



State of Arizona  
Department of Education

**HNS# 12-2015**

**MEMORANDUM**

---

**To:** Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

**From:** Mary Szafranski, Associate Superintendent  
Arizona Department of Education, Health & Nutrition Services Division

*Original Signed*

**Date:** May 27, 2015

**RE:** HNS response to Requests for Exemption from the School Meals' Whole Grain-Rich Requirement SP 20-2015

---

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Local Education Agencies (LEA) details regarding the exemption request process for whole grain-rich menu items in the 2015-2016 school year (SY).

USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) granted State agencies authority to approve School Food Authorities (SFA) product exemption requests when the SFA is able to demonstrate hardship(s) in procuring, preparing, or serving specific whole grain-rich products that are accepted by students.

Arizona Department of Education, Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) will review specific product exemption requests submitted by SFAs using the attached form. When exemptions are granted, the LEA must ensure menus comply with the SY 2013-2014 requirement to offer at least half of the grains as whole grain-rich products. Additionally, LEAs must continue working to find acceptable whole grain-rich products to use beginning in SY 2016-2017.

Please review USDA guidance memo, SP 20-2015 located at <http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/memorandum/> which provides details on criteria HNS will use when reviewing SFA exemption requests (i.e. financial hardship, limited product availability, unacceptable product quality, poor student acceptability). The exemption request form is also available on the HNS webpage at <http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/meal-pattern/>. All completed exemption request forms should be submitted to your NSLP Program Specialist. Please submit one request form per product.



For questions regarding this memo, please contact Health and Nutrition Services at (602) 542-8700.

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*





State of Arizona  
Department of Education

## Whole Grain-Rich Exemption Request Form

LEA Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Food Authority Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Product for which the exemption is requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Hardship(s) experienced in procuring acceptable whole grain-rich product (Check all that apply)

- Financial hardship (Attach documentation showing increased cost, and meal counts/production records documenting at least a 5 percent decrease in participation)
- Limited availability (Include documentation from vendors, with specific product names)
- Unacceptable quality (Include photos and specific product name)
- Poor student acceptability (Include meal counts/production records documenting at least 5 percent decrease in participation when whole grain-rich product is offered).

Describe in detail the hardships you indicated above.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Describe the efforts you have taken to find products that meet the whole grain-rich requirement and are accepted by students.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Describe the efforts you will make to meet the whole grain-rich requirement for all grains by School Year 2016-2017.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Check here if you are requesting an exemption for more than 2 products.

I understand that this exemption request only applies to the product identified above. I also agree that approval of this exemption does not exempt the entire menu from meeting the 50 percent whole grain-rich requirement.

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For Office Use Only:

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved: Yes No Specialist Signature: \_\_\_\_\_