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United States
Department of
Agriculture

SUBJECT: Zero benefit households and Employment and Training Services

Food and
Nutrition
Service

TO: Regional Directors
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
All Regions

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Alexandria, VA
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This memo clarifies the Food and Nutrition Services' (FNS) policy on serving zero benefit households through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) Program.

The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and SNAP regulations provide States the option to work register members of zero benefit, categorically eligible households. FNS has determined that States have the discretion to refer these household members to a SNAP E&T Program or component, if appropriate.

Under 7 CFR 273.10(e)(2)(iii)(7), States have the option to suspend a zero benefit household as opposed to denying it. Under this rule, the State may delay the work registration of a household member until the household is determined entitled to benefits. The State may also choose to work register non-exempt household members. Additionally, States may choose to serve exempt members of zero benefit households that volunteer for a SNAP E&T component.

Previously, FNS advised that States opting to suspend zero benefit households, rather than deny them, must exclude these households from program participation counts. This guidance still stands.

Please share this information with your States. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact Jackie Windfeldt at jackie.windfeldt@fns.usda.gov or 703-305-2390.

Sincerely,

Lizbeth Silberman
Director
Program Development Division

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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.