

**Estimate of the Information Collection Burden Associated with the Proposed Rule --  
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Eligibility, Certification, and  
Employment and Training Provisions (RIN 0584-AD87)**

This document explains the burden calculations for the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to include the reporting and recordkeeping requirements contained in the Final Rule “SNAP: Eligibility, Certification, and Employment and Training Provisions.” The rule amends SNAP regulations to implement 12 provisions of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (P. L. 110 – 246) (FCEA). The FCEA amended and renamed the Food Stamp Act of 1977, the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (the Act), which specifies eligibility, benefits, and certification requirements for administering the program. State agencies are responsible for determining the eligibility of applicant households and issuing benefits to those households entitled to benefits under the Act.

The average burden per response and the annual burden hours for this information collection are explained in the following sections. The burden hours under this collection will revise the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) collection No. 0584-0064, SNAP Forms: Applications, Periodic Reporting, and Notices.

**OMB No. 0584-0064**

**AFFECTED PUBLIC: STATE AGENCIES**

**STATE AGENCY REPORTING BURDEN DUE TO RULEMAKING**

**Application to Participate in SNAP**

Section 273.2 of the SNAP regulations requires that each applicant household complete and file an application, either in paper or electronic form. The application contains detailed information about each household member and their income, employment, shelter expenses, medical expenses (if applicable) and resources that are necessary to determine if the applicant household is entitled to assistance. The application process also includes the verification of the information provided on the application and an interview where the State agency asks a series of questions and collects more information. The burdens associated with the activities of the application process are included below.

**SNAP Application**

**1. Application Form**

*Initial Application form* - It is estimated that a caseworker can review a household application in 19 minutes or 0.3173 hours. This yields a total burden of 3,556,686.46 hours for all 53 State agencies (\*11,209,223 initial applications x 19 minutes or .3173 hours = 3,556,686.46 hours). (\*FY 2014 National Data Bank – Total Initial Applications Report.)

**State agency burden:** There is no change in burden associated with this rulemaking.

*Change of Program Name* - Part 273 of the SNAP regulations details all of the requirements for the certification of eligible households under the “Food Stamp Program.” The Act renamed the “Food Stamp Program” the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” or “SNAP”. Conforming nomenclature changes have been proposed where the program name will be updated. Even though States were not required to adopt the official program name, they were encouraged to discontinue the use of the name “Food Stamp Program.” If the State agency chooses to adopt the official Federal program name or changed from Food Stamps to an alternative name in response to the Act, print materials such as application forms, program materials, and client information packets should be

updated accordingly.

**State agency burden:** For the 44 State agencies that have adopted SNAP or an alternate program name, **FNS estimated 8 hours per agency to make the necessary updates to print materials which results in a one-time burden of 352 hours (44 State agencies x 8 burden hours = 352 burden hours).**

*Telephonic Signatures* - Sections 273.2(b) and (c), 273.12(c) and (d), 273.14(b), and 273.21(h) provide the contents of the SNAP application, instructions to households on filing an application, the eligibility process, and the process for submitting a change in the household circumstances. More specifically, section 273.2(c)(1) provides for handwritten and electronic signatures. Under the FCEA, State agencies can opt to incorporate a system by which an applicant household or existing SNAP household can sign an application or periodic report through recorded verbal assent via the telephone. FNS proposed to add provisions to make telephonic signatures for applications and periodic report forms an option under the regulations, incorporating the requirements specified in the FCEA. FNS also proposed to permit gestured signatures as a State option. Because the telephonic signature and gestured signature process would be a component of the application process, periodic reporting process, and recertification process, it is estimated that the State agency will incur an upfront cost burden to implement the system and train staff.

**State agency burden:** Based on the assumption that each fiscal year, three States will work towards incorporating the necessary system, procedure, and personnel changes needed to support the requirements for electronic signatures and gestured signatures, FNS estimated an upfront cost burden of 120 hours per State agency. **Therefore for a State agency to incorporate telephone signatures and gestured signatures would result in a 120 hour burden, totaling 360 hours in upfront burden for three State agencies (120 hours x 3 State agencies = 360 hours).**

## 2. Interview

*Telephone Interviews* - Sections 273.2(e)(1) and (2), and 273.14(b)(3) detail the interview requirements in the certification process, the conditions under which a face-to-face interview can be waived, and the State agency's requirements during this process. Under the current regulations, State agencies can permit a telephone interview in lieu of a face-to-face interview for certain

households. These households include elderly/disabled with no earned income, households residing on reservations, and others for whom the face-to-face interview constitutes a hardship as defined by the State agency. The regulations require that State agencies must document in the household’s case file the hardship that exempts it from a face-to-face interview. FNS proposed to allow States to expand the use of telephone interviews significantly beyond the current regulatory limits for certain households and to drop the requirement for case file documentation. Currently, this is available to States only through waiver authority. The expansion of telephone interviews statewide as a State option and the elimination of the documentation step in the application process significantly reduce the amount of time associated with the interview process, resulting in a burden reduction.

