

PRESS (MEDIA) RELEASE

SENT TO (NAMES OF NEWS/MEDIA OUTLETS AND MAJOR EMPLOYERS CONTEMPLATING LAYOFFS)

(Make appropriate changes as applicable to reflect the programs operated)

(Local school food authority) will be participating in the **(National School Lunch Program and/or the School Breakfast Program)**. As part of this program, **(Pioneer Preparatory School)** offer healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **(\$1.45)**; lunch costs **(\$2.65)**. Your children may qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Reduced-price is **(\$.30)** for breakfast and **(\$.40)** for lunch.

Qualifications for children to receive free or reduced price meals include belonging to a household whose income is at or below the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines, belonging to a household that receives public assistance, or if the child is homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, or participates in a Head Start or Even Start pre-Kindergarten program.

Household size and income criteria are used to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits if the household does not receive assistance or the children are not in the other categories mentioned below. Children can get free or reduced-price meals if the household's gross income falls at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guideline chart.

Federal Eligibility Income Chart for School Year 2015-2016						
Household Size	FREE			REDUCED-PRICE		
	Yearly Income	Monthly Income	Weekly Income	Yearly Income	Monthly Income	Weekly Income
1	\$15,301	\$1,276	\$295	\$21,775	\$1,815	\$419
2	\$20,709	\$1,726	\$399	\$29,471	\$2,456	\$567
3	\$26,117	\$2,177	\$503	\$37,167	\$3,098	\$715
4	\$31,525	\$2,628	\$607	\$44,863	\$3,739	\$863
5	\$36,933	\$3,078	\$711	\$52,559	\$4,380	\$1,011
6	\$42,341	\$3,529	\$815	\$60,255	\$5,022	\$1,159
7	\$47,749	\$3,980	\$919	\$67,951	\$5,663	\$1,307
8	\$53,157	\$4,430	\$1,023	\$75,647	\$6,304	\$1,455
Each additional person:	\$5,408	\$451	\$104	\$7,696	\$642	\$148

To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households can fill out the application and return it to the school unless the household has already received notification that their children are approved for free meals this year. Application forms are being distributed to all households with a letter informing households of the availability of free and reduced-price meals for their children and what is required to complete on the application. Applications also are available **(insert locations where the applications are available, i.e. at the principal's office in each school, on the school's website)**. Only one application is required for all children in the household and the information provided on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and verification of data. Applications may be verified at any time during the school year by the school or other program officials. An application for free or reduced price benefits cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions, including the last four digits of the primary wage earner's social security number and a signature of an adult household member.

Families can apply for benefits at any time. If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the Federal Guidelines. Contact **(Maria Parra)** at any time to request an application. In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price policy, **(Cafeteria Manager)** will review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the official may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to **(Maria Parra, 6510 W Clarendon Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85033. (623)933-3733)**.

When known to **(Pioneer Preparatory School)** households will be notified of their children's eligibility for free meals if they are members of households receiving assistance from the:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR); or
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), if the State program meets Federal standards.

An application is not required for free meal benefits for Assistance Program participants and all of the children in the household are eligible for free meal benefits. If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, or if a household does not receive a notice of eligibility, the household should contact the LEA or school to have free meal benefits extended to them. Participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals, but they will need to turn in an application including household size and total income.

When known to **(Pioneer Preparatory School)** households will also be notified of any child's eligibility for free meals if the individual child is considered "Other Source Categorically Eligible", because the child is categorized, as defined by law as:

- Homeless,
- Migrant,
- Runaway,
- Enrolled in an eligible Head Start, or
- Enrolled in an eligible pre-kindergarten class.

If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, the household should contact the LEA or school about their eligibility through one of the programs listed above, or should submit an income application.

Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact the LEA or school if the household chooses to decline the free meal benefits.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866)632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing 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.