

# MDE announces USDA income guidelines for the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and After School Snack Program

JACKSON, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Office of Child Nutrition announces the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) income guidelines for free and reduced-price meals served under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and After School Snack Program. Families with children who are unable to pay the full price of the meals are encouraged to apply for benefits.

Meal applications and instructions for applying for meal benefits are sent home with each student during registration, or parents may apply via an online portal (if applicable). To apply for the meal benefits, each household should fill out the application and return it to the school or institution. Additional copies of the ap-

plication are available at the administrative office of each facility.

For the school/institution officials to determine eligibility, the household must report income information or provide a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number. If a child receives TANF payments or is a member of a SNAP or FDPIR household, the parent or guardian must provide only the name of the child, SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR case number, and sign the application to allow the child to receive free meals. Homeless, migrant, or runaway youth are categorically eligible for free meals.

Other applicants must report household income

identified by source, such as earnings, welfare and alimony received by each household member. In order for income applicants to be approved, the household must provide the following on the application: the names of all household members, each household member's monthly income identified by source, the signature of an adult household member certifying that the information provided is correct, and the last four digits of the social security number of an adult who signs the application or an indication that this adult household member does not have a social security number. The information is confidential and will be used only for purposes of determining eligibility and verifying data. Verification of the application may occur at any time during the year by the school/institution or

program officials.

Households may apply for benefits at any time during the year as circumstances change. In certain cases, foster children are also eligible for meal benefits. If a household has foster children living with them and wishes to apply for benefits, the household should contact the school/institution for more information.

Each school/institution has a copy of their approved free and reduced-price meal policy, which indicates who is responsible for determining eligibility. The determining official is, in most instances, the principal, the food service administrator, or the program director. Each school/school district/institution has an individual named as the hearing official. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the determining official may discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. To make a formal appeal, the parents or guardians may make a request either orally or in writing to the hearing official. The school/institution office or the superintendent's office can provide you with the name, address, and phone number of the hearing official.

Children from households whose income is at or be-

low the Income Eligibility Guidelines may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The Income Eligibility Guidelines for reduced-price meals (School Year 2026-2027) can be located via the following link: <https://www.federalregister.gov>.

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, audiotope, 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, 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:

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;

Fax: (202) 690-7442; or  
Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. Full NDS Statement: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/civil-rights/usda-nondiscrimination-statement-other-fns-programs>

Find all MDE news releases at [mdek12.org/news](http://mdek12.org/news).

## HOLMES COUNTY TAX ASSESSOR/COLLECTOR

LINDA ROLLINS

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Lexington, MS 39095

662-834-2865 or 662-834-2869

### Office of Motor Vehicle and County Service Legislation Updates

To the Taxpayers:

Starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Legislative Tag Credit will be 7.5%. Legislative tag credit is a credit the State of Mississippi gives to help out on your Ad Valorem tax registration tag fees, which are your values. It has decreased, which has caused your tag to increase. Please feel free to call the Holmes County Tax Assessor/Collector's Office for more information.

### REMINDER:

**The last day to pay taxes will be August 28th, 2026. The Holmes County tax office will have the land sale on August 30th. Please call the Holmes County tax office for more information about the land sale. Unpaid taxes will be listed in the *Holmes County Herald* the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> weeks in August. The land sale is conducted by GOV Ease. Please call the tax office with your questions.**



July is the month when the fruit of sowing begins to show. Gardens begin to produce their harvest, and trees begin to reveal what has been hiding behind their leaves. For deer hunters, behind those oak leaves should be tiny acorns beginning to take shape. And since acorns are a deer's favorite food, these signs tell us where to hang a tree stand. It's not unusual for me this time of year, to just ride around on my side-by-side looking for the trees that will be dropping acorns during the upcoming deer season. And there's really no rhyme or reason to know which trees these will be. Sometimes I will see a large tree, thick with leaves, and think this tree will be full of acorns, only to do a deeper look and find no fruit whatsoever. It looked "fruity," but nothing was there.

There's a story in the Bible where Jesus saw a fig tree that looked fruity, but when He arrived at the tree, the figs were absent. He cursed

the tree and it withered. He understood that while leaves do most of the work that makes fruit possible, leaves are not the fruit.

For years, when it came to the Christian life, I got the fruit wrong. I thought the fruit of a follower of Christ was church attendance, prayer, giving, Bible study, and some other disciplines. Somehow, I overlooked one of the simplest verses in the Bible. The Apostle Paul put it on the lower shelf for people like me. He said, "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Gal 5:22-23 NLT) For some reason, I always thought these verses read this way. "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: Bible reading, church attendance, prayer, and giving." I'm not sure how I missed something so plain. Maybe I couldn't see the fruit for the leaves. More likely how-

ever, I thought the leaves were the fruit. Let me break this down quickly. (And you can join me on Zoom on Tuesday mornings as I talk about this.) The true test of spiritual growth is not found in the leaves but in the fruit. And what the Holy Spirit is trying to produce in you and me, is not church attendance, prayer, Bible study, or giving. These are only the leaves. And while they do most of the work toward producing fruit, they are not the fruit. Let me break it down a little more. If you and I are a follower of Christ and we are not more loving, joyful, peace-filled, have more patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, than we were a few years ago, then we have mistaken the leaves for the fruit. And while others may be initially drawn to our fruity look, they will ultimately leave disappointed because our life produced nothing that satisfied.

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Gary Miller has written *Outdoor Truths* articles for 24 years. He has also written five books which include compilations of his articles and a father/son devotional. He also speaks at wild-game dinners and men's events for churches and associations. Stay updated on *Outdoor Truths* each week by subscribing at [OutdoorTruths.org](http://OutdoorTruths.org)