

2017 Report On
The Status of Women in Northeast Wisconsin

Free & Reduced-price School Meals


KEY FINDINGS

In Northeast WI, 44,000 K-12 students (38%) are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals—the equivalent of 2 out of 5 students.

Over the past decade, the percentage of eligible students grew by 43%—growing by 34% from 2007 to 2011, and an additional 9% from 2011 to 2016.

The percent of school children that receive free and reduced-price school meals is often used as an indicator of child/family poverty in a community.

In the 2015-2016 school year, about 38% of K-12 students in Northeast Wisconsin were eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, up from 35% in 2011, and catching up to the statewide average of 39%. By county, the percentages ranged from 31% in Outagamie County to 41% in Brown County (see table).



Does it surprise you
that nearly half of all K-12 students across the region are eligible for the free and reduced-price meal program?

Percent of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-price School Meals

	2015-2016 School Year		Historical Trend				
	Total Enrollment	Eligible Students	2016	2015	2011	2007	2003
Brown	43,701	17,904	41%	41%	39%	30%	25%
Fond du Lac	15,079	6,034	40%	40%	37%	25%	20%
Outagamie	35,068	10,957	31%	29%	29%	20%	16%
Winnebago	22,847	9,014	39%	40%	36%	27%	20%
Northeast Region	116,695	43,909	38%	37%	35%	26%	21%
Wisconsin	860,809	338,778	39%	41%	39%	31%	28%

Program eligibility is based on the household income where the child lives.

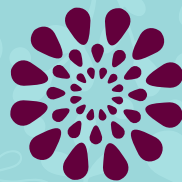
Children in households with annual income at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are eligible for free meals, while those in households with income between 130% and 185% of the FPL are eligible for reduced-price meals (see example). Families that participate in public benefit programs such as FoodShare (food stamps) and Wisconsin Works (W2) are also eligible for free meals.

The percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals has increased markedly over the past decade, both locally and statewide.

In Northeast Wisconsin, 2 out of 5 students (38%) now qualify for the program, compared to 1 out of 5 in 2003.



Do you think
having nearly half of all K-12 students eligible for the free and reduced-price meal program is an indicator that food insecurity is a growing issue for children in our area?



Example: Student Eligibility

2015 Federal Poverty Level (FPL) = \$24,250 for a family of four

Free School Meal

If annual household income is
\$0 to \$31,525
(at or below 130% FPL)

Reduced-price Meal

If annual household income is
\$32,526 to \$44,862.50
(130% to 185% FPL)

Sources: See Appendix

This research is a collaboration of the Women's Funds of Northeast Wisconsin.