

Community Newspaper Article (265 words): Submit this article to your local daily or weekly newspaper or community newsletter.

In Tough Times, the School Meal Program is Strong

In the current time of economic uncertainty, the school meal program is a valuable resource to families with children. Households at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible to receive free or reduced price school breakfast and lunch. For a family of four, that's \$39,220 per year. Families can apply for free or reduced price school meals at any time during the school year. All kids who qualify for free or reduced price school meals receive a free breakfast.

There are many benefits to school meals. Free or reduced price school meals ensure that kids receive consistent nutrition and take pressure off of tight family budgets. A family of four with two children can save over \$150/month by qualifying for free school meals. This ensures that families have adequate resources to pay for basic necessities including utility bills, and fuel costs. In addition, studies show that kids who participate in the meal program do better in school and have reduced rates of illness and absence. . All school meals have basic nutritional requirements, and at minimum, each meal includes milk, fruits and vegetables, protein and grains.

Apply for free or reduced price school meals today. The program is confidential and all information provided on the application is confidential. All kids receive the same meal – regardless of income.

Contact your local school for an application, or download one from the web at www.vtnohunger.org/schoolmealapplication.pdf

Please share this information with your neighbors via school newsletters, congregation bulletins, town offices, local libraries, senior centers, doctor's offices and food shelves.

**Vermont Campaign to
End Childhood Hunger**



802-865-0255 • www.vtnohunger.org