



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

3101 Park  
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Alexandria, VA  
22302-1500

NOV 07 2012

**SUBJECT:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Fiscal Year 2013  
Target Areas for Management Evaluations

**TO:** Regional Administrators  
All Regions

The purpose of this memo is to transmit national target areas and procedures for management evaluations (MEs) for fiscal year (FY) 2013. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), with input from the Regional Offices (ROs), has identified three national target areas for the ROs to review during FY 2013. In addition, FNS has selected five other program areas that ROs should review on an at-risk basis.

### **Annual ME Reviews**

MEs for the Federal target areas must be performed on an annual basis in accordance with Federal Regulation 275.3 (a). Each year, FNS identifies specific areas required to be reviewed by the ROs.

The FY 2013 Federal Target Areas are:

1. Program access at the State agency level (including online application processing and initial and recertification application processing timeliness);
2. The State's quality control (QC) system (completion rates); and
3. Recipient integrity

### **Review of the States ME system**

In addition to the annual ME reviews, the ROs shall conduct a review of the State agency's management evaluation system on a biennial basis. FNS may review a State agency's management evaluation on a more frequent basis if a regular review reveals serious deficiencies in the ME system. This review will include, but not be limited to, a determination of whether or not the State agency is complying with FNS regulations, an assessment of the State agency's methods and procedures for conducting ME reviews, and an assessment of the data collection by the State agency in conducting the review. ROs may consolidate the scheduling of these reviews to reduce the frequency of entry into the State agencies.

### **Federal At-Risk Areas**

ROs have the flexibility to review other areas on an at-risk basis. In determining risk, the RO should take into consideration the time elapsed since an area has been reviewed, deficiencies identified at that time, and any recent changes to the program area. The RO does not need to include the reason a program was not reviewed in the ME review report that is sent to the State agencies.

The FY 2013 Federal at-risk review areas are:

1. Recipient Claims Management
2. Treasury Offset Program
3. Nutrition Education
4. Employment and Training (E&T)
5. Electronic Benefit Transfer

### **Federal Procedures**

ROs should note the following procedures for completing MEs in FY 2013.

- Reviews of a national target area or at risk program area may be conducted off-site if data is available at the RO to ensure an adequate review. However, reviews of the State ME systems must be conducted on site.
- To determine whether or not to perform an on-site review, ROs should refer to the ME review guides and consider changes in the past year that put the State agency at risk for compliance problems such as recent staffing cuts, personnel changes, reduced budgets, or policy changes.
- ROs should use the standardized ME review guides to review the specified program areas. More information concerning the review guide for quality control and recipient integrity are forthcoming.
- ROs are required to perform four local level program access reviews (PAR) per year. A full local level PAR using the review guide can be substituted for the required local level ME review.
- A shadow or follow-up review of a State's ME can be used as a PAR when the shadow review is augmented to meet the PAR guidelines or the follow-up review's focus is on program access and the PAR guide is used.

### **Review Staff**

If reviewers at the RO are not familiar with a target area, the RO may need to train reviewers to conduct the review or assign the review to other staff within the RO who have the expertise. For example, financial management staff may monitor and review the financial area of a target, information technology staff may monitor and review an automated function, or civil rights staff may review an overlapping client services target. It does not matter which staff conduct the review as long as they are trained and the target and other areas are covered. This will help ensure that problems are identified and corrected.

### **Reports of RO Review Activity**

The ROs are required to submit the following information related to their review activity:

- **Review Schedule**: Each RO must submit a schedule of review visits, including review type and coverage, to Moira Johnston, Chief, Program Design Branch, by October 31, 2012. Please include program access reviews (PARs) to local offices in this schedule and indicate which areas will be reviewed in each State.
- **Summary of Review Activities**: Each RO must enter a summary of each completed ME and a year-end summary into the tracking tool located on the Partner Web. If the year-end summary is uploaded to the tool as an attachment, please use the attached reporting form. A summary of each completed local PAR must also be entered into the tracking tool. Contact Marcia Shaffer-Hughes at [Marci.ShafferHughes@fns.usda.gov](mailto:Marci.ShafferHughes@fns.usda.gov) for access to the tool. Summaries of all review activities must be completed and entered into the tool no later than November 30, 2013.

We appreciate the effort made by you, your staff, and your State agency partners to ensure the integrity of and improved access to SNAP. If you have any questions or require assistance, please contact Moira Johnston (703) 305-2515 or Billy DeLancey (703) 305-2480.



Jessica Shahin  
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Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program



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**SUBJECT:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Target Areas for Management Evaluations (MEs)

**TO:** Regional Administrators  
All Regions

The purpose of this memo is to transmit target areas and procedures for management evaluations (MEs) for fiscal year (FY) 2013. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has identified two target areas to be received by State agencies. In addition, FNS has identified six other program areas that State agencies should review on an at-risk basis, but at least once every 6 years.

### **FY 2013 State Target Areas**

1. Program Access - to include on-line application processing and call centers
2. Recipient Integrity

MEs for the State target areas must be conducted in accordance with the following schedule or on a more frequent basis if there is an identified risk. State agencies may submit a plan that covers the 3 year review cycle and provide updates annually.

- In large project areas every year;
- In medium areas every 2 years; and
- In small project areas every 3 years.

**State At-Risk Areas:** State agencies have the flexibility to review other areas on an at-risk basis but at a minimum every 6 years. In determining risk, the State should take into consideration the time elapsed since an area has been reviewed, deficiencies identified at that time, and any recent changes to the program area.

The FY 2013 State at-risk review areas are:

1. Recipient Claims Management
2. Treasury Offset Program
3. Nutrition Education
4. Employment and Training (E&T)
5. Electronic Benefit Transfer
6. Negative Errors

The regulations at 7 CFR 275.8 provide that States shall review the national target areas specified by FNS. Considering that States are stressed due to reduced resources, FNS has determined that States should focus their reviews on program access and recipient integrity and review the other areas on an at-risk basis. This gives States the flexibility to put resources where the risks are greatest and to conduct more effective reviews.

The regulations at 7 CFR 275.9(b) provide that State agencies develop a plan prior to each ME review. Under the regulations at 275.5(b)(2) each project area must be reviewed at least every 3-years. Allowing State agencies to submit a plan that covers the 3-year review cycle and provide updates annually is consistent with the regulations.

We appreciate the effort made by you, your staff, and your State agency partners to ensure the integrity of and improve access to SNAP. If you have any questions or require assistance, please contact Moira Johnston at (703) 305-2515 or Billy DeLancey at (703) 305-2480.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Shahin".

Jessica Shahin  
Associate Administrator  
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program