

PRESS (MEDIA) RELEASE

SENT TO DES AND POSTED ON THE DISTRICT WEBSITE

Pendergast will be participating in the **National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program**. As part of this program, **Canyon Breeze, Desert Mirage, Garden Lakes, Rio Vista and Sonoran Sky** will offer healthy meals every school day. Breakfast is provided to all students at no cost; lunch will cost **\$2.45**. Your children may qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Reduced-price meals cost **\$0.40** for lunch.

Qualifications for children to receive free or reduced price meals include: belonging to a household whose income is at or below the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines, belonging to a household that receives public assistance, or if the child is homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, or participates in a Head Start or Even Start pre-Kindergarten program.

Household size and income criteria are used to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits if the household does not receive assistance or the children are not in the other categories mentioned above. Children can get free or reduced-price meals if the household's gross income falls at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guideline chart.

Federal Eligibility Income Chart for School Year 2017-2018						
Household Size	FREE			REDUCED-PRICE		
	Yearly Income	Monthly Income	Weekly Income	Yearly Income	Monthly Income	Weekly Income
1	\$15,678	\$1,307	\$302	\$22,311	\$1,860	\$430
2	\$21,112	\$1,760	\$406	\$30,044	\$2,504	\$578
3	\$26,546	\$2,213	\$511	\$37,777	\$3,149	\$727
4	\$31,980	\$2,665	\$615	\$45,510	\$3,793	\$876
5	\$37,414	\$3,118	\$720	\$53,243	\$4,437	\$1,024
6	\$42,848	\$3,571	\$824	\$60,976	\$5,082	\$1,173
7	\$48,282	\$4,024	\$929	\$68,709	\$5,726	\$1,322
8	\$53,716	\$4,477	\$1,033	\$76,442	\$6,371	\$1,471
Each additional person:	+\$5,434	+\$453	+\$105	+\$7,733	+\$645	+\$149

To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households can fill out the application and return it to the school unless the household has already received notification that their children are approved for free meals this year. Application forms are being distributed to all households with a letter informing households of the availability of free and reduced-price meals for their children and what is required to complete on the application. Applications also are available at **Canyon Breeze, Desert Mirage, Garden Lakes, Rio Vista and Sonoran Sky; along with the Pendergast Learning Center, District Office and the Pendergast Community Center. ONLINE applications are also available at pendergast.schoollunchapp.com; we highly advice households to take advantage of online applications, they are simple and easy and are sent directly to the Child Nutrition Department for processing.**

Only one application is required for all children in the household and the information provided on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and verification of data. Applications may be verified at any time during the school year by the school or other program officials. An application for free or reduced-price benefits cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions. In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability.

Families can apply for benefits at any time. 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 Federal Guidelines. Contact **Kathy Leon Gil at (623) 772-2270** at any time to request an application.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price policy, **the PESD Compliance Coordinator** will review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the official may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to **Yianni Andrews, 3802 N. 91st Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85037**.

When known to **Pendergast School District** households will be notified of their children's eligibility for free meals if they are members of households receiving assistance from the:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR); or
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), if the State program meets Federal standards.

An application is not required for free meal benefits for Assistance Program participants and all of the children in the household are eligible for free meal benefits. If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, or if a household does not receive a notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school to have free meal benefits extended to them. Participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals, but they will need to turn in an application including household size and total income.

When known to **Pendergast School District** households will also be notified of any child's eligibility for free meals if the individual child is considered "Other Source Categorically Eligible", because the child is categorized, as defined by law as:

- Foster
- Homeless,
- Migrant,
- Runaway,
- Enrolled in an eligible Head Start, or
- Enrolled in an eligible pre-kindergarten class.

If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school about their eligibility through the list above, or should submit an income application.

Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact the school if the household chooses to decline the free meal benefits.

For more information, you may call **Kathy Leon Gil** at **(623) 772-2270** or e-mail at **kleon@pesd92.org**.

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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 Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, 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, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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