

TO:

THROUGH: Rachelle Ragland Greene, Food and Nutrition Service, Information Clearance Officer

FROM: Jean Daniel, Director, Public Affairs

DATE: May 15, 2008

RE: Under Approved Generic OMB Clearance No. 0584-0524 Request Approval to Perform Focus Group Testing of Program Messages and Outreach Materials for the Food Stamp Program Media Outreach Campaign and Name Change Awareness Benchmark and Tracking Surveys

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the USDA Food and Nutrition Services is requesting approval for Focus Group Testing and Name Change Awareness Benchmark and Tracking Surveys under Approved Generic OMB Clearance No. 0584-0524.

The following information is provided for your review:

1. **Title of Project:** Food Stamp National Media Campaign Audience Assessment of Messages and Outreach Materials.
2. **Clearance Number:** 0584-0524.
3. **Public Affected by this Project:** There are two audiences who will participate in the focus groups: 1) Individuals with a household income less than 130% of the poverty level who are food stamp-eligible, non-participants; and 2) current Food Stamp Program (FSP) participants. Please see Attachment B, "Audience and Market Matrix," which outlines the markets where we will conduct the groups with these audiences. The audience who will participate in the benchmark and tracking surveys will be nationally representative and include: 1) individuals ages 18 and older; and 2) individuals who currently live in the continental United States.
4. **Number of Respondents:** 168 people recruited to allow for "no shows"; approximately 126 people will actually participate in the focus group discussions. 2,000 individuals will participate in each wave of the benchmark and tracking surveys (4,000 total).
5. **Time Needed per Response:** Approximately 138 minutes per person for focus group participation.¹ Approximately 10 minutes per person for the benchmark and tracking surveys.
6. **Total Burden Hours on the Public:** 1,033 hours total (326 hours for the focus group discussion and 707 hours for the benchmark and tracking surveys)
7. **Project Purpose, Methodology and Data Collection:** Focus groups allow researchers to capitalize on small group dynamics that generate new insights into recipients' attitudes and perceptions regarding life/family aspirations, general perceptions of the Food Stamp Program (FSP), and receptivity to FSP messages and materials. Key stakeholders' reactions to proposed messaging and brand/communications approaches for the program will be tested. Attachment A, "USDA Food Stamp Program Focus Groups," provides in-depth detail regarding the research methodology and data collection steps associated with this study. (Please see pages 2 through 10 within this document.) Additionally, surveys

¹ Includes time for screening, travel to and from the discussion group, and participation in the discussion group.

allow researchers to quantify results across an audience and provide a solid metric to measure and track opinions and awareness among the general public. The public's reactions to and awareness of the name change will be tested. Attachment K, "USDA Food Stamp Program Benchmark and Tracking Surveys," provides in-depth detail regarding the research methodology and data collection steps associated with this study.

8. **Confidentiality:** Participants will be told about confidentiality and privacy act provisions (1) while being recruited, over the telephone, to participate in the research (please see Attachment C), (2) when arriving at the focus group facility where they will be asked to read and sign a confidentiality agreement (please see Attachment J), and, (3) at the beginning of each focus group discussion when the focus group moderator will read these statements to the participants (please see Attachment E). The impact of the burden to the participants in regards to confidentiality is a matter of approximately 12 minutes out of the total estimated 138 minutes per participant (a minute or so on the telephone during the screening process; 10 minutes after initially arriving at the focus group facility to read, review, and sign the form; and a minute or so at the beginning of the discussion group while the moderator reads the statement to the participants). Survey participants will also be told about confidentiality and privacy act provisions during the interview process and given the OMB control number.
9. **Federal Costs:** Contract cost for focus groups: \$337,941.51; Estimated costs for benchmark and one tracking survey: \$97,660; Estimated costs for benchmark and two tracking surveys: \$146,490.
10. **Requested Approval Date:** July 2008
11. **Focus Group Tools:**
 - a. Participant Recruitment Screener Guides (see Attachment C)
 - b. Participant Reminder Letter (see Attachment D)
 - c. Focus Group Moderator Discussion Guides and Supporting Materials(see Attachments E, F, G, H, and I)
 - d. Confidentiality Agreement (see Attachment J)
12. **Benchmark and Tracking Survey Tools:**
 - a. Benchmark and Tracking Survey Questionnaire (see Attachment K)