

Illinois Free Lunch and Breakfast Programs (23 IL Administrative Code Section 305.10)

Section 305.10 addresses requirements for school districts and others that receive state reimbursement under the Illinois Free Lunch and Breakfast Programs. The rules clarify the requirement of all public schools to offer a free meal (lunch required, and breakfast required if the school operates a free breakfast program) to students eligible to receive such meals as determined under the regulations governing the federal School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program.

1. Every public school is required to provide a free meal to students eligible to receive free meals. My school does not participate in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program. How is a student determined to be eligible for free meals?

Students must receive free meals if they are eligible to receive food stamps or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), or if their household income falls within guidelines published annually by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). These Income Eligibility Guidelines are posted annually on our website at <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/data.htm#income>.

Some students eligible for free meals may receive a letter from ISBE certifying they are eligible for free meals. This is referred to as an Eligibility Certificate that automatically qualifies them for free meals. If the household does not receive an Eligibility Certificate, eligibility is best determined by asking households each school year to complete the Household Eligibility Application for the Illinois Free Lunch and Breakfast Programs application provided by ISBE at http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/household_eligibility.htm. The form contains the required information to process applications in the federal programs and can be used by schools for the state-funded program. While schools are not required to use this form, they must have a procedure in place to determine whether students are eligible for free meals.

2. Is a school required to seek reimbursement for meals served to students eligible for free meals?

It is the option of the public or nonpublic school to seek reimbursement through the state-funded Illinois Free Lunch and Breakfast Program. For school year 2006–2007, the current rate of reimbursement is \$0.1150 per each free breakfast and/or lunch. Reimbursement rates are posted annually at <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/data.htm>. Contact the Nutrition Programs Division for more information on claiming meals for reimbursement through the Illinois Free Lunch and Breakfast Programs.

3. A student who is eligible for free meals is enrolled in a public school; however, the student is placed in a facility (public or nonpublic) that does not provide meal services. Is the public school required to provide free meals to the student?

The public school in which the student is enrolled is responsible for ensuring the enrolled student receives a free meal by providing the meal or making arrangements for the student to receive a meal. Under these circumstances, the free meal is eligible for state reimbursement through the Illinois Free Breakfast and Lunch Program only.

4. My school is seeking reimbursement through the state-funded Illinois Free Lunch and Breakfast Program. What must the school serve?

The meals must meet the definition of a federal reimbursable meal. Federal regulations require the lunch meal contain a serving in the appropriate size of the following items: meat/meat alternate, bread/grain, two servings of fruits/vegetables, and fluid milk at a minimum. The breakfast meal must contain a serving in the appropriate size of the following items: two servings of meat/meat alternate and/or bread/grain, a serving of fruit/vegetable, and fluid milk at a minimum. Additional information on the meal requirements set forth in the federal regulations may be found at http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/forms_sbn.htm.