



Food and Nutrition
Service

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Alexandria, VA
22314

June 28, 2020

Larry Braasch
Assistant Division Director
Division of Family Development
Department of Human Services
Post Office Box 716
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

RE: SNAP – New Jersey Adjustment Request to Extend Certification Periods and
Adjust Reporting Requirements Due to COVID-19 – Extension - Approval

Dear Mr. Braasch:

This letter transmits approval of the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS) adjustment request (COV-012) to continue to extend certification periods and adjust periodic reporting requirements statewide for ongoing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households in July 2020. FNS is approving this request under authorization of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127).

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approves the State agency's request to adjust the certification provisions of section 3(f) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (the Act) and SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.10(f)(5). The State agency may extend certification periods for households scheduled to expire in July 2020, for up to 6 months, or until January 2021. This adjustment includes households with earned income that, by regulation, cannot normally be certified for more than a six-month period. FNS appreciates the significant data the State provided in support of this request demonstrating that an extension of the adjustment is necessary to be consistent with what is practicable under actual conditions in the State. FNS also appreciates the State's effort to minimize the use of this adjustment by only extending certifications and adjusting the periodic report requirements for only a small portion of the caseload.

FNS also grants the State agency's request to adjust the periodic reporting requirements of section 6(c)(1)(D)(i) of the Act, and SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.10(f)(1) and 7 CFR 273.12(a)(5)(iii)(B) for ongoing households.

FNS is approving this adjustment for a period of 1 month, effective July 1, 2020, through July 31, 2020. The approval is contingent upon the State agency's compliance with the adjustment's conditions and data reporting components in item 11 of Enclosure 1. The detailed adjustments response is enclosed.

FNS is providing multiple waivers and flexibilities in its programs in its continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act requires the Food and Nutrition Service to collect specific data elements from States. The CARES Act (P.L. 116-136) provides funding, which FNS will use to

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collect information in order to distribute funding. Please prepare the necessary data elements to collect and submit this data as described in this document. The public will be given the opportunity to comment on this data collection, including legislatively-mandated data collection through a future information collection process being submitted to the Office of Management and Budget.

If you have questions or need additional information regarding this adjustment, please contact your respective Regional office representative.

Sincerely,

Sasha Gersten-Paal
Program Development Division
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Enclosure

**EXTEND CERTIFICATION PERIODS AND ADJUST REPORTING
REQUIREMENTS ADJUSTMENT RESPONSE**

1. **Adjustment serial number:** COV-012
2. **Type of request:** Extension
3. **Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.10(f)(5)
4. **State:** New Jersey
5. **Region:** MARO
6. **Regulatory requirements:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) regulations at 7 CFR 273.10(f)(3)(i) require a minimum certification period of 6 months for most households. Regulations at 7 CFR 273.10(f)(5) allow states to extend certification periods up to 12 months or 24 months for those households that are all elderly or disabled. Regulations at 7 CFR 273.12(a)(5)(iii) require an interim periodic report in the sixth month for households assigned to simplified reporting (SR), if the certification period exceeds 6 months.

SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.14 state that no household may participate beyond the expiration of the certification period assigned in accordance with § 273.10(f) without a determination of eligibility for a new period. The State agency must establish procedures for notifying households of expiration dates, providing application forms, scheduling interviews, and recertifying eligible households prior to the expiration of certification periods. Households must apply for recertification and comply with interview and verification requirements.

7. **Description of alternative procedures:** The State agency will adjust the expiration for certification periods expiring in July 2020 and will extend the certification period of these households for up to 6 months, or until January 2021. The state will also adjust the periodic reporting requirement for households with a period report due in July 2020 and for households whose certification period is extended under this waiver.
8. **Action and reason for approval or denial:** The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) recognizes the need for State agency measures for effective and efficient program management. FNS is approving this extension request for 1 month, effective July 1, 2020.
9. **Legislative basis for action:** Approval is based on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127), which allows FNS to approve

adjustments that would result in a more effective and efficient administration of the program.

10. Conditions and reasons: Approval is contingent upon the following conditions:

- The State must notify households impacted by this approval and continue to comply with the notice requirements at 7 CFR 273.10(f)(5).
- SNAP Quality Control will review against the terms of this adjustment and in accordance with FNS Handbook 310.
- The State agency will submit a request to FNS for approval if it wishes to extend this adjustment beyond the initial period.

11. Evaluation Data Requirements: The State agency must provide to FNS the data and analysis listed below required for evaluation of this waiver.

- Estimated number of households affected by this adjustment;
- A narrative on the effect of program access and client satisfaction, including an analysis of any client or advocate complaints received related to the waived procedure;
- A narrative on the effect of providing timely and accurate benefits; and
- A narrative on the effect of any other aspects of the eligibility process including the ability to manage staff caseload growth and the impact on administrative efficiency.

12. Expiration date: July 31, 2020.

13. Limitation, if any, on approval: Approval of this adjustment is limited to the State SNAP agency.

14. Quality control procedures: No special Quality Control (QC) procedures are required for cases subject to the provisions of this adjustment. Cases should be reviewed using standard review procedures contained in the FNS Handbook 310.

15. Anticipated implementation date (*notify FNS if actual date differs*):
Upon receipt of approval.