



Food and
Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA
22314

August 25, 2020

RE: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) –Extension of Waiver of Quality Control (QC) Face-to-Face Interview Requirement Due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency – Blanket Approval

Dear SNAP State Agencies:

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will allow State agencies to suspend requirements at 7 CFR 275.12(c)(1) to conduct face-to-face interviews for QC active reviews through December 31, 2020.

SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 275.12(c)(1) require State agencies to conduct personal face-to-face interviews for QC active case reviews at the participant's home, at an appropriate State agency certification office, or at a mutually agreed upon alternative location. FNS policy also allows States to conduct video conferencing interviews in lieu of face-to-face interviews and to conduct telephone interviews for households that received \$100 or less in benefits during the sample month. FNS has already approved States to conduct telephone interviews in lieu of face-to-face interviews for all QC cases through September 30, 2020. This waiver approval extends that flexibility through December 31, 2020, regardless of the case sample month.

Under the authority of 7 CFR 272.3(c)(1)(i), FNS may authorize temporary waivers to deviate from specific regulatory provisions when they cannot be implemented due to extraordinary temporary situations. Agencies have reported challenges in conducting face-to-face interviews for QC reviewers. Some State agencies continue to experience limited in-person capacity at local certification offices. In addition, State agencies are continuing to face challenges with contacting households and employers in order to verify circumstances. Providing flexibility to conduct QC interviews through telephone instead of requiring face-to-face contact should allow State agencies to complete more case reviews while also ensuring the continued health and safety of QC reviewers and households. As a result, FNS has determined that temporarily waiving the QC face-to-face interview requirement will improve the effectiveness of program administration during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

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FNS is ready to provide technical assistance to State agencies as they seek to maintain operations and serve clients during the current public health emergency. State agencies must notify their respective Regional Office representative if they elect to adopt this flexibility.

Sincerely,

Ronald K. Ward
Director
Program Accountability and Administration Division