



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
33 West State Street 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
PO Box 334  
TRENTON NJ 08625-0334

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO  
Lt. Governor

DOUGLAS H. FISHER  
Secretary

To: School Business Administrators  
Charter School Leads  
Non-Public School Administrators  
Food Service Directors

From: Arleen Ramos-Szatmary, Coordinator  
School Nutrition Programs

Date: May 1, 2014

Subject: IMPORTANT Updates for FY 2015 Application Packet

PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF SOME CHANGES IN THE PACKET REQUIREMENTS:

### **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)**

As of **May 1, 2014** the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) application packet will be available in SNEARS. Only applicants for CEP will be able to initiate the application packet approval process at this time.

CEP will be an ongoing annual process. Data will be collected in SNEARS by March 15<sup>th</sup> of every school year to determine if sites are eligible to apply. Emails will be sent out by April 15<sup>th</sup> to notify LEAs about their district wide eligibility and near-eligibility status. By May 1<sup>st</sup>, the publication list of eligible LEAs and schools will be available on the NJ Dept. of Agriculture's website, as well as SNEARS.

Any LEA determined by the State Agency to be eligible **must** indicate in SNEARS (under the Community Eligibility Application Link) if they are interested in applying **or** certify that they will not apply for the upcoming School Year. LEAs that intend to apply must complete the application process in SNEARS using data as of April 1<sup>st</sup>. The data submitted will be compared to March's reimbursement voucher. The deadline for submitting a CEP application is no later than June 30<sup>th</sup>. LEAs that elect to participate in CEP must remain in the program for the entire school year. LEAs that choose to opt out of CEP must submit a request prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>.

As of May 1, 2014, the CEP annual notification list of eligible LEAs and schools is available on the Department of Agriculture's website: <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/fn/>  
It is also available in SNEARS under the Resources Tab, click on the CEP Category Heading.

### **Application Packet Approval**

As of **July 1, 2014**, the FY 2015 Application Packet will be accessible in SNEARS, under the Menu Tab "Program Management". Accessing this packet allows the submission and certification of the Letter to

Parent for state agency approval, which will then provide access to print the letter, along with the 2014-2015 Application for Free or Reduced Price Meals and related documents.

### **Letter to Parent**

a. LEAs must enter the 2014 Paid Lunch Equity weighted average price; this figure can be obtained from the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Tool, after entering the required data. (*Refer to the PLE Webinar posted under the Trainings tab in SNEARS.*) **Please make sure that you save the PLE tool. This year this office will be requiring some LEAs to submit the tool in order to verify the veracity of the information submitted.**

b. LEAs must certify that prices entered on the Letter to Parent reflect the required weighted average price, at a minimum.

c. Approval of the Letter to Parent will activate the rest of the application packet's required sections.

### **Schedule A**

a. **Certifier and Submitter email addresses** - an edit has been incorporated in SNEARS to prohibit the certifier, submitters and alternates email addresses from being the same. The emails must be different across these four roles. Certifiers, Submitters and alternates must maintain confidentiality of their username and password.

b. **Site details**

- all schools in the breakfast program will need to indicate breakfast times

- all schools participating in the breakfast and/or lunch program will need to indicate the number of serving areas within each school

c. **Seamless Summer Option (SSO)** - Districts will be asked if they plan to participate in the SSO in the FY 2015

d. **Site details** - all schools will have to report the number of meal serving areas within the school

e. **Vended kitchen edit** - the system will prompt LEAs to enter the vendor name if that option is chosen within the schedule A or in one of the schools within the district

### **USDA Memos Section**

As of July 1, 2014, all USDA memos will be posted in SNEARS under the Resources tab.

### **Electronic Applications**

LEAs that use an electronic application system that approves the free/reduced price meal application or have some other application form different than the one provided in SNEARS, must get prior approval from this office to use the form.

Required elements of the application are:

- The application, instructions and letter to parent **MUST** include the same sections and language as the state format
- A hard copy must be available to parents that do not or cannot complete the application electronically
- The current USDA non discrimination statement must be included in the instructions

Email the request, along with a copy of the application, instructions and letter to parent to [Jacqueline.Bricker@ag.state.nj.us](mailto:Jacqueline.Bricker@ag.state.nj.us) . Feel free to contact your School Nutrition Specialist for any questions or concerns at 609-984-0692.