



Department of
Job and Family Services

Mike DeWine, Governor

Kimberly Hall, Director

April 24, 2020

Julie Mikkelson, Director
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
USDS, Food and Nutrition Service
77 West Jackson Blvd 20th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604-3507

Dear Ms. Mikkelson:

Attached please find Ohio's waiver request to suspend the use of IEVS data and allowing the State agency to not act on any changes received through IEVS. Therefore, ongoing SNAP households will not have their benefits reduced or terminated based on IEVS data. The State will still be required to use IEVS data matches in determining eligibility at initial certification.

Allowing households to have continued access to SNAP would provide a significant boost to local economies. For every \$5 in new SNAP benefits, as much as \$9.20 is generated in total economic activity. We feel this waiver will not only offer our clients more food security, but would also benefit the local economy, which is struggling during this pandemic crisis. Additionally, this will allow county agencies to focus on new SNAP applications as they continue to be received, as the number of applications increases and the current workforce level, already strained, is at risk of becoming unsteady.

This waiver request is in response to the March 13, 2020, national declaration of emergency due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as well as the state of emergency declared in Ohio on March 9, 2020. This will help prevent exposure of our customers, as well as state and county employees, to COVID-19.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Betsy Suver at Betsy.Suver@jfs.ohio.gov or (614) 425-5859.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Betsy Suver, Chief
Bureau of Cash/Food Policy & Technical Support
Office of Family Assistance
Attachment

30 East Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215
jfs.ohio.gov

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):**
2. **Type of request:** Initial
3. **Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.2 (f)(9)
4. **Secondary regulation citation, if any:**
5. **State:** Ohio
6. **Region:** Midwest Region
7. **Regulatory requirements:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) regulations at 7 CFR 273.2(f)(9) require the State agency to obtain information through an Income and Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) and use it to verify the eligibility and benefit levels of applicants and participating households.
8. **Proposed alternative procedures:** The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services will suspend the use of IEVS data and will not act on any changes received through IEVS. The State will continue to verify income through other data sources and databases and act on all other mandatory matches, including prisoner and death matches. Therefore, ongoing SNAP households will not have their benefits reduced or terminated based on the IEVS data. This will save the county agencies valuable time and allow them to focus time on processing applications. The State will still be required to use IEVS data matches in determining eligibility at initial certification.
9. **Justification for request:** On January 31, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern. Additionally, the Health and Human Services Secretary, Alex M. Azar II, declared a public health emergency for the United States. The Governor of Ohio, Mike DeWine, declared a state of emergency for the entire State of Ohio on March 9, 2020, (Executive Order 2020-01D) to protect the well-being of the citizens of Ohio from COVID-19. In addition to the state-declared state of emergency, on March 13, 2020, President Trump declared a national state of emergency.

Approval of this waiver will assist in ensuring individuals currently in receipt of SNAP are not negatively impacted due to the reduction or loss of benefits during a time when American families continue to need food security during this time. Additionally, this will also help to continue to benefit the local economy, which is also struggling during this crisis. Further, while the number of applications increases, the current workforce level to process the work, already strained, is at risk of becoming unsteady.

10. **Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations:** The State will not take action to reduce or terminate SNAP benefits based on IEVS data as of March 9, 2020, through

the end of Ohio's state of emergency. The State agency will continue to use IEVS data matches in determining eligibility at initial certification.

- 11. Caseload information, including percent, characteristics, and quality control error rate for affection portion (if applicable):** This waiver will apply to all SNAP recipient households. Ohio's federal fiscal year (FFY) 2018 quality control error rate was 7.46%. The number of SNAP recipients as of January 2020 was 1,331,462.
- 12. Anticipated implementation date and time period for which waiver is needed:** Immediately upon approval, for the period of time during which Ohio is under a state of emergency due to COVID-19, beginning on March 9, 2020 through the end of the pandemic.
- 13. Proposed quality control review procedures:** Cases will be reviewed in accordance with this waiver approval. QC will not consider changes from IEVS alerts when conducting case reviews for the waiver approval period. QC will review income from all other data sources and databases.
- 14. State agency submitting waiver request and State contact person:** Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Betsy Suver.
- 15. Signature and title of requesting official:**

Betsy Suver

Betsy Suver
Bureau Chief, Bureau of Cash/Food Policy & Technical Support
Betsy.Suver@jfs.ohio.gov

- 16. Date of request:** April 24, 2020
- 17. State agency staff contact (name/email/telephone):** Ashley Howard, Ashley.Probst@jfs.ohio.gov, (614) 644-1680
- 18. Regional office contact person:** Jenie Farinas, Jenie.Farinas@usda.gov