**State agency burden:** Forty State agencies, at the time of the proposed rule, utilized the waiver authority to conduct telephone interviews without documenting the case file. Considering the impact the telephone interview option has on the workflow of the application process, FNS estimates that a caseworker can conduct a household interview in just under 30 minutes or 0.49999054 hours. **This yields a total burden of 4,229,815.44 for 40 State agencies (8,459,790.94 initial application interviews in 40 State agencies x .49999054 hours = 4,229,815.44 hours) for a net reduction of 80 hours annually.**

### 3. Verification

Based on input received from FNS regional offices on initial application verification times, we estimated that when verified, the following verification step will take 3 minutes or .0501 hours. **The burden for these verification steps remains unchanged.** The table below summarizes the verification burden.

Activity	No. State Agencies	Annual Reports or Records Filed	Total Annual Responses	No. Burden Hrs per Response	Estimated Total Burden
Income (all initial applications)	53	211,494.77	11,209,223.00	0.0501	561,582.07
Identity (all initial applications)	53	211,494.77	11,209,223.00	0.0501	561,582.07
Alien Eligibility	53	211,494.77	11,209,223.00	0.0501	561,582.07
Social Security Number (all initial applications)	53	211,494.77	11,209,223.00	0.0501	561,582.07
*Medical expenses (if	53	13,132.08	696,000.24	0.0501	34,869.61

claimed and to receive income deduction)					
Residency (all initial applications)	53	211,494.77	11,209,223.00	0.0501	561,582.07
*Utility Expenses (if the State agency does not utilize a standard utility allowance and the applicant wishes to claim expenses)	53	244,509.4340	12,959,000.00	0.0501	649,245.90
*Hours Worked (Able-bodied Adults w/out Dependents)	53	69,890.42	3,704,192.00	0.0501	185,580.02
*Legal obligation to pay child support and actual child support payments	53	6,867.92	364,000.00	0.0501	18,236.40
*Disability	53	68,547.17	3,633,000.01	0.0501	182,013.30
Household composition (all initial applications)	53	211,494.77	11,209,223.00	0.0501	561,582.07
*Questionable Information	53	11,035	584,872.00	0.0501	29,302.09

\*Based on household participation data from Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households FY 2014 (January 2015) and input from FNS Regional Offices

**This rule proposed the following revisions to verification:**

*Combat-related Pay* - Section 273.9(c) details the types of income the State agency should exclude from the household income when determining eligibility for SNAP. The Act stipulated that combat-related pay be excluded as income. Combat-related pay is a special compensation to United States Armed Services members that is received as a result of the member’s deployment or service in a designated combat zone. The exclusion includes any special pay received pursuant to 37 United States Code, Chapter 5 and any other payment that is authorized by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture.

State agency burden: State agencies have excluded combat-related pay from consideration as income for the purposes of determining eligibility since the enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 (P.L. 108-447). **Because State agencies have been in the practice of excluding combat-related pay, it is assumed that this type of pay is accounted for under the verification process, therefore no burden is estimated.**

*Elimination of Dependent Care Caps* - Sections 273.9(d)(4) and 273.10(e)(1)(i)(E) have been

revised to remove the caps of \$175 to \$200 for the care of children or other dependents as mandated by Section 4013 of the FCEA. Since October 1, 2008 when this change became statutorily effective, working households with dependent care expenses have been allowed to deduct the entire amount of their monthly dependent care expenses from their income when determining benefits. This deduction is available to SNAP household members if they work, perform job seeking activities, attend required employment and training activities, or attend college or training in order to get a job.

**State agency burden:** A burden of 8 hours per State agency was estimated to develop procedures and modify manuals to include the new dependent care requirements. **This resulted in a one-time total burden of 424 hours for all 53 State agencies (8 hours x 53 State agencies = 424 burden hours).**

Additionally, FNS estimates a State agency burden of 5 minutes or .0835 hours at the initial interview per household and 2 minutes or .0334 hours at recertification per household. Approximately 4.5 percent of 11,209,223 new households and 14,619,642 existing households receive dependent care. Based on this information, FNS estimates a combined burden of 63,964.05 hours (504,415 newly certified households with dependent care × .0833 hours = 42,034.59 burden hours; 657,883.89 existing households with dependent care × .0333 hours = 21,929.46 burden hours) to implement the requirements under the new dependent care provision. **This results in an increase in burden of 63,964.05.**

*Increasing the Minimum Benefit for Small Households—§ 273.10(e)(2)(ii)(C)*

FNS proposes to amend § 273.10(e)(2)(ii)(C) to include the FCEA increase in the minimum benefit amount for one and two-person households from \$10 to 8 percent of the maximum allotment. State agencies would have a minimum burden associated with implementing this change in the benefit amount, since it will now be adjusted annually rather than being a fixed amount.

**State agency burden:** FNS estimates a burden of 30 minutes per State agency, totaling 27 burden hours (30 minutes or .5 hr × 53 State agencies = 26.5 burden hours) for State agencies to incorporate this provision. **This results in an increase in burden of 27 burden hours.**

*Indexing Asset Limits* - Section 273.8(b) states that SNAP households without elderly or disabled members have a limit of up to \$2000 in resources and households with elderly or disabled members have a limit of up to \$3000 in resources. The Act specified that effective October 1, 2008, the asset limits are to be indexed to inflation to keep pace with rising costs of goods and services. Changes under this rulemaking will require State agencies to make changes to their system, application forms, outreach material and their State Plan of Operations. In the proposed rule, FNS estimated a burden of 15 hours for State agencies to address the changes due to this provision.

