




State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DIVISION OF FOOD AND NUTRITION
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To: School Business Administrators, Charter School Leads; Non Public School Administrators; Food Service Directors

From: Arleen Ramos-Szatmary, Coordinator 
School Nutrition Programs

Date: August 30, 2018

Subject: "Back to School" Information and Reminders

The 2018-2019 School Year is beginning and the School Nutrition Programs Unit would like to highlight newly released changes and requirements for the new School Year. Please take a few moments to read the important reminders and updates noted below.

2019 Application Packet Deadlines & Administrative Review Notifications: Letter to Parent and Application documents must be submitted and certified by September 30, 2018 in order to participate in the School Nutrition Programs for School Year 2018-2019. Reimbursement for SFAs who have not certified their Letter to Parent and Application Packets by this deadline will be placed on hold.

Electronic Contract Application System (ECAS): All contract types: Food Service Management Companies, Commercial Vendor contracts, Consolidation Agreement contracts, and SFA to SFA Agreements must have already been submitted. Reimbursement for SFAs who have not submitted their contract by the deadline will be placed on hold. Please contact Nani Lepicard at Nani.Lepicard@ag.nj.gov to address any contract related questions.

Administrative & Procurement Reviews: SFAs receiving an Administrative Review this year were notified this past June. Procurement Reviews will also be conducted for those SFAs receiving an Administrative Review, however, all SFAs are expected to comply with basic procurement guidelines. A webinar and guidance has been posted on SNEARS to assist SFAs in assuring full and open competition when entering into contractual agreements.

Change in Federal Procurement Thresholds: The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has released a memo that changed the micro purchase threshold from \$3,500 to \$10,000 and the small purchase threshold from \$100,000 to \$250,000. Please refer to the State Agency revised Federal Funds Procurement Method Selection Chart, Form #358. The OMB memo can be found here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/M-18-18.pdf>

New Legislation: Three new state laws were passed in May of 2018 that will impact School Food Authorities in the 2018-2019 school year:

- **NJ State S-1894** determines that "every public school in which 70% or more of the students enrolled in the school on October of the preceding school year were eligible for free or reduced-price meals, shall establish a 'breakfast after the bell' program." SFAs with sites that fall under these criteria will receive notification in January of 2019. These SFAs must submit a plan to establish a Breakfast After the Bell program to the Division of Food and Nutrition by May 31, 2019, and implementation must commence in School Year 2019-2020.
- **NJ State S-1896** determines that each school shall report the number of students who did not receive a meal at

the service line because of unpaid meal charge debt. Beginning in September of 2018, SFAs must include this information in the monthly reimbursement vouchers in SNEARS. This number will not include students who receive alternate meals as a result of unpaid meal charges.

- **NJ State S-1895** determines that every school district that has at least one school that qualifies for the Community Eligibility Provision, but is not implementing it, shall report the following: *'a description of the specific impediments at the school district to implementing the program, the specific actions that could be taken to remove those impediments, and the specific steps required to successfully implement the program in the following school year.'* The SNEARS system already requests SFAs to note specific impediments. SNEARS will be updated to request the additional required information by this statute in the Spring of 2019.

To access the legislation noted above click on <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/Default.asp>

Electronic Applications: SFAs that use an application (web-based software), a scanned application format or an electronic application system that approves the Application for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals must get an approval from this office on an annual basis prior to the use of the software. Any questions pertaining to this procedure should be directed to Jackie Bricker at Jacqueline.Bricker@ag.nj.gov.

Child Nutrition Programs' Flexibilities Extended for School Year 2018-2019: USDA memorandum dated June 1, 2018, SP18-2018, summarizes the extended flexibilities that will be effective July 1, 2018. A final rule will address the availability of flexibilities beyond SY 2018-2019.

- **Milk:** SFAs will have the option to offer flavored, low-fat (1 percent fat) milk as part of a reimbursable meal for students in grades K through 12. Flavored, low-fat (1 percent fat) milk may be provided to Special Milk Program participants 6 years of age and older. No waiver/exemption will be required.
- **Whole grains:** SFAs that demonstrate hardship(s) in procuring, preparing, or serving specific products that are acceptable to students and compliant with the whole grain-rich criteria must submit a waiver/exemption to the State agency. SFAs that receive exemption approval must offer at least half of the grains as whole grain-rich. Please refer to the Exemption Form #279 in SNEARS, Resources and submit to snpsspecialprojects@ag.nj.gov by October 15, 2018. Previously approved Whole Grain-Rich Exemptions from prior school years will not be honored for SY 2018-19.
- **Sodium:** Sodium Target 1 will continue as the regulatory limit in the NSLP and SBP.

CACFP Meal Pattern for Pre-School Children Ages 1-4: SFAs serving meals to infants and children ages 1-4 (preschoolers) in separate service areas from K-5 students must comply with the updated Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements. Failure to meet this requirement will result in fiscal action as a result of an Administrative Review. Live trainings on the updated CACFP meal pattern will be offered at the Division of Food and Nutrition Office monthly through January 2019. Additional guidance and resources can also be found in the "Resources" tab under the category heading, "Preschool Meal Pattern".

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP): The CEP Final Rule released on July 29, 2016 established the following policy regarding carryover for CEP students transferring to non-CEP schools:

- A non-CEP school receiving a student from a CEP school in September must offer the student a free, reimbursable meal for up to 30 operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made in the current school year, whichever comes first
- A non-CEP school receiving a student transferring from a CEP school mid-year must provide free meals to the CEP student for up to 10 operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made

SFAs can refer to the listing of schools participating in CEP located in SNEARS and on the NJDA website when working with students transferring from CEP schools.

Civil Rights Data Collection Report: All SFAs must complete the Civil Rights Data Collection Report (Form #86) for each school/site under its sponsorship. The form must reflect data as of October 15th of each year and must be maintained on file. The form can be accessed on the NJDA website at <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/applic/forms/#5> and in SNEARS under “Resources/Annual Application and Agreement Documents”.

Food Safety Inspection Report: SFAs must report the number of health/sanitation inspections each school/site had during the 2017-2018 school year in SNEARS by October 30th.

Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week – September 24th – 28th: The last week of September is designated as Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week. During this celebration, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) showcases schools that connect with New Jersey farmers to purchase local produce for school meals and to increase student consumption of healthy produce through school garden, agriculture and nutrition education. More information can be found on the Farm to School Website at www.farmtoschool.nj.gov.

Calendar of Important School Nutrition Program Events: A calendar outlining important School Nutrition dates and events has been posted in SNEARS to assist SFAs in complying with all School Nutrition Program deadlines.

We look forward to working with you and your staff, and helping you to provide healthy, safe and low-priced meals for your students for the 2018-2019 School Year. Please direct any questions to the School Nutrition Programs Unit at 609-984-0692.