



Food and
Nutrition
Service

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Date: March 8, 2019

Subject: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Census 2020
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 Service's (FNS) decision to offer State agencies the opportunity to participate in a demonstration project to exclude earned income from temporary employment in the 2020 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 2020 Census are enumerators who reside and work in their own communities. 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 2000 and 2010 Censuses.

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 1.5 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.

As in years prior, FNS is offering this to States at their option. States that would like to participate in this demonstration project must submit a letter to their Regional Office requesting a waiver by March 29, 2019. The Regional Office should respond to these letters and inform the National Office on a weekly basis as States indicate their interest to request these waivers. Although the primary dates for Census 2020 operations are from January through June 23, 2020, the income can be excluded as long as the income earned is related to 2020 Census operations regardless of when the temporary census employee was hired. **Please note that this policy only applies to temporary Census employees that directly receive income from the Census Bureau. In order to begin excluding income, States must receive approval from their respective regional office.** Approvals may extend through September 30, 2020, in the event that some 2020 Census hiring operations extend

The policy to exclude temporary census earnings cannot be applied retroactively. Therefore, Census income for temporary employees cannot be excluded prior to the effective date of a State's demonstration waiver request for this project. 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.

Census 2020 Evaluation

Consistent with FNS's September 13, 2018, "Innovation and Evaluation in SNAP Demonstration Projects" memo, any approved demonstrations must have robust evaluation requirements. In keeping with this requirement, as a condition of this waiver approval, State agencies must identify cases where temporary census income was excluded and report this information to FNS. State agencies participating in this demonstration project must provide FNS the following information, for all months that demonstration projects run, by November 30, 2020:

1. The number of unduplicated SNAP households that had temporary earnings excluded;
2. The average number of months the income was excluded; and
3. The average monthly benefit these households received.
4. The average amount of excluded Census income per household with excluded earnings.

Here is a suggested template for this report:

- **State agency**
- **# SNAP Households with excluded earnings**
- **# Months Income was Excluded (average)**
- **Average Monthly Benefit for these Households**
- **Average Amount of Excluded Income per Household**

Please advise your State agencies of the opportunity to participate in the Census 2020 demonstration project and notify us of those States that plan to participate. If you have questions, please contact Simon Miller by e-mail at simon.miller@usda.gov or by phone at (703) 605-3205.

/s/ Lizbeth Silbermann
Director
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