



United States Department of Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

MAR 20 2014

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Center Drive
Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

SUBJECT: Waiver Process Update

TO: Regional Directors
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
All Regions

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is issuing this memorandum to update current waiver procedures and revise previous guidance contained in the September 14, 2004, memo, "Revised Waiver Processing Instructions." FNS is enhancing administrative waiver procedures to streamline current processes and eliminate inconsistencies in approval requirements for similar waivers. The changes outlined in this memorandum apply to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) administrative waivers under the Program Development Division and do not apply to demonstration project waivers or waivers issued by other program areas.

The 2004 guidance provided for Regional Office approval of certain waivers. Since that time, it has become increasingly important that waiver approvals contain uniform language and approval conditions. In an effort to ensure consistency and improve the waiver process, FNS will now require that all waiver requests be submitted to the National Office for approval. We understand that this procedure is a shift in existing practice; however, we believe it is a necessary change to ensure that the National Office and Regional Offices have current and thorough knowledge of all active waivers.

The second change addressed in this memo concerns indefinite waiver approvals. In the past, FNS has permitted indefinite approvals for routine waivers that appeared to be free of quality control errors and improved program administration. FNS has determined that indefinite approvals affect our ability to properly monitor the effectiveness of these waivers and their potential impact on SNAP caseloads. By eliminating indefinite approvals, FNS can help ensure that States are able to monitor the impact of waivers consistently and ensure that waivers continue to support program administration and benefit SNAP households. Therefore, FNS will no longer offer indefinite waiver approvals. All waivers will be approved for a specified timeframe, consistent with other waivers of the same type.

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Waivers that are currently approved as indefinite will remain effective through April 30, 2015. After this date, these waivers will be considered expired. We encourage Regional Offices to work with States interested in extending these waivers to ensure requests are submitted in a reasonable timeframe, prior to the April 30, 2015, expiration date.

Thank you for your partnership and support as we work to streamline our waiver processes. Please contact Angela Kline at angela.kline@fns.usda.gov with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lizbeth Silberman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Lizbeth Silberman
Director
Program Development Division