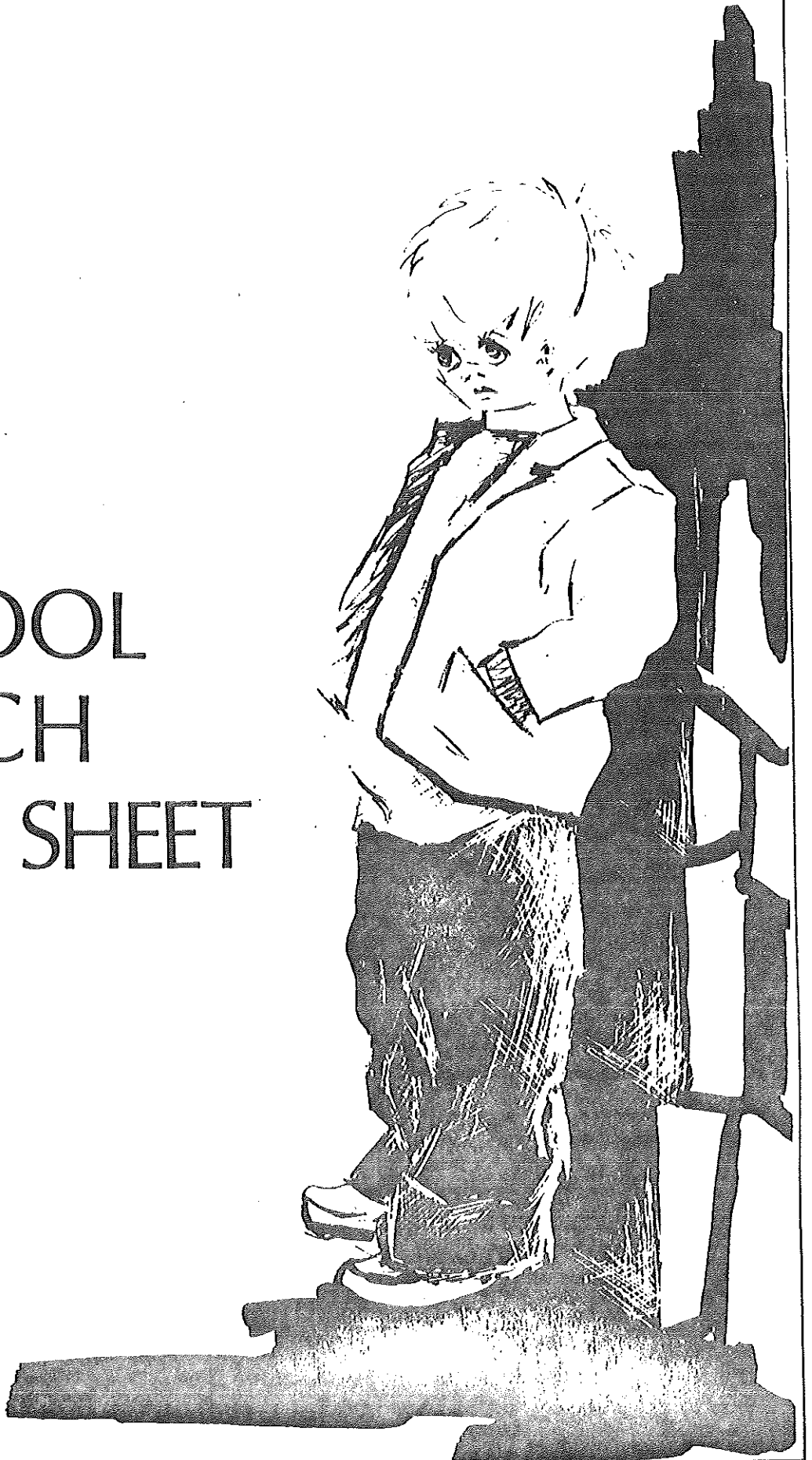


September, 1970

SCHOOL LUNCH FACT SHEET



INCOME GUIDELINE FOR FREE AND
REDUCED PRICE LUNCHESES

Family size	48 States, D. C. and Outlying Areas*	Hawaii	Alaska
One	\$ 1,920	\$2,210	\$2,400
Two	2,500	2,900	3,150
Three	3,120	3,590	3,900
Four	3,720	4,280	4,650
Five	4,270	4,910	5,340
Six	4,820	5,540	6,025
Seven	5,320	6,115	6,650
Eight	5,820	6,690	7,275
Each additional family member	450	520	560

* Outlying areas include the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Beginning January 1, 1971, the income poverty guidelines set forth above are the minimum family size annual income levels to be used by local school food authorities in establishing eligibility for free and reduced price lunches in schools. States may set their income standards higher than the national scale.

