




State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DIVISION OF FOOD AND NUTRITION
PO BOX 334
TRENTON NJ 08625-0334

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

DOUGLAS H. FISHER
Secretary

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 
School Nutrition Programs

Date: June 15, 2018

Subject: Requests for Exemption from the School Meals' Whole Grain-Rich Requirement for School Year 2018 - 2019

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently issued memo SP18-2018, *Child Nutrition Programs' Flexibilities for School Year 2018-2019*, which allows State Agencies to continue to have discretion to grant whole grain-rich exemptions to SFAs demonstrating hardships in procuring, preparing, or serving specific products that are acceptable to students and compliant with the whole grain-rich criteria.

SFAs who wish to apply for an exemption to the whole grain-rich requirement for School Year 2018-2019 can complete 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.

Previously-approved Whole Grain-Rich requests from prior school years will not be honored.

The approval process will begin July 1, 2018, and will be effective for School Year 2018-2019. The deadline to apply is October 15, 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: snspecialprojects@ag.nj.gov.

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 Katie Hunter, School Nutrition Specialist at 609-984-0692.