



Want to increase the return of school meals applications?

Superintendents, principals and food service directors all play a valuable part in a successful school meals application campaign. Together you can make it happen!

How do you do it? Just follow these 4 simple steps!

Step 1 When applications are sent home:

✍✍ Send a letter to parents from the principal with the application.

Describe the benefits of school meals for academic success. *A sample letter is enclosed.*

✍✍ Let parents know you speak their language!

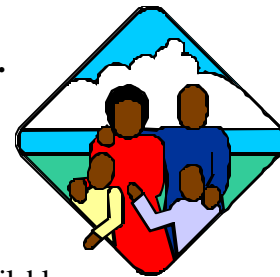
DOE has applications in eight languages. We can provide you with a slip to attach to the application listing which languages are available. *A sample slip is enclosed.*

✍✍ Talk about the benefits to the school.

Send a letter from the superintendent and a flyer describing school resources whose funding is linked to these applications. *Sample flyer and letter enclosed.*

✍✍ Make it easy.

- ✍✍ Mail a stamped return envelope marked 'confidential' with the application.
- ✍✍ Let parents know that staff are available to help them fill out the application.
- ✍✍ Remind families with Direct Certification that they *only* need to sign and return the application with the D.C. slip from DTA.



**Superintendents:
YOU CAN MAKE
IT IMPORTANT!**

Talk to your principals.
Make the return of meals applications an agenda item for the first principals' meeting to underscore its importance.



We have all the materials you need to help increase the return of applications. Look at the samples enclosed and order what you need by faxing the form on the back.

**Call DOE's Child Nutrition Outreach Program
at Project Bread at (617) 239-2570.**

Steps to a Successful

Step 2

First week after school meals applications are sent home:

Follow up.

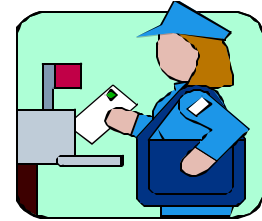
Send a flyer home reminding parents to return the application. Remind them that the information is confidential. *See the enclosed sample.*

Send a letter to parents from the food service director.

Highlight the availability and value of nutritious foods at school. *Sample letter available.*

Explain how returned school meals applications help build better schools.

Send home a memo from the principal. *Samples are available.*



Step 3

Second and third weeks after:

Make it fun for kids!

Offer a reward (a pizza party!) to the first classroom/school to return completed applications for all students. We can provide you with a flyer to announce the contest.

Talk about the benefits for families.

Send a flyer reminding parents that they may be eligible for discounts on their utilities if they qualify for free or reduced-price meals. We have a list of utilities and a sample flyer.

Identify students who haven't returned their applications yet.

Send home an application completed except for income and signature. Assign a staff member to each "case."

Focus on families.

Make sure you follow up with parents who have two (or three kids) in a school – you'll be twice (or three times) as close to a 100% return rate!

Use technology.

Program the school's automatic phone system to call parents to remind them to return the school meals application.

Principals:

YOU CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN!

Make the return of school meals applications mandatory. Assign a staff person to oversee returns. Many schools that have done so are enjoying more resources than ever before!

Application Return Campaign

Step 4

Ongoing:

✍✍ Make applications available.

- ✍* Be sure that applications are available at all parent events (open houses, parent conference nights, etc).
- ✍* Send blank applications to places where parents go: local food pantries, parent information centers, health centers, after school programs, WIC programs, churches and Head Start centers. Ask the staff at these centers to help parents complete the applications.



✍✍ Use helpers!

- ✍* Train parent liaisons to help parents fill out school meals applications. Ask them to staff school open houses.
- ✍* Make sure school staff can answer questions about how to fill out the applications.

Food Service Directors:

YOU CAN MAKE IT EASIER!

Use family applications. This is especially useful for increasing returns from middle and high school students! *Samples available.*

IN A WORD: REWARD!

Nothing beats healthy competition!

Superintendents, principals and food service directors – show your appreciation to families for their prompt return of school meals applications. Look at your resources to decide what you can offer the school or classroom that returns the most applications this year! Is it...

- ?? a computer?
- ?? a night at the school skating rink or swimming pool?
- ?? a night of no homework for the students?
- ?? a pizza party?

Benefits of School Meals

More than Tater Tots and Milk Cartons

School Meals Give Kids the Energy They Need to Learn

School breakfast and lunch provide the nutritious meals kids need to succeed in school. Research has shown that kids who eat meals at school consume more nutrients than those who don't.

According to federal guidelines, school meals must provide more than half of the recommended daily levels of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium and calories.



Meals Applications Bring Resources to Schools and Communities

The demographic information gathered from school meals applications is considered the most accurate way to describe school and neighborhood populations for a variety of programs. These programs bring much needed resources to schools and families.



- ☞ State, federal and Title I funding for school resources like **books, computers, classroom equipment and school furniture** is based on information gathered from the school meals applications.
- ☞ The Summer Food Service Program and utility companies use the information to help provide much-needed resources for families in the community.

Order FREE Materials

The enclosed materials are a sampling of those available to help you promote your school meals application campaign. All materials should be tailored specifically to your school or district. To order, simply check off the ones you want and fax this page with your name and phone number to (617) 248-8877.

FLYERS

- ☞☞ School Benefits flyer
- ☞☞ Confidential flyer
- ☞☞ Utilities flyer
- ☞☞ Contest flyer

PRINCIPAL MEMO SERIES

- ☞☞ General Application Cover Letter
- ☞☞ General Application Cover Letter in Spanish
- ☞☞ How School Meals Help Parents
- ☞☞ How School Meals Help the School

OTHER

- ☞☞ Superintendent letter
- ☞☞ Sample family application
- ☞☞ List of languages

Your Name: _____

Your Telephone #: _____