**State agency burden:** FNS estimated a burden of 1 minute per State agency submission to incorporate the changes under this provision. This results in a burden of 15 hours (53 State agencies x 17 annual responses x 1 minute = 15 burden hours). **This results in an increase in burden of 15 burden hours.**

*Exclusion of Retirement Accounts and Education Accounts* - Section 273.8(e) of the SNAP regulations provides a list of the type of resources a household can exclude from income. Section 4014 of the FCEA excluded certain funds that are in tax-preferred retirement accounts from countable resources when determining eligibility for SNAP. FNS proposed to amend the regulations at section 273.8(e)(2)(i) and 273.8(e)(20) to codify these provisions. The proposed rule identified funds that are exempt under this provision. The following funds, which fall under the following sections of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (Title 26 of the United States Code) (IRC): 401(a), 403(a), 403(b), 408, 408A plans, 457(b), 501(c)(18), must be excluded as countable resources.

In addition, the FCEA also excluded all tax-preferred education savings accounts from resources. FNS proposed to codify the statutory requirement to exclude educational funds described in section 529 or section 530 of the IRC. It has been proposed to amend program regulations by adding a new paragraph (20) at section 273.8(e).

Under this provision, a State agency will no longer need to consider retirement accounts and education savings accounts as resources. This will reduce the State's resource verification burden. In the proposed rule, FNS estimated a 1 minute burden reduction x the number of newly certified and exiting households for a total proposed burden reduction of 122,611 hours for the exclusion of retirement accounts and a proposed burden reduction of 7.60 hours for education accounts. However, the burden for verification of retirement and education accounts was not previously included in the information collection burden and thus this reduction, while true in practice, is a

mathematical error for which we cannot account in the information collection. In the proposed rule, FNS also estimated a small increase in burden for an increased number of applications due to implementing this provision. The adjustments to the total burden for applications has been accounted for elsewhere in this information collection (see initial and recertification burden) and thus have also been removed from this provision as it would result in duplicate burden.

**State agency burden: There is no burden change associated with this rulemaking.**

*Student Work Hours* - Section 273.5(b)(5) identifies the work requirement under which a student may receive benefits. FNS proposed to amend section 273.5(b)(5) to give States the option to determine compliance of the 20-hour minimum requirement by allowing States to average student work hours over a month using an 80-hour monthly minimum. Currently, this is available only as a waiver that the State agency must request.

Verification of student work hours is not mandatory under the regulations at 273.2(f)(1). However, State agencies determine compliance with the minimum work hours to determine program eligibility. The proposed rule would grant States the additional administrative flexibility and reduce the burden associated with determining compliance with the minimum weekly hours worked standard without having to request a waiver. Households must continue to provide documentation to support the number of hours worked.

**State agency burden:** The 2011 proposed rule estimated a 5 minute reduction in time for the State agency's process to determine student work hours. However, a more recent assessment of the burden time for this activity determined the total burden time to be 3 minutes, which results in no change in to the current burden estimate. **No burden reduction is estimated as a result of rulemaking.**

*Transitional Benefits Alternative (TBA)* – Sections 272.2(d)(1)(H) and subpart H in part 273 of the SNAP regulations details the policy guidelines associated with transitional benefits offered to households when they leave certain public assistance programs. Section 4106 of the FCEA allows State agencies the option to provide transitional SNAP benefits to households with children that cease to receive cash assistance under a State-funded cash assistance program.

**State agency burden:** Current regulations require that States that offer transitional benefits



provide households leaving cash assistance programs with a TN. If no transitional benefit is offered, State agencies would provide households with a NOE prior to the end of the certification period or a Notice of Adverse Action. Since State agencies would automatically generate a notice, regardless of the type of notice, FNS does not estimate an additional burden for State agencies. **There is no burden change associated with this rulemaking.**

### **Application for SNAP Recertification**

Section 273.10(f) of the regulations requires that all households participating in SNAP must be assigned certification periods of a definite length. According to section 273.14(b), to continue participating in SNAP, ongoing households must apply for recertification prior to the end of their current certification periods. The recertification form and process is similar to the initial application and is completed and used in the same manner. However, verification requirements are reduced and States are permitted under Federal regulations to use a simplified version of the initial application.

#### **1. Recertification**

*Recertification form* - FNS estimates that a caseworker can review a household recertification application in 15 minutes or 0.2500 hours. **This yields a total burden of 3,654,910.50 for all 53 State agencies (\*14,619,642 recertification applications x .2500 hours = 3,654,910.50 hours).** (\*FY 2014 National Data Bank – Total Recertification Applications Report)

**State agency burden:** There is no change in burden associated with this rulemaking.

#### **2. Interview**

*Telephone Interviews* - Sections 273.2(e)(1) and (2), and 273.14(b)(3) detail the interview requirements in the certification process, the conditions under which a face-to-face interview can be waived, and the State agency's requirements during this process. The proposed rule estimated a 2 hour burden reduction for State agencies due to no longer requiring the approval of waivers for telephonic interview. The 2 hour burden reduction associated with rulemaking is reflected under initial applications. 14,619,642

**State agency burden:** FNS estimates that a caseworker can review a household recertification application in 15 minutes or 0.2500 hours. **There is no change in burden as a result of rulemaking.**

### 3. Verification

Based on input received from FNS regional offices on recertification verification times, we estimated that when verified, each item will take 6 minutes or .1002 hours.

