



MEMORANDUM

To: School Food Authorities

From: **Lindsey Palmer**

Lindsey Palmer, RDN, LD
School Programs Manager

Date: March 2, 2015

Re: Requests for Exemption from the School Meals' Whole Grain-Rich Requirements for School Years 2014-15 and 2015-16

State Agency Memo

NSLP #10-15

This memorandum is to provide guidance around the whole-grain rich exemption being offered by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) for School Years 2014-15 and 2015-16. Effective July 1, 2014, all grains offered in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) must meet the definition of whole grain-rich. While this requirement was phased in over three years, some School Food Authorities (SFAs) have continued to experience difficulty procuring and/or serving whole grain-rich foods, leading to possible exemptions for those who qualify.

If SFAs would like the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to consider them for this temporary exemption for School Years 2014-15 and/or 2015-16, for one or more whole-grain rich items, the following information must be documented:

- Financial Hardship
 - o Records to demonstrate a significant drop in meal counts after whole grain-rich products were offered.
 - o Records to show a significant cost increase when procuring the whole grain-rich products.
- Limited Product Availability
 - o Records that the SFA does not have access to a compliant whole grain-rich product(s) in the local market.
- Unacceptable Product Quality
 - o Records that the whole grain-rich products offered by the SFA did not retain the desired texture or lost palatability during the typical holding time.



- Poor Student Acceptability
 - Records that show the whole grain-rich products offered by the SFA received significant student feedback or there was increased plate waste of that menu item when the whole grain-rich product was offered multiple times and over a sustained period of time.

Please note that while exemptions may be granted, SFAs must still follow certain Federal and Local requirements around the number of whole grains served daily and weekly.

For more information on the whole grain-rich temporary exemption or to submit a formal request, please email lindsey.palmer@dc.gov. All other question should questions should be sent to your designated Program Specialist.