

Supporting Statement for  
Paperwork Reduction Act  
Submission for Quality Control (QC) reviews  
for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance  
Program (SNAP).

OMB Number 0584-0034

FNS-245

*Associated with Final Rule RIN 0584-AD31 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program:  
Quality Control Provisions of Title IV of Public Law (107-171)*

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**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information:**

This is a revision of a currently approved collection based on rulemaking; we are also seeking the three-year renewal at this time. State agencies are required to perform Quality Control (QC) reviews for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The FNS-245 (Negative Case Action Review Schedule), and FNS-248 (Status of Sample Selection and Completion), as revised by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), is for State use to collect QC data and information on the status of case reviews. Instructions for completing Form FNS-245 are in Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Handbook 310.

Form FNS-245 has been updated due to the implementation of final rule, “Non- Discretionary Quality Control Provisions of Title IV of Public Law 107-171,” which was published on June 11, 2010. In addition, Form FNS-248 was officially discontinued by the same final rule and will no longer be included in this information collection package.

The legislative basis for the QC system is Section 16 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008. Part 275, Subpart C, of SNAP regulations implements the legislative mandates found in Section 16. The regulatory basis for the QC reporting requirements is provided by 7 CFR 275.14(d) and 7 CFR 275.21.

The legislative basis for the recordkeeping requirements is Section 11(a) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008. SNAP regulations, in Section 272.1(f), specify that program records are to be retained for a period of three years from the month of origin.

**2. Indicate how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection:**

The FNS-245 (Negative Case Action Review Schedule) serves as the data collection form for negative case action reviews. Negative case actions include the denial, termination or suspension of benefits. The form consists of four sections and is used to record data in negative case reviews only. The first section, Case Management Information, is designed for State-related management tool use; the second section, Identifying Information, provides space for information about the household; the third section, Analysis of Review Activity, is for coding compliance with notice requirements; and the fourth section, Description of Variances, provides for the detailed coding of each distinct variance identified in the Review and the recorded reasons for the agency's action. All information will be provided by the household through a SNAP application or through the interview process with an eligibility worker. The State agency will use the collected data to input into the worksheet.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the**

**basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden:**

In compliance with the E-Government Act, 2002 (E-Gov), FNS has reviewed the QC review and sampling process. We have made every effort to streamline and automate the process.

The FNS-245 serves as both the data summary entry form that the QC reviewer completes during each negative QC case review and, subsequently as the data input document for direct data entry into the SNAP Quality Control System (SNAPQCS). Therefore, while data is manually collected, it is electronically submitted via a virtual network connection into a web-based database for tabulation and analysis.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purpose described in item 2 above:**

There is no duplication of effort since there is no similar data available. FNS solely monitors the QC reviews for (SNAP).

**5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden:**

FNS has determined that the requirements for this information collection do not adversely impact small businesses or other small entities. There are smaller State agencies; however they provide the same data as larger State agencies for this collection.

**6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden:**

Invalid denials, terminations or suspensions would not be effectively monitored or related policy improvements identified without information obtained through the negative review. Less frequent reporting would delay the awarding of monetary incentives in which the negative error rate plays a role.

Legal obstacles to reducing the frequency of this collection are contained in SNAP regulations, referenced under Question #1 of this statement.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:**

- **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**

- requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;
- requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;
- in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;
- requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;
- that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or
- requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

State agencies are required to select and conduct QC reviews on a monthly, ongoing basis. The results of those reviews are required by regulations at 7 CFR 275.21 to be reported on a monthly, ongoing basis. There are no other special circumstances that cause the information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

**8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments.**

**Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting form, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported:**

Notice of this collection was published in the Federal Register on February 27, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 38, Page 11484). We received one comment from the State of Washington's Department of Social and Health Services. The comment included a recommendation of decreasing the burden to 2.5 hours because the State found they took that long to complete the FNS-245. They also made comments indicating that the FNS 245 had a few questionnaire redundancies. In response to these comments, we informed the State of Washington that we were not going to change the estimated burden that we issued to this form because we did not believe Washington's proposed 2.5 hours reflected all State Agencies involved with SNAP. We also provided the State with additional information regarding the purpose for the questions on the form that they felt were redundant, which we do not believe are redundant.

FNS attends an annual meeting with the National Association of Program Information and Performance Measurement (NAPIPM) organization and holds calls regularly with the Quality Control Technical Advisory Group (QC TAG) of this organization, an association made up of state SNAP QC Directors, to discuss various QC topics including FNS worksheet 245. In our discussions on the FNS 245 we covered various areas from coding to modernization of the form; however, aside from the 60 day notice comment, we have not received any comments regarding the changes in burden for this collection.

**9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees:**

No payments or gifts are made to respondents.