**State agency burden: The burden for these verification steps remains unchanged.** The table below summarizes the verification burden.

Activity	No. State Agencies	Annual Reports or Records Filed	Total Annual Responses	No. Burden Hrs per Response	Estimated Total Burden
Income (if source changed or amount changed by more than \$50)	53	137,921.15	7,309,821.00	0.1002	732,444.06
Social Security Number (if Social Security number is new)	53	2,758.42	146,196.42	0.1002	14,648.88
Medical expenses (unreported and reoccurring expenses that have changed by more than \$25)	53	5,516.85	292,392.84	0.1002	29,297.76
Legal obligation to pay child support (if there were changes in obligation to pay)	53	13,792.12	730,982.10	0.1002	73,244.41
Utility expenses (if has changed by more than \$25)	53	13,792.12	730,982.10	0.1002	73,244.41
Hours worked (Able-bodied Adults w/out Dependents)	53	137,921.15	7,309,821.00	0.1002	732,444.06
Other information which has changed may be verified (this includes changes in ID, immigration status, residency, disability, HH composition)	53	137,921.15	7,309,821.00	0.1002	732,444.06
Combat related pay	0	0	0	0	0

### 4. Periodic Reports

*Monthly Report* - Under section 273.21, households subject to monthly reporting are required to submit reports of their circumstances on a monthly basis. The report requests the information necessary to determine eligibility and benefits of affected households. Households subject to monthly reporting are assigned certification periods of 12 months and submit 11 monthly reports a year plus the application for recertification.

**State agency burden:** FNS estimates that a caseworker can review a monthly report in 7 minutes or .1169 hours. **This yields a total burden of 85,204.67 hours for the 2 State agencies that have monthly reporting (\*728,868 reports x .1169 hours = 85,204.67 hours).**

**There is no change to the burden estimate.**

*Quarterly Report* - Under section 273.12 (a)(4), State agencies may require households to report changes on a quarterly basis. Since households are not required to submit a separate quarterly report when they submit an application for recertification, the quarterly report is submitted 3 times a year.

**State agency burden:** FNS estimates that a caseworker can review a quarterly report in 8 minutes or 0.1336 hours. **This yields a total burden of 231,573.69 for 1 State agency (\*1,733,336 reports x .1336 hours = 231,573.69 hours).**

**There is no change to the burden estimate.**

*Simplified or Periodic Report* - Sections 273.12(d)(6)(iii)(A) and (d)(6)(iii)(B). The simplified reporting system, a type of periodic reporting system, is an option available to State agencies that requires minimal household reporting in comparison to other reporting systems. The Food, Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (FSRIA) (P.L. 107-171) exempted homeless, migrant and seasonal farm workers, and elderly or disabled adults without earnings from participating in simplified reporting. The FCEA removed the exemption and expanded simplified reporting to these households. However, the Act minimized the frequency in which State agencies may require these households to file a periodic report. Homeless and migrant or seasonal farm worker households, like most households on simplified reporting, may be required to file a report every 4 to 6 months if they are certified for longer than 6 months. FNS assumed that the changes through this option will be more apparent in households where all adult members are elderly or disabled with no earned income. For State agencies that opt for this provision, elderly or disabled households, who may be

certified for 24 months, will be required to report changes only once a year. This is the group FNS assumed would see the largest burden impact. This change was made to the regulations in the 2002 FSRIA final rule, published January 29, 2010 (75 FR 4912), in order to be consistent with current law.

**State agency burden:** Based upon the changes to rulemaking described above and changes in participation, FNS estimates that a State agency spends 11 minutes or .1837 hours processing each report. **This results in a burden of 3,920,627.51 hours (21,342,555.85 reports x 11 minutes or .1837 hours = 1,283,231.39 burden hours). This increases the burden by 457,596.70 due to rulemaking.**

*Change Reports* - Under section 273.12(a)(1), households not subject to one of the periodic reporting systems (monthly, quarterly reporting or simplified reporting) are assigned to a reporting system commonly referred to as change or incident reporting. Households assigned to change reporting must report most changes in household circumstances within 10 days from the date that the change becomes known to the household.

State agency burden: FNS estimates that a caseworker can review a change report in 11 minutes or .1837 hours. This yields a total burden of 594,353 for 24 State agencies (3,235,456 reports x .1837 hours = 594,353 hours). **There is no change in burden due to rulemaking.**

## Notices

### 1. Notice of Eligibility or Denial

According to section 273.10(g)(1)(i) and (ii), this notice is used by State agencies to advise households of the disposition of their application for initial certification or recertification. If the household is denied, the notice contains the reason(s) for the denial and advises the household of its right to appeal.

**State agency burden:** FNS estimates a burden of 2 minutes or .0334 hours to generate this notice. **This yields a total burden of 1,260,831 for 53 State agencies. There is no change in burden due to rulemaking.**

### 2. Notice of Missing or Incomplete Report

Sections 273.12(a)(4)(iii) and 273.12(a)(5)(iii)(D) relate to notice of missing or incomplete reports. This notice is used by State agencies to advise ongoing households when they have failed to submit the required monthly, quarterly or semiannual report altogether or, if the household submitted the report, that some of the information required to be included in such reports was not provided.

