
[REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:04 PM

[REDACTED]

Subject: Re: COVID-19: July or August Adjustments

MS requests to extend the Adjustment of Initial Certification and Recertification Interview Response for July and August 2020.

[REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:23 PM

[REDACTED]

Subject: COVID-19: July or August Adjustments

Good Afternoon Mark,

While the number of SNAP applications are starting to return to levels similar to before the onset of COVID-19, some States have shared with FNS their ongoing difficulties in handling their increased caseload sizes and reduced operational capacity. These States are struggling to maintain their responsibility for the administrative functions of operating the program responsibly. FNS strongly believes that it is of the utmost importance to ensure the program is administered appropriately so families receive the proper benefits in a timely fashion and that SNAP program integrity is consistently maintained to ensure public confidence in SNAP administration and use of taxpayer resources.

For States that are struggling, each corresponding regional office continues to provide tailored customer service. To best serve recipients, please do not hesitate to call on our team or your

fellow States for best practices and solutions in this dynamic and unprecedented situation.

Based on the recent feedback from some States, combined with the recent spike in COVID-19 cases in some parts of the country, FNS is providing an additional opportunity to seek approval for adjustments to extend certification periods or eliminate the interview, including States agencies that were previously denied for July. FNS hopes that approval of these adjustments during July and August will assist the State as it transitions to its new normal in the fall. State agencies should continue to plan appropriately and make necessary systems changes to return to normal processing.

If your State was previously denied for a July adjustment, or did not apply and is now interested, please respond to the FNS regional office (FN-SE-Policy@usda.gov) within 3 business days and indicate which adjustments your State is seeking. FNS will respond to your request within 3 business days.

In order to request an extension, your State must have an emergency order that extends into the month in which you are requesting the adjustment or waiver. For example, in order to receive an extension for the month of August, the emergency order must extend into some part of August.

Looking ahead, requests for extensions beyond August will be approved on an extremely limited basis. In order to receive an extension beyond August, a State must have an emergency order that extends into the month in which the State is requesting the adjustment and provide data that demonstrates that the adjustment continues to be warranted given the current circumstances in the State. States must submit these requests by the 10th day the month before the adjustment would take effect with a response due back from FNS to the State by the 15th.

FNS expects that requests include data on substantial increases in new applications in recent months (e.g. July and August for September adjustment), sizable increases in a backlog of case actions or applications, or a significant decrease in staffing capacity due to COVID-19, among other supporting information. States are expected to reasonably adjust to changing circumstances, including caseload growth, and FNS will not approve requests where the data is merely comparable with the State agency's data from non-COVID-19 circumstances or where FNS was working with the State under a corrective action plan unrelated to COVID-19. These requests should also include plans to return to a new normal in a reasonably short time frame. Because approvals for adjustments beyond August will be extremely limited, States should make arrangements to ensure they are able to return to their new normal by September 1, 2020.

We stand ready to provide technical assistance and answer any of your questions.

Thanks.

Gene Malveaux

SNAP Director

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