PURPOSE: "To safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children" by providing them with nutritious lunches in school, every school day.

WHO CAN APPLY? Any public or nonprofit private school of high school grade or under.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM Applications may be made at any time of the year.

Before a school applies for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), it should be aware that 60 days probably will elapse after they begin serving meals before they receive their first monthly reimbursement payment. Reimbursement is determined by the number of meals served during the preceding month.

Public Schools

1. The School Board in each school district must decide whether or not its schools will participate in the NSLP. It then makes application to the State Education Agency.
2. All those schools within a district that desire the program, must make application to their State Education Agency, through their local School Board or their local School Superintendent.
3. An individual school in a district that is not participating in the NSLP may participate individually. Such a school should check with district school officials as to how it should make application.

Nonprofit Private Schools

1. In States which are authorized to handle nonprofit private schools, the school would use the same procedures to apply as do the public schools.
2. Where States are not permitted by law to disburse funds to private schools, a nonprofit private school would apply directly to the USDA Regional Food and Nutrition Office nearest to it, and receive its funds directly from USDA.

FEDERAL RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL LUNCHES

Commodities

About one-fourth of the food served comes from goods donated from the Federal "surplus" program and the Federal "price support" program conceived to assist the farmer. Also, some foods are especially purchased for schools by USDA.

Approximately three-fourths is purchased on the local market, by the schools, with the Federal reimbursement payments, with local funds, and with children's payments.

Cash Assistance

1. For All Lunches Served to Children

- a. All participating schools receive general assistance to help them buy food for the lunch program. Nationally, this assistance averages about 5 cents a lunch.
- b. Each school is assigned a rate of reimbursement so they know in advance how much they will receive per lunch.

2. For Free and Reduced-Price Lunches for Needy Children

- a. There are new rules this year for special cash assistance because of the new law, P. L. 91-248.
- b. Special cash assistance can now be provided to any participating school if it needs this special assistance to serve lunches free or at reduced price to needy children.
- c. Any school may be eligible for up to 30 cents for each free or reduced-price lunch served to needy children from these special assistance funds.
- d. If that level of general and special assistance is not sufficient to serve all the free and reduced-price lunches that need to be served, the school should:
 - 1. Reapply to Section 4 (Maximum: 12¢ per meal)
 - 2. Maximize State fund assistance
 - 3. Utilize commodities to fullest possible extent
 - 4. Reapply to Section 11 to receive up to 100% of operating costs or 60¢ per meal of Federal cash, whichever is lower.

3. Cash Assistance from Sources Other Than NSLP

HEW's Elementary and Secondary Education Act
For depressed areas - Section 101, 105
For migrants - Section 103(a)(6)
For the handicapped - Section 103(a)(5)

Johnson O'Malley Act for Indian children

Demonstration Cities Act as part of Model Cities -
Section 103.

WHAT ARE THE STATES' RESPONSIBILITIES?

- 1. State Plan. Before the State can receive any Federal assistance, either through cash or commodities, by January 1 of each year, they must file a State Plan of Child Nutrition Operations with USDA showing how the State proposes:
 - a. To see that every needy child will be fed a free or reduced-price lunch.

- b. To extend the NSLP to every school within the State, giving priority to schools with many needy children
- c. To extend the school breakfast and special food service programs to reach needy children.

These State Plans do not represent a contractual obligation; rather they are a way of systematically setting forth program goals year by year. The State Plan is public information and should at least be available for review at the office of the State Department of Education.

- 2. Increased Financing. In the past, most States have paid only minimal administrative costs, at the State level; the State's share has been provided by participating schools -- usually by children's payments for their lunches. As of July 1, 1971, at least 4% of the State share must come from the States' own budgets. This, combined with the increased expense of providing lunches to all needy children, will probably force States to contribute more dollars than they have in the past.
- 3. Conduit for Federal cash and commodities. All Federal contributions are given to the State Education Agency, which in turn allocates the food and dollars to local schools, at its own discretion. That State Agency assigns reimbursement rates for both general and special cash assistance and supervises the operations in the local schools.

WHAT IS THE LOCAL SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITY?

- 1. Requesting the program. A school board applies to the State Education Agency for the NSLP.
- 2. Serving a "Type A" Lunch. A well-balanced meal that meets a meal pattern designed to provide one-third of a child's daily nutritional requirements must be served to every child.
- 3. Maintaining proper sanitation and health standards in the storage, preparation, and service of the food.
- 4. Providing free or reduced-price meals to every needy child. Each school agrees to serve free or reduced-price lunches to those children it determines are unable to pay the full price of the lunch. School officials must develop and make public an objective set of criteria on which they will determine need for such lunches. This may require supplementing Federal cash and commodities with any local funds needed to prepare and serve lunches to all children in the school. Local funds required will vary from State to State, depending on (a) the Federal donation, (b) the State donation, and (c) the number of needy children and thus the number of free or reduced-price lunches required.

