



Food and
Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock
Place
Alexandria, VA
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DATE: December 20, 2023

SUBJECT: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Publication of the Race and Ethnicity Data Collection Final Rule

TO: All SNAP State Agencies
All Regions

On December 14, 2023, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published the Race and Ethnicity Data Collection Final Rule. This rule revises Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) regulations at 7 CFR 272.6(g) that cover the collection and reporting of race and ethnicity data by State agencies on persons applying for and receiving SNAP benefits. Through this rulemaking, FNS aims to improve the quality of race and ethnicity data collected and to ensure program benefits are distributed without regard to race, color, or national origin.

SNAP applications include the option for applicants to indicate their race and ethnicity. Previously, if the applicant chose not to disclose this information, SNAP State agencies were required to record this information using alternative means, such as visual observation, when reporting data to FNS. The final rule removes the option for State agencies to use visual observation as an acceptable alternative when this information is not provided by the applicant.

Moving forward, FNS will gather and disseminate information on best practices for developing alternative means of collecting race and ethnicity data when the information is not voluntarily provided on the application form, including considerations when using aggregate data.

FNS is committed to modernizing SNAP to best serve all participants by building equitable and inclusive systems for nutrition support. Please review the final rule and update your State's SNAP business processes accordingly. States should contact their respective FNS Regional Offices with questions or requests for technical assistance.

For Rachel Frisk
Director
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Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program