United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

3101 Park
Center Drive

Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

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SUBJECT: Clarification on Census 2010 Demonstration Waivers

TO: Regional Directors
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Attached are questions and answers in response to common issues raised by States regarding the Census 2010 Demonstration Projects. These demonstration waivers will allow States agencies to exclude income from temporary employment in the 2010 Census for SNAP applicants or participants.

Please direct any additional questions to Jackie Windfeldt at jackie.windfeldt@fns.usda.gov or 703-305-2390.

Arthur T. Foley
Director
Program Development Division

Attachments

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Question 1: Does FNS want an unduplicated count of participants? Or does FNS want the number of clients each month, even though the same person might be included over consecutive months?

Answer: FNS would like an unduplicated count of participants.

Question 2: The August 24 memorandum from FNS seems to say the dates clients will receive income will be March through July 2010, but could be received during other months as well. If it is, it should always be excluded. Is this correct? In other words, do we program our system to exclude ANY temporary census income, regardless of the month received, or only exclude it from March-July 2010?

Answer: State agencies should exclude Census income on or after the effective date of their policy waiver. The policy memo issued by FNS on August 24, 2009 informed States of the opportunity to participate in this demonstration project but States must notify FNS of their intention to exclude Census income and receive a waiver in order to do so. The August 24th memo is not a blanket waiver and States cannot exclude Census income between August 24 and the effective date of their waiver. Census income can be excluded from the effective date of a State waiver through September 30, 2010.

Question 3: For reporting purposes, what is the beginning month and end month that demonstration project data should be submitted? If the report is due 11/1/2010, is Sept 2010 the last month that could be included in the reporting?

Answer: Since the primary census activity will occur during the months of February 2010 through September 2010, FNS would prefer that States report data for those months. However, since the most active months for census workers will be **April, May and June of 2010**, States should report for those months at minimum.

Question 4: Counting income of Census workers prior to Aug.24 - should the State issue retro benefits or contact households that they denied for being over-income?

Answer: Census income for temporary employees cannot be excluded prior to the effective date of a State's demonstration waiver for this project. Census income prior to the date of this waiver cannot be excluded; therefore, States cannot issue retroactive benefits. However, if a household was denied benefits after the effective date of this policy, States should reconsider the denials based on the waiver.

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Question 5: Apparently, some of the Census jobs held by SNAP clients are actually through private companies contracted through the Census Bureau. For example, contractors may hire for jobs such as data entry, document scanning and so on with a starting pay of $16 per hour. Can States agencies exempt the income of these contract employees as Census income?

Answer: No. Under the terms of this demonstration project, only income directly from the Census Bureau can be excluded. The State cannot exclude income for SNAP applicants or participants employed by an outside contractor.

Question 6: How will State agencies go about contacting the Census Bureau?

Answer: FNS will notify the Census Bureau of a State's participation after the State has requested and received a demonstration waiver. The Census Bureau will then contact the State agency and initiate a memorandum of understanding. Once the terms and conditions are agreed upon and the MOU signed, Census will begin forwarding employee information.

States should still submit waiver applications through their Regional Office. Regional Offices should forward State waiver applications to Dale Walton at dale.walton@fns.usda.gov and Jackie.Windfeldt@fns.usda.gov

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