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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

3101 Park
Center Drive

Alexandria, VA
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SUBJECT: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Census 2010
Demonstration Project – Exclusion of Earned Income of Temporary Census
Employees

TO: All Regional Directors
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The purpose of this memorandum is to advise you of Food and Nutrition Services' (FNS) decision to offer State agencies the opportunity to participate in a demonstration project to exclude earned income from temporary employment in the 2010 Census.

These demonstration projects are intended to help ease program administration by aligning SNAP policy with TANF and Medicaid policies. Most temporary positions associated with the 2010 Census are enumerators who reside and work in their own communities, many of which are low-income. Excluding the earned income of temporary census employees assists the Census Bureau with staff recruitment and retention while allowing individuals with limited or no employment history to gain valuable work experience without a reduction in SNAP benefits. Similar demonstration projects were conducted for the 1990 and 2000 Census.

Section 17(b)(1) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 gives the Secretary the authority to conduct certain demonstration projects. Accordingly, the Secretary may utilize this authority to waive the requirements of Section 5(d) of the Act and exclude temporary income. The Census Bureau projects approximately 1.4 million temporary employees will be hired nationwide over the course of the census. For those States that choose to participate, earned income from temporary Census employment will be excluded for SNAP benefits.

States that would like to participate in this demonstration project must submit a letter to their Regional Office requesting a waiver by November 1, 2009. Although the primary dates for Census 2010 operations are from March through July 2010, the income can be excluded as long as the income earned is related to 2010 Census operations regardless of when the temporary census employee was hired. This policy is effective through September 30, 2010 in the event that some census operations extend beyond the projected July 2010 end date.

The policy to exclude temporary census earnings cannot be applied retroactively. Therefore, those households who participated in the 2008 Census dress rehearsal operations are not covered under these demonstration projects. Participating States that become aware of households who were denied benefits after the effective date of this policy should reconsider those denials based on this current policy.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The contents of this guidance document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

Post-Census 2010 Evaluation

FNS is requesting that State agencies identify cases where temporary census income was excluded. State agencies participating in this demonstration project must provide FNS the following information by November 1, 2010:

1. The number of SNAP households that had temporary earnings excluded;
2. The number of months the income was excluded; and
3. The total amount of benefits issued.

To measure the project's effect on recruitment, a small number of State agencies may also be requested to participate with the Census Bureau in conducting limited data matches. Some data matches may be based on geographic information.

Please advise your State agencies of the opportunity to participate in the Census 2010 demonstration project and notify us of those States that plan to participate. If you have questions, please contact Vicky Robinson by e-mail at vicky.robinson@fns.usda.gov or by phone at (703) 305-2476.



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