**State agency burden:** FNS estimates a burden of 2 minutes or .0334 hours to generate this notice. **This yields a total burden of 2,035.46 for 53 State agencies (60,942 notices x .0334 hours = 2,035.46 hours). There is no change in burden due to rulemaking.**

### **3. Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI)**

Sections 273.2(h)(1)(i)(D) and 273.14(b)(3)(iii) of the regulations apply to the NOMI. The NOMI is issued by State agencies to households that fail to appear for their scheduled initial or recertification interview, or in the case of households subject to telephone interviews, fail to contact the State agency or receive telephone calls initiated by the local office. The household may respond to the notice by requesting that the interview be rescheduled.

**State agency burden:** FNS estimates a burden of 1 minute or .0167 hours to generate this notice. **This yields a total burden of 39,399.49 for 53 State agencies (2,359,251 notices x .0167 hours = 39,399.49 hours). There is no change in burden due to rulemaking.**

### **4. Notice of Expiration (NOE)**

Per the regulations in section 273.14(b)(1), State agencies are required to mail a NOE to currently participating households at least 30 days prior to the expiration of their current certification period. The NOE is usually accompanied by the application for recertification. The NOE advises the household that its certification period is expiring and that to continue receiving assistance the household must file its application for recertification in a timely manner.

**State agency burden:** FNS estimates a burden of 2 minutes or .0334 hours to generate this notice. **This yields a total burden of 737,706.17 for 53 State agencies (22,087,011 total participating households x .0334 hours = 737,706.17 hours). There is no change in burden due to rulemaking.**

### **5. Notice of Adverse Action (NOAA)**

According to section 273.13(a), the NOAA is issued by State agencies to participating households whose benefits will be reduced or terminated as the result of a change in household circumstances.

**State agency burden:** FNS estimates a burden of 2 minutes or .0334 hours to generate this notice. **This yields a total burden of 55,278.44 for 53 State agencies (1,655,043 notices x .0334 hours = 55,278.44 hours). There is no change in burden due to rulemaking.**

## **6. Adequate Notice**

Sections 273.12(a)(4)(v) and 273.13(b) of the regulations apply to adequate notices. An adequate notice is sent to households by the State agency when the household's benefits are reduced or terminated based on information reported by the household itself. Adequate notices can also be used when mass changes occur. Mass changes are certain changes initiated by the State or Federal government that may affect the entire caseload or significant portions of the caseload.

**State agency burden:** FNS estimates a burden of 2 minutes or .0334 hours to generate this notice. **This yields a total burden of 12,212.88 for 53 State agencies (365,655 notices x .0334 hours = 12,212.88 hours). There is no change in burden due to rulemaking.**

## **7. Request for Contact (RFC)**

According to section 273.12(c)(3)(i), the RFC notice is used to contact the household when the State agency receives information regarding a potential change in a household's eligibility or benefits and such information is not sufficient for the State agency to determine exactly how the household's status would be affected.

**State agency burden:** FNS estimates a burden of 2 minutes or .0334 hours to generate this notice. **This yields a total burden of 55,278.44 for 53 State agencies (1,655,043 notices x .0334 hours = 55,278.44 hours). There is no change in burden due to rulemaking.**

## **8. Transitional Benefits Notice (TN)**

Per section 273.29, State agencies that opt to provide transitional benefits must provide eligible families a TN that includes detailed and specific information about the household's transitional benefits and rights. Because the TN and the NOE are very similar, the reporting burden associated with the TN is included in the reporting burden for the NOE.

**State Agency burden:** No burden is estimated under this notice activity. **There is no change in burden due to rulemaking.**

#### RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS

Section 11(a) of the Food and Nutrition Act mandates that State agencies keep records as may be necessary to ascertain whether the program is being conducted in compliance with the Act and the regulations. States are required under the Act to maintain such records for a period of 3 years from date of origin. Section 11(n) of the Act also requires that States check for duplicate participation. This rule does not affect the current recordkeeping burden of 4,009,836 under OMB No. 0584-0064.

1. **Case Records** - State agencies must keep records as may be necessary to ascertain whether the program is being conducted in compliance with the Act and the regulations. The Act and Section 272.1(f) of the regulations require States to maintain such records for a period of 3 years from date of origin. States are allowed to store records using automated retrieval systems and other features that do not rely exclusively on the collection and retention of paper records. **There is no burden change for this activity.**
2. **Duplicate Participation System** - Section 272.4(e) of the regulations require State agencies to search their files for duplicates in order to prevent individuals from receiving benefits in more than one household and to prevent households from receiving benefits in more than one jurisdiction within the State. The Act further requires State agencies to establish a system that will prevent an individual from receiving both food coupons and cash benefits in lieu of coupons in an SSI cash-out State or under a cash-out demonstration project. **There is no burden change for this activity.**

