



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, and Food Service Directors of Schools Participating in the School Nutrition Programs

From: Arleen Ramos-Szatmary, Coordinator 
School Nutrition Programs

Date: March 13, 2020

Subject: Meal Service During School Closures or Remote Instruction due to the Coronavirus

In response to Governor Murphy's declaration of a State Emergency on March 9, 2020, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture requested and has been granted a waiver from the USDA allowing School Food Authorities (SFA) that participate in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) to serve meals in a non-congregate setting at school sites during unanticipated school closures due to the Novel Coronavirus. The waiver also allows approved sponsors to provide meals to be taken and consumed offsite to support social distancing during the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

SFAs in good standing have two options for reimbursement, under the SFSP or the SSO Program, should they close or institute remote instruction due to the Coronavirus:

1) SFAs approved to participate in the 2019 Summer Food Service Program can claim reimbursement for meals served according to all SFSP regulations. Form # 199 will be emailed to approved SFSP participants. Approved SFAs should complete and e-mail Form #199, Waiver to Serve Meals during a COVID-19 related closure, to snpspecialprojects@ag.nj.gov as soon as possible, for approval to serve meals due to a COVID-19 related closure.

2) SFAs with at least one school site serving a minimum of 50% or more free and reduced-price eligible students can apply to the SSO through SNEARS. Once approved, all students served will be claimed at the "free" eligibility classification. In order to apply, click on the "Seamless Summer Option" link on the home page of SNEARS. This link will be active as of Monday, March 16, 2020 at 8am. A quick turnaround time for approval is expected.

SFAs serving meals through the SFSP and SSO must continue to follow all counting, claiming, and meal pattern guidelines. Up to two meals may be claimed per child per day.

The Division of Food and Nutrition acknowledges that many SFAs do not qualify to participate in either SSO or SFSP because they have less than 50% free and reduced-price eligible students. To that end, an additional waiver has been submitted to the USDA requesting to allow these SFAs to continue providing meals through the National School Lunch Program. This waiver request is under review. The Division of Food and Nutrition will maintain communication and provide guidance as received.

Questions may be directed to the School Nutrition Programs unit at 609-984-0692.