



State of New Jersey

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Division of Food & Nutrition
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To: School Business Administrators, Charter School Leads; Non Public School Administrators; Food Service Directors of Schools Participating in the School Nutrition Programs

From: Arleen Ramos-Szatmary, Coordinator *Arleen Ramos-Szatmary*
School Nutrition Programs

Date: June 17, 2017

Subject: Requests for Exemption from the School Meals' Whole Grain-Rich Requirement for School Year 2017 - 2018

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently issued memo SP32-2017 *School Meal Flexibilities for School Year 2017-18*, which states that all exemptions approved by the State Agency under SP33-2016, *Exemption Notice: Requests for Exemption from the School Meals' Whole Grain-Rich Requirements for School Year 2016-17*, may continue under the terms by which they were approved through SY2017-18. **Therefore, it is not necessary for SFAs whose SY2016-17 Whole Grain-Rich waivers were approved to re-apply for SY2017-18.**

SFAs who did not apply or did not receive approval in SY2016-17 may apply for an exemption to the whole grain-rich requirement for School Year 2017-2018 by completing the New Jersey Whole Grain-Rich Exemption Form #279 available in SNEARS. SFAs are encouraged to include specific types of pasta and whole grain-rich products in the Whole Grain-Rich Exemption Form.

SFAs granted the exemption will need to describe how they plan to identify, evaluate and incorporate new, acceptable whole grain-rich products into their school menus.

The approval process will begin July 1, 2017, and will be effective for School Year 2017-2018. SFAs granted the exemption must comply with the School Year 2013-2014 requirement to offer at least half of the grains as whole grain-rich products. It is the responsibility of the SFA to ensure compliance with this requirement, and grain offerings will be monitored as part of the administrative review. A copy of the Exemption Form, State Agency notification of approval and any other documentation to support the request should also be maintained on file.

The New Jersey Whole Grain Rich Exemption Extension Form is available in SNEARS under the tab "Resources" and then in the subcategory, "Equipment Requests/Waivers." The completed form **must** be sent by email to: smspecialprojects@ag.state.nj.us.

SFAs may also find the webinar "*Meeting the Whole Grain-Rich Criteria*" helpful. This webinar is located in the "Training" section of SNEARS.

Direct any questions to the School Nutrition Programs unit at 609-984-0692.