HOUSEHOLD REPORTING BURDEN DUE TO RULEMAKING

**Application to Participate in SNAP**

Section 273.2 of the SNAP regulations requires that each applicant household complete and file an application, either in paper or electronic form. The application contains detailed information about each household member and their income, employment, shelter expenses, medical expenses (if applicable) and resources that are necessary to determine if the applicant household is entitled to assistance. The application process also includes the verification of the information provided on the application and an interview where the household is asked a series of questions and more information is obtained. The burdens associated with the activities of the application process are included below

**SNAP Application**

**1. Application form**

*Initial Application form* - FNS estimates that a household can complete an application in 19 minutes or .3173 hours. **This yields a total burden of 6,186,000.52 hours (\*11,209,223 applications x .3173 hours = 6,186,000.52 hours).** (\*FY 2014 National Data Bank – SNAP Total Initial Applications)

**Household burden:** There is no change in burden associated with this rulemaking.

*Telephonic Signatures* - Sections 273.2(b) & (c), 273.12(c) and (d), 273.14(b), and 273.21(h) detail the application content and application process for SNAP applicants and existing households. The FCEA amended the Act to allow State agencies the option to accept telephonic signatures or recorded verbal assent on applications and periodic reports. The proposed rule would add telephonic signatures and gestured signatures as an optional form of signature for applications at initial certification and recertification, and periodic report forms (monthly, quarterly, and simplified). Since households are currently required to sign these documents, no additional burden is estimated for households.



Household burden: While this change will improve access for households, the application process remains the same. **Therefore, no additional burden is estimated for households.**

## 2. Interview

This rule proposed to allow State agencies to significantly expand the use of telephone interviews as an option during certification and recertification. Currently, expanded use of telephone interviews to include the State's entire caseload is only available through waiver authority. The reporting burden for this option is discussed below.

*Telephone Interview* - Section 273.2(e)(1) and (2), and 273.14(b)(3) detail the interview requirements in the certification process, the conditions under which a household's face-to-face interview can be waived, and the State agency's requirements during this process. Prior to the use of the waiver authority, most households would have to visit the local office to meet their eligibility worker and have a face-to-face interview. Current regulatory exemptions from the face-to-face waiver include elderly/disabled applicants with no earned income, other applicants with no earned income, applicants residing on Indian reservations, and applicants for whom an in-office interview would pose a hardship, as determined by the State agency. Face-to-face interviews in the office are associated with travel time to and from the local office, long wait times, and lost wages for those who have to take time off from work to attend the interview. Based on sources identified at the end of this document, FNS estimates that each household will save 2 hours in travel time for each required interview (initial and recertification) as a result of this proposed provision.

We have estimated that 80 percent of all applicants will have a telephone interview instead of an in-office interview. Due to a change in participation levels, the burden reduction increased from the proposed rule estimate of 20,862,818 hours to 41,326,184.00 hours (-17,934,756.80 hours for initial application households + -23,391,427.20 hours for recertification households = -41,326,184.00 reduced hours).

**Household burden**: The travel time burden for initial applications is calculated using 20% of initial applications (11,209,223 \* 20% = 2,241,845) x 2 hours travel time which results in a total burden of 4,483,689. **This is a net reduction of -17,934,756.80 for initial applicants due to rulemaking.** (The calculation of recertification burden is explained below.)

## 3. Verification

Based on input received from FNS regional offices on verification times during the initial application process, we estimated that when verified, each item will take 4 minutes or .0668 hours. **The burden for these verification steps remains unchanged.** The table below summarizes the verification burden.

Activity	Est. Number of Respondents	Annual Reports or Records Filed	Total Annual Responses	No. Burden Hrs per Response	Estimated Total Burden
Income (all initial applications)	11,209,223	1.00	11,209,223.00	0.0668	748,776.10
Identity (all initial applications)	11,209,223	1.00	11,209,223.00	0.0668	748,776.10
Alien Eligibility	11,209,223	1.00	11,209,223.00	0.0668	748,776.10
Social Security Number (all initial applications)	11,209,223	1.00	11,209,223.00	0.0668	748,776.10
*Medical expenses (if claimed and to receive income deduction)	696,000	1.00	696,000.00	0.0668	46,492.80
Residency (all initial applications)	11,209,223	1.00	11,209,223.00	0.0668	748,776.10
*Utility Expenses (if the State agency does not utilize a standard utility allowance and the applicant wishes to claim expenses)	12,959,000	1.00	12,959,000.00	0.0668	865,661.20
*Hours Worked (Able-bodied Adults w/out Dependents)	3,704,192	1.00	3,704,192.00	0.0668	247,440.03
*Legal obligation to pay child support and actual child support payments	364,000	1.00	364,000.00	0.0668	24,315.20
*Disability	3,633,000	1.00	3,633,000.00	0.0668	242,684.40
Household com-	11,209,223	1.00	11,209,223.00	0.0668	748,776.10

position (all initial applications)					
*Questionable Information	584,872	1.00	584,872.00	0.0668	39,069.45
*Student work hours (Not mandatory verification, but to meet exemption per 273.5(b)(5), household must provide supporting documentation on hours worked)	121,688	1.00	121,688	0.0668	8,128.76
Total	11,209,223	7.97	89,318,090.00	0.0668	5,966,448.4 1

\*Based on household participation data from Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households FY 2010 (September 2011) and input from FNS Regional Offices

This rule proposed the following revisions to verification:

*Student Work hours* - This rule also proposed an option to allow State agencies to average student work hours over a month, using an 80-hour monthly minimum. Section 273.5(b)(5) indicates that for a student to be eligible for SNAP, he or she must be employed for a minimum of 20 hours per week and be paid for the job performed. FNS proposed to amend section 273.5(b)(5) to give States the option to determine compliance with the 20-hour minimum work requirement by averaging the number of student hours worked over a month using 80-hour monthly minimum. Although verification of student work hours is not mandatory under the regulations at 273.2(f)(1), student households must continue to provide documentation to support the number of hours worked.