FREE AND REDUCED PRICE LUNCHES

- 1. In every school receiving either Federal cash or commodities, every child must be fed, and charged according to his family's ability to pay. First priority must be given to serving free lunches.

2. The cost of reduced-price lunches must be lower than the regular or full price and may not exceed 20¢.
3. At the beginning of each school year, a notice must be distributed both to the parents of all children attending the school and to the news media, setting forth:
 - a. The specific criteria used in the school's eligibility standards for free lunches and for reduced-price lunches, respectively.
 - b. How a family may make application, with a copy of the application form
 - c. The specific procedures for families to file an appeal, if aggrieved.

This notice must also be sent to the parents of a child who enrolls after the beginning of the school year.

Criteria:

1. The income criteria used must not be lower than the national standards set forth by the Secretary of Agriculture (see box), effective January 1, 1971.
2. States and/or individual schools may set standards higher than the national income standard in order to be able to include more needy children. The only other criteria that may be added by school authorities shall be those deemed necessary to provide free or reduced-price lunches to children who would not be eligible for such lunches under the minimum criteria.
3. In addition, families who do not meet the minimum requirements but who have additional difficulties may make an application, stating why its children are unable to pay the full price of the lunch, and may be deemed eligible.

Application:

1. Every school must provide supplies of an application form which may be submitted at any time and will only show:
 - a. Amount of family income, including public assistance payments
 - b. Number of persons in family
 - c. Number of children in school or service institutions
 - d. Facts concerning any additional criteria used by the school
 - e. Statement that information is true
 - f. Signature of adult in family.
2. Eligibility is determined on basis of information in the form, without further investigation or verification.

3. Regulations give schools the option of determining eligibility by means other than application forms (e.g., welfare or food stamp recipients), if the method will expedite determination of eligibility. In this event, the notice sent to parents shall include this information.

Appeals:

1. Specific procedures must be made public and must include provision for the maintenance of a written record of the hearing and provision for the family to have the aid of others, including an attorney, if they so desire.
2. The child does not have to prove he is eligible; the school has to prove he is ineligible.
3. Appeal decisions must be made by a person who did not take part in making the original decision.
4. The child must be fed in the interim.

Protection of Anonymity:

Children getting free or reduced-price lunches shall not be discriminated against in any way. Their names shall not be announced in any manner, nor shall they be required to:

- a. Work for their lunch
- b. Go through a separate serving line
- c. Use separate facilities
- d. Eat lunch at a different time
- e. Eat a different lunch
- f. Have different colored tickets, etc.

WHAT CAN CAA's DO WITH EMERGENCY FOOD AND MEDICAL SERVICES MONEY?

1. Encourage State Legislatures to appropriate State funds to supplement local school budget provisions for providing lunches to all children in every school.
2. Encourage schools to use the national eligibility standards by the fall of 1970, instead of waiting until these become mandatory.
3. Eligibility guidelines should always reflect the needs of the community being served, never excluding any needy children. When guidelines are not responsive to the need, first, be able to document the cases where children are still not able to afford lunches; and, secondly, build community pressure to change the standards.
4. When schools apply on the 10th day of each month for reimbursement for the lunches they served, they must now report the average number of free lunches and the average number of reduced-price lunches served. Check to see if the percentage of those receiving free lunches versus those receiving reduced-price lunches is an accurate reflection of the situation in the community.
5. Work with schools in their effort to publicize the free and reduced-price lunch program to all low-income families in the area. Often CAA's are the only agency in the community that can reach these families.

6. Maintain a periodic check with schools to make certain that all needy children are being fed -- and that no discrimination is being practiced against them. Set up Parent-Student Advisory Boards to oversee the free and reduced-price lunch program, and work with school officials in assuring equitable treatment for all students.
7. Help get programs started in schools that do not have them. Encourage School Boards to apply to the State Education Agency for Federal funds for kitchen equipment.
8. Check application forms being used by the schools to make sure they do not add long-winded, prying, or irrelevant questions.
9. Mobilize community interest in the program -- and community resources in helping to meet any local share of the expense that might not be covered by State or Federal funds.

NOTE: If the date on the cover of this Fact Sheet is over six months old, check to see if either the laws or regulations have changed before acting on its contents.