



State of New Jersey

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To: All New Jersey School Food Authorities Participating in “Closed Enrolled” Seamless Summer Option Sites during School Closures related to COVID-19

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

Date: April 24, 2020

Subject: Waiver Allowing Suspension of Area Eligibility Requirement during School Closures Related to COVID-19

On April 7, 2020, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) requested a waiver of the area eligibility requirement of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)’s Seamless Summer Option (SSO). The purpose of this waiver is to more effectively provide meals to eligible students during unanticipated schools closures due to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The waiver will allow the NJDA to provide meals to students who may not have previously qualified for free or reduced price meals but whose families have experienced financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. This waiver request has been approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is effective immediately.

Specifically, the waiver temporarily lifts the requirement that open or restricted open sites must be located in area eligible communities. It allows School Food Authorities (SFAs) in good standing to operate as open or restricted open SSO sites in areas approved by NJDA based on economic hardship, but that are not necessarily located in “areas in which poor economic conditions exist” as defined in section 13(a)(1)(A) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. This waiver remains in effect until June 30, 2020, or until expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier.

Effective immediately, SFAs previously approved to operate a “Closed Enrolled” site are allowed to provide meals free of charge to all students enrolled in the school, regardless of eligibility status. All meals will continue to be claimed at the “free” rate of reimbursement.

SFAs currently operating “Closed Enrolled” sites will receive detailed instructions via e-mail on how to revise their current SSO Application to reflect an open/restricted open site.

All SFAs operating open or restricted open sites are reminded that they should also provide meals to siblings of enrolled students under the age of 18 and out-of-district placements. Out-of-district placements may include students attending a charter school, a technical school, or an approved private school for students with disabilities.

The School Nutrition Programs Unit would like to extend a deep appreciation to all SFAs for their tireless efforts in ensuring that each student has access to healthy meals during this unprecedented time.

Questions can be directed to 609-984-0693.