**Household burden: No additional burden is estimated for households under this provision.**

*Combat-related Pay* - Section 273.9(c) identifies the income exclusions permitted under the Act that a household may be entitled to when undergoing the application process for SNAP. Section 4101 of the FCEA added an exclusion of combat-related pay from the household's income. To qualify for the exclusion, the household must receive the pay as a result of the service member being deployed to or service in a combat zone and must not have been received prior to deployment.

Since State agencies have excluded combat-related pay from consideration as income since the enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 (P.L. 108-447), it is assumed that this income is accounted for under the verification process.

**Household burden: No burden assumed.**

*Exclusion of Retirement Accounts and Education Accounts* - Section 273.8(e) addresses the resources that are allowed to be excluded under program regulations. FNS proposed at section 273.8(e)(2)(i) and 273.8(e)(20) that all funds in tax-preferred retirement accounts and education savings accounts be excluded from countable resources for the purposes of SNAP.

Applicant households that are not categorically eligible (based on eligibility for other means-tested public assistance programs), would be the households most impacted by this change. Categorically-eligible applicants are not subject to the income and asset standard tests, and thus are not affected by the exclusion of retirement and educational savings accounts from the asset tests.

**Household burden:** Households will not need to provide supporting documents for the tax-preferred accounts unless questioned by the State agency. In the proposed rule, FNS estimated burden reductions for newly certified and existing households totaling -122,669 hours (-122,611 + -7.6 hours). However, as this burden was not previously captured in the information collection, the burden reduction cannot be applied. **There is, therefore, no change in burden due to rule-making.**

*Elimination of Dependent Care Caps* - Households may have to provide additional verification of costs greater than \$175 to \$200 and for additional types of expenses associated with dependent care (i.e., transportation and activity fees).

**State agency burden:** FNS estimates that newly certified households will incur an additional burden of 5 minutes or .0835 hours. The proposed rule estimated an additional 5 minutes of burden for approximately 4.5% of applicants. The total burden has increased from the proposed rule due to changes in participation. FNS estimates a burden of (5 minutes or .0835 hours × 4.5% of 11,209,223 new applicants = 42,118.66 burden hours) to obtain additional verification information and a burden of 2 minutes or .0334 hours (2 minutes or .0334 hours × 4.5% of 14,619,642 recertification applicants = 21,973.32 burden hours) for existing households. **The combination of**

**newly certified and existing households results in 64,091.98 burden hours.**

### **Application for SNAP Recertification**

Section 273.10(f) of the regulations requires that all households participating in SNAP must be assigned certification periods of a definite length. Under section 273.14(b), to continue participating in SNAP, ongoing households must apply for recertification prior to the end of their current certification periods. The recertification form and process is similar to the initial application and is completed and used in the same manner.

#### **1. Recertification**

##### **Recertification form**

It has been estimated that a household can complete the recertification application in 15 minutes or 0.2500 hours.

**Household burden: This yields a total burden of 3,654,910.50 (\*14,619,642 recertification applications x .2500 hours = 3,654,910.50 hours). There is no change in burden as a result of rulemaking.**

#### **2. Interview**

*Telephone Interviews* - Sections 273.2(e)(1) and (2), and 273.14(b)(3) detail the interview requirements in the certification process, the conditions under which a face-to-face interview can be waived, and the State agency's requirements during this process. (See additional detail in Household Burden, initial application interview for changes proposed in the rule.)

**Household burden: Based on the data from the Food Stamp Program Access Study and input from FNS Regional offices, FNS estimated a 2-hour reduction in burden associated with travel for households that have telephone interviews. FNS estimates that 80% of in-person interviews will be waived resulting in 20% of recertification interviews taking place in person. This yields a burden of 5,847,856.80 hours (14,619,642 \* 20% x 2 hours). The result is a reduction in burden time of -23,391,427.20 hours for applicant households.**

#### **3. Verification**

Based on input received from FNS regional offices on verification times during the recertification process, we estimated that when verified, each item will take 6 minutes or .1002 hours. **The burden for these verification steps remains unchanged.** The table below summarizes the verification burden.

