



WHAT IS COMPASS?

COMPASS is a web-based system that allows families to apply for social service benefits online. The Pennsylvania Department of Education partnered with the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare to provide families the opportunity to apply for free or reduced price meals online and make this system available to schools.

Direct Certification identifies students from households receiving Food Stamps (FS) and/or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance. Direct Certification will be accomplished by school districts logging onto the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Access to Social Services (COMPASS) Website. If a student's name appears on the Direct Certification list, the student is automatically or categorically eligible to receive free meals without the need for a household application. Direct Certification provides school districts with the opportunity to provide free meals to low-income, at-risk children from households that *do not or cannot* complete the household income eligibility application for free and reduced price meals.

Now families can apply for free or reduced price school meals through the National School Lunch Program online using the Internet! This can be done using COMPASS. COMPASS allows Pennsylvanian's to apply for social service programs, such as Food Stamps (FS), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Energy Assistance, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), etc., online. Families can use COMPASS to apply for free or reduced price school meals only, or they can apply for other services at the same time (FS, TANF, etc.).

Since your child attends Bear Creek Community Charter School, you can apply for free or reduced price school meals online by going to the COMPASS website at www.compass.state.pa.us, or you can continue to use the paper "Household Meal Benefit Application" if you prefer.

Once you access COMPASS, select ***Apply for Benefits***.

Parents will select the programs they wish to apply for and be directed through a series of questions regarding those programs.

Please enter ***Luzerne***, the county of the school when you apply. This may not necessarily be your home county. Select ***Bear Creek Community Charter School*** as the school your child attends.

Once the questions have been completed, the COMPASS system will direct your information to each appropriate program office and the school you selected will receive the Household Meal Benefit Application.

The school will notify you if you are eligible for free or reduced price meals.

If you apply for free or reduced price school meals through COMPASS, you do not need to submit a paper application.