**Your Action Now Supports Our School Funding!**

SPPS Nutritional Services has requested that all families complete the Application for Educational Benefits/Free or Reduced Price Meals.

What many people don’t know is that for every family who qualifies for this benefit, our school receives funding for educational programs and supports. This is funding for teachers, educational support staff, nurses, social workers, etc.

**Who should complete the application?**

Everyone! Last year, 87.5% of L’Étoile du Nord families completed the application. Our goal this year is 100%!

Last year, 44 LNFI families did not complete the application. If they had, and half qualified for free meals and half qualified for reduced price meals, our school would have received an additional $79,000 in compensatory revenue.

**I don’t think our family qualifies. Should I still complete the form?**

YES! Many families are surprised to find they do qualify for these benefits. If you know your family doesn’t qualify or you do not want to complete an application because you don’t want to share or disclose your income, please use the “No, I do not want to apply” check box on the application. By doing so, you will no longer get communications asking to complete the application.

**Will anyone know my family is receiving these benefits if we qualify?**

The school district understands that families may have confidentiality concerns surrounding applying and qualifying for an assistance program. This meal program is funded by the United States of Agriculture (USDA), which has very strict rules surrounding the disclosure of a student’s eligibility status. Families are in control of what information is shared with whom at the school. More information about this can be found on pages 83-95 of the [USDA Eligibility Manual](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/eligibility-manual-school-meals).

**When do I need to apply?**

There are two important dates for applications:

**October 17** – Parents/guardians of students who were free or reduced eligibility last year have until October 17 to apply to qualify again for this year. Starting October 17, students who haven’t qualified again this year will be charged for lunches.

**December 15** – Applications must be submitted to SPPS on or before December 15 to be included on the state report that will determine funding for next school year.

You can complete an additional application at any time during the school year, and are encouraged to do so if your household size increases and/or your income decreases. For example, if a family doesn’t qualify today, but a parent loses their job in March, they could complete a new application in March with the updated income.

**Where do I apply/submit my response?**

Online or by mail:

* You may complete the application online at [school cafe.com/spps](https://www.schoolcafe.com/spps)
* SPPS Nutritional Services will be mailing an application to families shortly

**Who do I contact if I have questions?**

You may contact SPPS Nutritional Services at ns@spps.org or 651-603-4950.

The PTO will share updates on progress towards our goal. Help us get to 100%!