

SY 21-22 Paid Lunch Equity Requirements and Guidance

The U.S. Department of Agriculture issued [waivers for School Year 2021-22](#) allowing School Food Authorities (SFAs) to operate the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO), which provides meals at no cost to all students. Guidance has recently been provided on how SFAs should proceed for Paid Lunch Equity (PLE).

School Food Authorities operating under Seamless Summer Option for 2021-22 school year

- SFAs operating SSO only during SY 21-22 **do not** need to follow PLE requirements for SY 21-22 per Child Nutrition Response #97, the [Nationwide Waiver to Provide Flexibility for School Meal Programs Administrative Reviews of School Food Authorities Operating Only the Seamless Summer Option in SY 2021-22](#).
- It is still suggested to maintain PLE and publish pricing for the community to know where prices would stand if SSO was not available, while announcing SSO.

School Food Authorities operating under traditional National School Lunch/School Breakfast Program (not Seamless Summer Option)

- PLE Exemption available for SFAs with a zero or positive balance in their food services account, as of Dec. 31, 2020, will not be required to raise lunch prices. Please print and fill out the [exemption form](#), scan it, and submit to pleexemption@isbe.net.
- If the School Food Authorities balance in the food services account is negative, a [Paid Lunch Equity tool](#) will be required.

For more information on PLE visit <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Nutrition-Resource-Management.aspx>, where the new PLE tool and exemption form are posted. If you need any assistance in completing the PLE tool for the 2021-22 school year, please contact Mike Gogerty (mgogerty@isbe.net) and/or Toby Turek (rturek@isbe.net).

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