MEDIA RELEASE FOR FREE MEALS FOR STANDARD Schools **National School Lunch/Breakfast Program  
School Year 2025-2026**

The Las Cruces Catholic School announced today its policy to serve nutritious meals every school day under the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and/or Afterschool Snack Program*]*. Effective July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026, children are eligible for FREE Eligibility Status or REDUCED Eligibility Status if the household income is less than or equal to the federal guidelines.

Starting on July 1, 2025, Jerrell De Leon / Las Cruces Catholic School will begin distributing letters to the households of the children in the district Las Cruces about the 2025-2026 eligibility benefits and actions households need to take to apply. Applications also are available at 1331 N. Miranda St Las Cruces, NM 88001.

**Criteria for Free and Reduced-Price Eligibility Status Benefits to Start School Year** 2025-2026

The following criteria will be used to determine a child’s eligibility for FREE Eligibility Status or REDUCED Eligibility Status benefits at the beginning of School Year 2025-2026:

*Income*

* Household income that is at or below the income eligibility levels

*Categorical or Automatic Eligibility*

* Household receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

*Program Participant*

* Child’s status as a foster child, homeless, runaway, migrant, or displaced by a declared disaster
* Child’s enrollment in Head Start or Even Start

*Income Eligibility*

For those households that qualify for FREE Eligibility Status or REDUCED Eligibility Status based on income, an adult in the household must complete the free and reduced-price meal application and return it to Jerrell De Leon /Food Service Manager / [jdeleon@lascrucescatholicschool.com](mailto:jdeleon@lascrucescatholicschool.com) or 1331 N Miranda Las Cruces, NM 88001. Those individuals filling out the application will need to provide the following information:

* Names of all household members
* Amount, frequency, and source of current income for each household member
* Last 4 digits of the Social Security number of the adult household member who signs the application or, if the adult does not have a social security number, check the box for “No Social Security number”
* Signature of an adult household member attesting that the information provided is correct

*Categorical or Program Eligibility*

Jerrell De Leon is working with PED to identify all children who are categorically and program eligible.

Any household that wishes to decline benefits should contact Jerrell De Leon/ Food Service Manager / [jdeleon@lascrucescatholicschool.com](mailto:jdeleon@lascrucescatholicschool.com) or 1331 N Miranda Las Cruces, NM 88001.

Applications may be submitted anytime during the school year. The information households provide on the application will be used to determine eligibility. Applications may also be verified by the school officials at any time during the school year.

*Determining Eligibility*

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price meal policy, Jerrell De Leon will review applications and determine eligibility. Households or guardians dissatisfied with the Determining Official’s eligibility determination may wish to discuss the decision with the Determining Official on an informal basis. Households wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to Windy Ferreira, Principal, [wdrake@lascrucescatholicschool.com](mailto:wdrake@lascrucescatholicschool.com) or 1331 N Miranda Las Cruces, NM 88001.

*Unexpected Circumstances*

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 current income eligibility guidelines below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES  Effective from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026  48 CONTIGUOUS STATES, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, GUAM, AND TERRITORIES** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES** | | **REDUCED PRICE MEALS - 185 %** | | | | | **FREE MEALS - 130%** | | | | |
| **HOUSEHOLD SIZE** | **ANNUAL** | **ANNUAL** | **MONTHLY** | **TWICE PER MONTH** | **EVERY TWO WEEKS** | **WEEKLY** | **ANNUAL** | **MONTHLY** | **TWICE PER MONTH** | **EVERY TWO WEEKS** | **WEEKLY** |
| **1** | 15,650 | 28,953 | 2,413 | 1,207 | 1,114 | 557 | 20,345 | 1,696 | 848 | 783 | 392 |
| **2** | 21,150 | 39,128 | 3,261 | 1,631 | 1,505 | 753 | 27,495 | 2,292 | 1,146 | 1,058 | 529 |
| **3** | 26,650 | 49,303 | 4,109 | 2,055 | 1,897 | 949 | 34,645 | 2,888 | 1,444 | 1,333 | 667 |
| **4** | 32,150 | 59,478 | 4,957 | 2,479 | 2,288 | 1,144 | 41,795 | 3,483 | 1,742 | 1,608 | 804 |
| **5** | 37,650 | 69,653 | 5,805 | 2,903 | 2,679 | 1,340 | 48,945 | 4,079 | 2,040 | 1,883 | 942 |
| **6** | 43,150 | 79,828 | 6,653 | 3,327 | 3,071 | 1,536 | 56,095 | 4,675 | 2,338 | 2,158 | 1,079 |
| **7** | 48,650 | 90,003 | 7,501 | 3,751 | 3,462 | 1,731 | 63,245 | 5,271 | 2,636 | 2,433 | 1,217 |
| **8** | 54,150 | 100,178 | 8,349 | 4,175 | 3,853 | 1,927 | 70,395 | 5,867 | 2,934 | 2,708 | 1,354 |
| **For each add'I family member, add** | 5,500 | 10,175 | 848 | 424 | 392 | 196 | 7,150 | 596 | 298 | 275 | 138 |

For additional information please contact the following person:

Attention: Jerrell De Leon, Food Service Manager

Cafeteria

1331 N Miranda

Las Cruces, NM 88001 575-526-2517

jdeleon@lascrucescatholicschool.com

Sincerely,

*[Insert name and title]*

**Non-discrimination Statement:**In accordance with federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, [AD-3027](https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf), 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, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. **Fax**: (202) 690-7442; or
3. **Email**: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).