Activity	Est. Number of Respondents	Annual Reports or Records Filed	Total Annual Responses	No. Burden Hrs per Response	Estimated Total Burden
Income (if source changed or amount changed by more than \$50)	7,309,821	1	7,309,821.00	0.1002	732,444.06
Social Security Number (if Social Security number is new)	146,196	1	146,196.42	0.1002	14,648.88
Medical expenses (unreported and reoccurring expenses that have changed by more than \$25)	292,393	1	292,392.84	0.1002	29,297.76
Legal obligation to pay child support (if there were changes in obligation to pay)	730,982	1	730,982.10	0.1002	73,244.41
Utility expenses (if has changed by more than \$25)	730,982	1	730,982.10	0.1002	73,244.41
Hours worked (Able-bodied Adults w/out Dependents)	7,309,821	1	7,309,821.00	0.1002	732,444.06
Other information which has changed may be verified (this includes changes in ID, immigration status, residency, disability, HH composition)	7,309,821	1	7,309,821.00	0.1002	732,444.06

#### 4. Periodic Reports

*Monthly Report* - Under section 273.21, households subject to monthly reporting are required to submit reports of their circumstances on a monthly basis. The report requests the information necessary to determine eligibility and benefits of affected households. Households subject to

monthly reporting are assigned certification periods of 12 months and submit 11 monthly reports a year plus the application for recertification.

**Household burden:** FNS estimates that a household can review and change information on a monthly report in 7 minutes or .1169 hours. This yields a total burden of 937,251.36 hours for 2 States with monthly reporting (\*8,017,548 reports x .1169 hours = 937,251.36 hours). (\*9<sup>th</sup> Edition of State Options Report; FY 2012 National Data Bank – Participating Households Report)

**There is no change to the burden estimate.**

*Quarterly Report* - Under section 273.12 (a)(4), State agencies may require households to report changes on a quarterly basis. Since households are not required to submit a separate quarterly report when they submit an application for recertification, the quarterly report is submitted 3 times a year.\_

**Household burden:** FNS estimates that a household can review and change information on a quarterly report in 8 minutes or 0.1336 hours. **This yields a total burden of 694,721 hours for 1 State with quarterly reporting (\*5,200,008 reports x .1336 hours = 694,721 hours).**

**There is no change to the burden estimate.**

*Simplified Report or Periodic Report* - Section 273.12(d)(6)(iii)(A) and (d)(6)(iii)(B). The Act expanded the simplified reporting system to include elderly or disabled persons, the homeless, and migrant and seasonal farm workers. (See the detailed explanation of rule changes under State Agency reporting for Simplified Reports.)

**Household burden:** FNS estimated that it takes a household 10 minutes or .167 hours to complete a simplified periodic report. Based upon the changes to rulemaking described above and changes in participation, FNS estimates that a household spends 10 minutes or .167 hours processing each

report. **This results in a burden of 3,356,208.35 hours (20,097,056.00 reports x 10 minutes or .167 hours = 3,356,208.35 burden hours). This increases the burden by 207,998.50 due to rulemaking.**

*Change Report Form* - Under section 273.12(a)(1), households not subject to monthly, quarterly reporting or simplified reporting must report most changes in household circumstances within 10 days from the date that the change becomes known to the household.

**Household burden:** FNS estimates that a household can review and change information on a change report in 10 minutes or .167 hours. **This yields a total burden of 540,321 hours (\*3,235,456 reports x .167 hours = 540,321 hours). There is no change to the burden estimate.**

## 5. Notices

*Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI)* - Sections 273.2(h)(1)(i)(D) and 273.14(b)(3)(iii) of the regulations apply to the NOMI. The NOMI is issued by State agencies to households that fail to appear for their scheduled initial or recertification interview, or in the case of households subject to telephone interviews, fail to contact the State agency or receive telephone calls initiated by the local office. The household may respond to the notice by requesting that the interview be rescheduled.

**Household burden:** FNS estimates a burden of 1 minute or .0167 hours for a household to read this notice. This yields a total burden of 35,460 hours (2,123,326 notices x .0167 hours = 35,460 hours). There is no change to the burden estimate.



*Notice of Adverse Action (NOAA)* - According to section 273.13(a), the NOAA is issued by State agencies to participating households whose benefits will be reduced or terminated as the result of a change in household circumstances.

**Household burden:** FNS estimates a burden of 1 minute or .0167 hours for a household to read this notice. This yields a total burden of 1,382 hours (82,753 notices x .0167 hours = 1,382 hours).

**There is no change to the burden estimate.**

*Adequate Notice* - Sections 273.12(a)(4)(v) and 273.13(b) of the regulations apply to adequate notices. An adequate notice is sent to households by the State agency when the household's benefits are reduced or terminated based on information reported by the household itself. Adequate notices can also be used when mass changes occur. Mass changes are certain changes initiated by the State or Federal government that may affect the entire caseload or significant portions of the caseload.

**Household burden:** FNS estimates a burden of 1 minute or .0167 hours for a household to read this notice. This yields a total burden of 244 hours (14,626 notices x .0167 hours = 244 hours). **There is no change to the burden estimate.**

*Request for Contact (RFC)* - According to section 273.12(c)(3)(i), the RFC notice is used to contact the household when the State agency receives information regarding a potential change in a household's eligibility or benefits and such information is not sufficient for the State agency to determine exactly how the household's status would be affected.

**Household burden:** FNS estimates a burden of 2 minutes or .0334 hours for a household to read this notice. This yields a total burden of 44,223 hours (1,324,034 notices x .0334 hours = 44,223 hours). **There is no change to the burden estimate.**

## Sources

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13. National Data Bank (NDB) – SNAP Total Initial Applications and Certification Applications (FY 2014)