



State of New Jersey

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DIVISION OF FOOD AND NUTRITION
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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: July 3, 2019

Subject: SNEARS 2.0 and Updates to the Application Packet for Participation in the School Nutrition Programs for School Year 2019-2020

The Division of Food and Nutrition is proud to announce the rollout of SNEARS 2.0 in preparation for the **July 1, 2019** opening of the School Year 2019-2020 Letter to Parent and Application Packet. SNEARS 2.0 offers School Food Authorities a number of enhancements. Two of the most noteworthy include:

- **Alignment of the School Year with the Fiscal Year:** The redesign of SNEARS 2.0 allows for the annual Application Packet to operate from the July 1st - June 30th School Year, as opposed to the October 1st - September 30th USDA Fiscal Year. This change enables School Food Authorities (SFAs) making changes to their Application Packets to only make the change once in the upcoming packet, thus increasing efficiency and accuracy for both SFAs and the State Agency.
- **Increased Ease of Use and Streamlined, Updated Look:** Based on SFA feedback, SNEARS 2.0 has been updated to reflect a more modern look. The dashboard now reflects upcoming deadlines to serve as reminders, Resources and Trainings are more easily accessible, and Announcements (formerly entitled, "Memos and Messages") will be e-mailed to all approved users once posted for greater communication ease. A link to the Resources and Trainings will also be found on the NJDA website, thus allowing access to the public. In addition, the system will highlight sections containing incorrect data in red as it is entered, informing users immediately of any potential inaccuracies. Finally, manual documents can now be uploaded directly to the Application Packet within the Required Documents section.

The following important changes to the Letter to Parent and Application Packet are highlighted below.

- **Letter to Parent/Application Packet Flow:** Traditionally, the Letter to Parent section of the Application Packet had to be certified and approved prior to working on the Application Packet. **In SNEARS 2.0, SFAs will need to certify the SFA Details, User Management and Letter to Parent sections (in this order) before State Agency approval is granted.** Once these three sections are approved, the SFA will be able to access the remainder of the Application Packet.
- **Application Packet Deadline:** The deadline to complete both the Letter to Parent and the 2020 Application Packet remains September 30, 2019, however, **SFAs who operate in July and August must certify both the Letter to Parent and Application Packet and be approved by the State Agency prior to submitting and certifying their July and August 2019 reimbursement claims.**

- **Claiming June Reimbursement in SNEARS 2.0:** SFAs that need to enter reimbursement claims for the months of May or June should click on the “Reimbursement” icon on the SNEARS dashboard. Then use the drop-down menu to select the **prior school year of 2018-2019** to access the May 2019 and June 2019 vouchers.
- **Application Packet Changes:** SFAs using SNEARS 2.0 will also notice several additional changes that have been incorporated:
 - Contact information for the user roles (Certifier, Alternate Certifier, Submitter, Alternate Submitter, Administrator, Food Service Director and "Other User" can now be found in the section entitled, "User Management"
 - “LEA Info” is now entitled, “SFA Details”
 - The Agreement and Policy Certification, Certification for Local Wellness, Certification for Public Announcements, Systems for Award Management Registration, HHFKA Attestation and Civil Rights Attestation can all be found under the category, “Attestations”
- **Addition of the Civil Rights Self-Study Guide:** SFAs are reminded that, pursuant to FNS 113-1 Civil Rights and Enforcement, Civil Rights training must be provided on an annual basis to all frontline staff and those employees who supervise frontline staff. To this end, the State Agency has provided a brief self-study guide to provide a general overview on Civil Rights requirements for SFAs. A live webinar on Civil Rights will also be provided in the coming months. Beginning in SY 2019-2020, SFAs must certify that the Civil Rights Self-Study Guide has been reviewed and the Certifier understands all Civil Rights requirements.

Other relevant information to note regarding the 2019-2020 School Year Applications for Free and Reduced Price School Meals include:

- **Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meal Changes:** In the English SY 2019-2020 Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals, the word, “migrant” has been changed to “migrant worker”. In the Spanish application and accompanying documents, the word "emigrante" has been changed to "trabajador migrante".
- **Letter to Parent Documents:** Once approved, SFAs can continue to access the Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals, Frequently Asked Questions, Instructions and Sharing Form in both English and Spanish under the "Reports" column within SNEARS 2.0.
- **Paid Lunch Equity Tool:** SP 27-2019 states that only SFAs that had a negative balance in the nonprofit school account as of December 31, 2018 **are required** to complete the Paid Lunch Equity Tool for SY 2019-20. If your food service account had a zero or positive balance as of December 31, 2018 and you choose not to use the PLE Tool, you must have documentation available for review upon request that evidences the zero or positive balance at the food service account as of December 31, 2018. In addition, you must enter 0.00 in the box requiring the weighted average price requirement in the “School Programs” section of the Letter to Parent.

Please note: SFAs who are already at the minimum required paid lunch rate of **\$3.00** are not required to complete the PLE Tool.

The SNEARS 2.0 Application Packet and Reimbursement Manuals can be found under the “Resources” section within SNEARS for further information and guidance.

Questions may be directed to the School Nutrition Programs Office at 609-984-0692 or the SNEARS Help Desk at 609-341-3817.