**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy:**

Information gathered from State agency records and information gathered in interviews during the negative case reviews (FNS-245) is subject to the same confidentiality as information obtained from households applying for SNAP benefits. Section 11(e)(8) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 mandates that each State agency shall provide "safeguards which limit the use or disclosure of information obtained from applicant households to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of the provisions of this Act, regulations issued pursuant to this Act, Federal Assistance programs, or federally assisted State programs...". Section 272.1(c) of SNAP regulations implements this legislative mandate. The findings of negative case reviews, when compiled, do not identify the recipient by name.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent:**

A final rule entitled "Civil Rights Data Collection" was published on May 18, 2006 by FNS. This rule revises the racial and ethnic data collection and reporting for SNAP to comply with the 1997

data collection standards issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for civil rights data collections. All Federal programs are required to collect racial/ethnic data and information from applicants to permit effective enforcement of the Civil Rights Act. Under the changed procedures applicants will be allowed to choose more than one race and State and local agencies will be required to report tallies for the new racial categories. This rule was effective June 19, 2006.

There are no questions of a sensitive nature on the FNS 245.

**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:**

- **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.**
- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories:**

FNS-245

There are 53 state agencies required to conduct QC reviews of the negative cases as part of the Performance Reporting System. The number of negative cases that must be selected and reviewed by each state agency during each annual review period is determined based on its size and the state's choice of sampling options. We estimate an annual negative case sample of 40,775

cases nationwide. We estimate that state agencies will need an average of 2.9406 hours per response for reporting on the FNS-245. This burden totals approximately 119,850 hours per year.

In addition, each of the 53 state agencies is required to maintain records of the Form FNS-245 for the recordkeeping requirement. We estimate the burden is 0.0236 hours per record. This record keeping burden totals approximately 962 hours per year.

We estimate the total annual reporting and recordkeeping burden for the FNS-245 to be 120,812 hours. The above burdens were arrived at by adding together the estimated reporting burden and the estimated recordkeeping burden.

The burden described above was estimated as follows:

**Table A. 12.1 Reporting Estimates of Hour Burden**

Form Number	No. of Respondents	Est. No. of Responses per Respondent	Est. Total Annual Responses	No. Hours per Response	Estimated Total Burden Hours
FNS-245	53.00	769	40,775	2.9406	119,850

**Table A. 12.2 Record Keeping Burden**

Form Number	No. of Respondents	Est. No. of Responses per Respondent	Est. Total Annual Responses	No. Hours per Response	Estimated Total Burden Hours
FNS-245	53.00	769	40,775	0.0236	962

**II Provide estimates of annualized costs to respondents for the hour burden for collections of information, identifying and using the appropriate wage categories**

**Table A. 12.3 Estimates of Annualized Cost to Respondents**

Type of Respondents	Number of Negative Sample Cases Per Annum	Average Time Per Response	Hourly Wage Rate	Total Respondent Cost
<b><u>Reporting Burden</u></b>				
FNS -245 State Agencies	40,775	2.9406	\$12.57	\$1,507,180.27
<b><u>Recordkeeping Burden</u></b>				
FNS -245 State Agencies	40,775	0.0236	\$12.57	\$12,095.99

The cost to the public is based on \$25.13 per hour. The rate to State agencies after 50 percent reimbursement by FNS is \$12.57. Based on these figures the estimated total cost to respondents for the reporting and recordkeeping burdens after FNS reimbursement is \$1,519,276.26.

To estimate public cost, FNS consulted with the U.S. Department of Labor’s May 2010 Occupational and Wage statistics – 21-1029 Community and Social Services Occupations (<http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211029.htm>).

**13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information, (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component:**

There are no capital/start-up or ongoing operation/ maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information:**

The annual cost to the Federal Government to collect and use the data for the FNS-245 is estimated at \$1,670,606.84. This cost includes (1) the cost of printing reporting forms; (2) reviewing and approving the data, data entry and retrieval; and (3) automated system costs [includes system monitoring and salaries]. These costs are operational costs only.

Worksheet	Printing Costs	Hours Reviewing & Approving	Cost per Hour	Costs Reviewing & Approving	Automated System Costs (incl. Monitoring)	Total Federal Costs
FNS-245	\$2,000	120,812	\$12.57	\$1,518,606.84	\$150,000	\$1,670,606.84

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-i**

This is a revision of a currently approved information collection. The FNS-248 was officially removed which reflects a decrease of 64 burden hours due to program changes impacted by rulemaking. The reporting time per response for the FNS-245 has decreased from 3.0236 to 2.9406 hours due to regulatory changes. In addition, the total Negatives SNAP case selection increased from 39,547 cases in FY 2007 to 40,775 cases in FY 2010. The overall reporting and recordkeeping burden associated with the completion of the FNS-245 has increased from approximately 118, 635 to 120,812 hours. This resulted in an increase of approximately 2,177 burden hours and an increase of approximately 1,228 responses.

**16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication:**

Data tabulation is achieved through established computer programs.

Data included in this collection of information is gathered throughout each annual (fiscal year) review period. The data is then published in the SNAP QC Annual Report. This report presents official QC error rates, and related data for the United States, individual states, Guam, the Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia. The SNAP QC Annual Report will be published approximately one year after the end of each annual review period and is sent to each region and state electronically through our PartnerWeb application.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate:**

FNS is seeking approval to not display the OMB expiration date on the FNS-245. If required to include an expiration date, the FNS-245 would require modification and would render the existing paper supply an economic loss each time the information collection burden was renewed. At that time the form would have to be revised and a new supply printed.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act.":**

This information collection conforms to the requirements of 5 CFR 1320.9. There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

**19. How is this Information collection related to the Customer Service Center?**

This information collection is not related to the Customer Service Center.