retirement/all other income. List all income that applies in the "Pensions/Retirement/ All Other Income" field on the application.

STEP 3: LIST ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS AND INCOME FOR EACH MEMBER

F) List total household size. Enter the total number of household members in the field "Total Household Members (Children and Adults)." This number **MUST** be equal to the number of household members listed in **STEP 1** and **STEP 3**. If there are any members of your household that you have not listed on the application, go back and add them. It is very important to list all household members, as the size of your household affects your eligibility for free and reduced-price meals.

G) Provide the last four digits of your Social Security Number. An adult household member must enter the last four digits of their Social Security Number in the space provided. You are eligible to apply for benefits even if you do not have a Social Security Number. If no adult household members have a Social Security Number, leave this space blank and mark the box to the right labeled "Check if no Social Security Number."

STEP 4: CONTACT INFORMATION AND ADULT SIGNATURE

An adult member of the household must sign the application. By signing the application, that household member is promising that all information has been truthfully and completely reported. Before completing this section, please also make sure you have read the privacy and civil rights statements on the back of the application.

A) Provide your contact information. Write your current address in the fields provided if this information is available. If you have no permanent address, this does not make your children ineligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Sharing a phone number, email address, or both is optional, but helps us reach you quickly if we need to contact you.

B) Print and sign your name and write today's date. Print the name of the adult signing the application and that person signs in the box "Signature of adult."

C) Mail Completed Form to: TCAPS Food and Nutrition Services, 1180 Cass Rd., Traverse City, MI 49685

Optional

Share children's racial and ethnic identities (optional). On the back of the application, we ask you to share information about your children's race and ethnicity. This field is optional and does not affect your children's eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals. This information is requested solely for the purpose of determining the State's compliance with Federal civil rights laws, and your response will not affect consideration of your application and may be protected by the Privacy Act. By providing this information, you will assist us in assuring that this program is administered in a nondiscriminatory manner.

Please return the application directly to your child's SCHOOL. DO NOT mail, fax, or email completed applications or questions about applications to the USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights or your child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals will be delayed.

EDUCATION BENEFITS FORM SY 2023 - 2024

District: _____ School: _____

Part A: STUDENT INFORMATION - Complete for each student Pre-K through 12th Grade

Student's Last Name	Student's First Name	Grade Level	School	Identify H if Homeless M if Migrant R if Runaway F if Foster

Part B: BENEFITS RECEIVED (if applicable)

If any member of your household receives Food Assistance Program (FAP), Family Independence Program (FIP), or FDPIR, provide the name and case number for the person who receives benefits. Bridge Card Numbers and Medicaid Numbers are NOT ACCEPTABLE case numbers.

Name: _____ Case Number: _____

Part C: HOUSEHOLD SIZE	Part D: ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME - Select the appropriate range of combined annual income for all people in the household (Include all income before taxes)		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 →	<input type="checkbox"/> At or below \$18,954	<input type="checkbox"/> Between \$18,955 and \$26,973	<input type="checkbox"/> At or above \$26,974
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 →	<input type="checkbox"/> At or below \$25,636	<input type="checkbox"/> Between \$25,637 and \$36,482	<input type="checkbox"/> At or above \$36,483
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 →	<input type="checkbox"/> At or below \$32,318	<input type="checkbox"/> Between \$32,319 and \$45,991	<input type="checkbox"/> At or above \$45,992
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 →	<input type="checkbox"/> At or below \$39,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Between \$39,001 and \$55,500	<input type="checkbox"/> At or above \$55,501
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 →	<input type="checkbox"/> At or below \$45,682	<input type="checkbox"/> Between \$45,683 and \$65,009	<input type="checkbox"/> At or above \$65,010
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 →	<input type="checkbox"/> At or below \$52,364	<input type="checkbox"/> Between \$52,365 and \$74,518	<input type="checkbox"/> At or above \$74,519
<input type="checkbox"/> 7 →	<input type="checkbox"/> At or below \$59,046	<input type="checkbox"/> Between \$59,047 and \$84,027	<input type="checkbox"/> At or above \$84,028
<input type="checkbox"/> 8 →	<input type="checkbox"/> At or below \$65,728	<input type="checkbox"/> Between \$65,729 and \$93,536	<input type="checkbox"/> At or above \$93,537

*** Special Instructions for households with more than 8 people: DO NOT check the boxes above. Instead, fill in items below:**

Household size (# people): _____ Total annual income: _____

Part E: CERTIFICATION - The head of household or adult designee who completed this form must complete this certification section

I certify (promise) that all information on this form is true and that all income is reported to the best of my knowledge. I understand that this form may impact the amount of State or Federal funding allocated to my local school district. I understand that the information I have provided may be verified.

(Signature) _____ (Printed Name) _____ (Date) _____

(Address) _____ (City) _____ (Zip) _____

(Email Address) _____ (Home Phone) _____ (Work Phone) _____

Do NOT fill out this section. This is for school use only.

Status: F _____ R _____ N _____ Determining Official's Signature: _____ Date: _____

See instructions on back →

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE EDUCATION BENEFITS FORM

This form is used to determine eligibility for state benefits for which your child(ren)'s school may qualify. Please complete, sign, and return this form to your child's school.

If any member of your household receives benefits from the Food Assistance Program (FAP), Family Independence Program (FIP), or FDPIR, please follow these instructions:

Part A: Student Information – For each student in the household Pre-K through 12th grade, list the last name, first name, grade level, school, and H if homeless, M if Migrant, R if Runaway or F if a Foster Child.

Part B: Benefits Received – If any household member, including adults, receives Food Assistance Program (FAP), Family Independence Program (FIP), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), provide the name and case number. Bridge Card Numbers and Medicaid Numbers are NOT ACCEPTABLE case numbers.

Part C: Household Size - Check the box for the total number of individuals living in your household. This should include all children and adults, related and un-related, that live in a single dwelling and share income and expenses.

Part D: Annual Household Income – Skip this part

Part E: Certification - Sign the form. Print your name and date.

If your household does not receive benefits from the Food Assistance Program (FAP), Family Independence Program (FIP), or FDPIR, please follow these instructions:

Part A: Student Information - For each student in the household Pre-K through 12th grade, list the last name, first name, grade level, school, and H if homeless, M if Migrant, R if Runaway or F if a Foster Child.

Part B: Benefits Received – Skip this part

Part C: Household Size – Check the box for the total number of individuals living in your household. This should include all children and adults, related and un-related, that live in a single dwelling and share income and expenses.

Part D: Annual Household Income – Moving across the same row as the household size check box, check the box that shows the range of annual income for all people in your household. Make sure to include all of the following income sources: work, welfare, child support, alimony, pensions, retirement, Social Security, SSI, VA benefits, child income and/or all other income. The amount should be before any deductions for taxes, insurance, medical expenses, child support, etc.

Part E: Certification - Sign the form. Print your name, date, and contact information.

