



# 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: September 13, 2019

Subject: "Back to School" Information and Reminders

The 2019-2020 School Year has begun, and the School Nutrition Programs Unit would like to highlight newly released changes and requirements for the new School Year. Please take a few moments to read the important reminders and updates noted below.

**2020 Application Packet Deadlines & Administrative Review Notifications:** Letter to Parent and Application documents should have already been submitted and certified before the first day of school in order to participate in the School Nutrition Programs for School Year 2019-2020. Reimbursement for SFAs who have not certified their Letter to Parent and Application Packets by September 30, 2019 will be placed on hold.

**Prevention of Lunch Shaming:** In lieu of recent events throughout the country, the Division of Food and Nutrition recommends a thorough review of all SY 2019-2020 unpaid meal charge policies to ensure that meal charge policies and the collection of debt do not involve students in any way. Communication about Unpaid Meal Charges should exist solely between school officials and guardians. The Division of Food and Nutrition strongly discourages the use of threatening language within these policies and discourages the involvement of students in any stigmatizing actions related to this debt. For more information and guidance, a webinar on the "Prevention of Unpaid Meal Charges and Lunch Shaming" will be provided on October 21<sup>st</sup> for all SFAs. Register by clicking on the following link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1894910835381789441>.

**Administrative & Procurement Reviews:** SFAs receiving an Administrative Review this year were notified in late August. Procurement Reviews will also be conducted for those SFAs receiving an Administrative Review; however, all SFAs are expected to comply with basic procurement guidelines. A webinar and guidance will be posted in SNEARS to assist SFAs in assuring free and open competition when entering into contractual agreements.

**Production Records Update:** An updated Production Record will be released shortly to account for the milk and grain flexibilities granted through the December 12, 2018 *Flexibilities for Milk, Whole Grains and Sodium* Final Rule. The release of a preschool production record reflecting the preschool meal pattern is also upcoming and will be located on the NJDA "Forms" website.

**Food Safety Inspection Report:** SFAs must report the number of health/sanitation inspections each school/site received during the prior 2018-2019 school year in SNEARS by October 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week – September 23<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>:** During this celebration, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) showcases schools that connect with New Jersey farmers to purchase local produce for school meals and to increase student consumption of healthy produce through school gardens and agricultural and nutritional education. More information can be found on the Farm to School Website at [www.farmtoschool.nj.gov](http://www.farmtoschool.nj.gov).

**Crediting of New Food Items:** The following food items are now creditable for use in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<b>Food Item</b>	<b>Meal Component</b>	<b>Portion Size/Comment</b>
Coconut, fresh or frozen	Fruit	Credits based on volume served
Coconut, dried	Fruit	¼ cup dried credits as ½ cup fruit
Coconut water	Fruit	-Credits as juice per volume served -Must be labeled as 100% Juice
Hominy, canned, drained or cooked	Vegetable or Grain	¼ cup credits as ¼ cup starchy vegetable
Hominy, cooked or dry	Grain	½ cup cooked or 1 ounce of dry credits as 1 ounce equivalent of whole grain
Corn Masa, Masa Harina, Corn Flour and Cornmeal	Grain	Determined by weight as listed in the <i>Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs</i> , or by grams of creditable grain per portion
Shelf-Stable, Dried and Semi-Dried Meat, Poultry and Seafood Snacks	Meat/Meat Alternate	A product formulation statement must prove: -The creditable meat ingredient listed must match or have a similar description as the ingredient listed on the product label -The creditable meat ingredient listed must have a similar description to a food item in the Food Buying Guide -The creditable amount cannot exceed the finished weight of the product
Tempeh	Meat/Meat Alternate	1 ounce provides 1.0 ounce meat alternate
Surimi Seafood	Meat/Meat Alternate	4.4 ounce portion credits as 1.5 ounces 3.0 ounce portion credits as 1.0 ounce 1.0 ounce portion credits as .25 ounce
Pasta Products Made of 100% Vegetable Flour(s)	Vegetable	½ cup of pasta made of 100% vegetable flour(s) credits as ½ cup of vegetables
Popcorn, popped – NSLP and SBP	Grain	¾ cup as ¼ ounce equivalent 1 ½ cups as ½ ounce equivalent 3 cups as 1 ounce equivalent
Popcorn, popped – NSLP Afterschool Snack	Grain	¾ cup as ¼ servings of grains 1 ½ cups as ½ serving of grains 3 cups as 1 serving of grains

**Community Eligibility Provision (CEP):** Effective July 1, 2019, a provision in the CEP Final Rule (released on July 29, 2016) established the following policy regarding free and reduced price eligibility for students transferring *between LEAs* (from CEP schools to non-CEP schools) during the school year:

- A non-CEP school receiving a student transferring from a CEP school **in the beginning of the School Year** must offer the student a free, reimbursable meal for up to **30** operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made in the current school year, whichever comes first.
- A non-CEP school receiving a student transferring from a CEP school **mid-year** must provide free meals to the CEP student for up to **10** operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made in the current school year, whichever comes first.

This is already an existing requirement for transfers *within the same* LEA. SFAs can refer to the listing of schools participating in CEP (located in SNEARS and on the NJDA website) when working with students transferring from CEP schools.

**Buy American Provision:** The *Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018* clarified that: Farmed fish must be harvested within the United States or any territory or possession of the United States, and that Wild caught fish must be harvested within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States or by a United States flagged vessel in order to be deemed compliant with the Buy American Provision.

New this year, SFAs can also utilize the Buy American Provision Exception Documentation Worksheet (Form 149) to document acceptable exceptions to the Buy American Provision. This worksheet can be found under “Procurement Documents” in the NJDA Forms Directory at <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/applic/forms/#5>.

**Civil Rights:** Civil Rights training must be provided on an annual basis to all frontline staff and those employees who supervise frontline staff. “Frontline staff” are defined as all employees who interact with Child Nutrition program applicants or participants. A new and revised *Civil Rights for School Nutrition Program Professionals* webinar will be provided live on September 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10 AM. Register by clicking on the following link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1209175119509722113>.

Recently, the office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights instructed all USDA agencies to halt distribution of the “And Justice for All” (AJFA) posters featuring the Statue of Liberty. This directive resulted from an issue with the poster graphic. At present, new AJFA posters have been ordered by the State agency and will be mailed out one per each school/site. If your SFA requires additional posters, please send the request to Lissette Pion at: [Lissette.Pion@ag.nj.gov](mailto:Lissette.Pion@ag.nj.gov).

Until the new posters are received, additional guidance is outlined below:

- Posters currently posted do not need to be removed until replaced with the new poster.
- The AJFA poster(s) should be removed from websites, training presentations and any pending printing of brochures, pamphlets and materials and replaced with the appropriate PDF version. The PDF versions can be found at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cr/and-justice-all-posters-guidance-and-translations>.

In addition, all SFAs must complete the Civil Rights Data Collection Report (Form #86) for each school/site under its sponsorship. The form must reflect data as of October 15<sup>th</sup> of each year and must be maintained on file. The form can be accessed on the NJDA website at <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/applic/forms/#5> and in SNEARS under “Resources/Annual Application and Agreement Documents”.

**Calendar of Important School Nutrition Program Events (Form 129):** A calendar outlining important School Nutrition dates and events has been posted in the “Resources” section of SNEARS to assist SFAs in complying with all School Nutrition Program deadlines.

We look forward to working with you and your foodservice departments toward a healthy and successful 2019-2020 School Year. Please direct any questions to the School Nutrition Programs Unit at 609-984-0692.