

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Document Number AMS–NOP–17–0024; NOP–17–03]

Notice of Meeting of the National Organic Standards Board

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, (5 U.S.C. App.), the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is announcing a meeting of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) to assist the USDA in the development of standards for substances to be used in organic production and to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on any other aspects of the implementation of Organic Foods Production Act.

DATES: The Board will receive public comments via a webinar on October 24, 2017 from 1:00 p.m. to approximately 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET). If the number of commenters registered for the webinar exceeds the time allotted, a second webinar will be held on October 26 from 1:00 p.m. to approximately 4:00 p.m. ET. An in-person meeting will be held October 31–November 2, 2017, from 8:30 a.m. to approximately 6:00 p.m. ET. Oral comments will be heard on Tuesday, October 31, 2017. The deadline to submit written comments and/or sign up for oral comment at either the webinar or face-to-face meeting is 11:59 p.m. ET, October 11, 2017.

ADDRESSES: The webinar(s) are virtual and will be accessed via the internet and/or phone. Access information will be available on the AMS Web site prior to the webinar. The in-person meeting will take place at the Omni Jacksonville Hotel, 245 Water Street, Jacksonville,

FL, 32202, United States. Detailed information pertaining to the webinar and in-person meeting can be found at www.ams.usda.gov/NOSBMeetings.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Michelle Arsenault, Advisory Committee Specialist, National Organic Standards Board, USDA–AMS–NOP, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Room 2642–S, Mail Stop 0268, Washington, DC 20250–0268; Phone: (202) 720–3252; Email: nosb@ams.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The NOSB makes recommendations to the Department of Agriculture about whether substances should be allowed or prohibited in organic production and/or handling, assists in the development of standards for organic production, and advises the Secretary on other aspects of the implementation of the Organic Foods Production Act (7 U.S.C. 6501–6522). The public meeting allows the NOSB to discuss and vote on proposed recommendations to the USDA, receive updates from the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) on issues pertaining to organic agriculture, and receive comments from the organic community. The meeting is open to the public. All meeting documents, including the meeting agenda, NOSB proposals and discussion documents, instructions for submitting and viewing public comments, and instructions for requesting time for oral comments will be available on the AMS Web site at www.ams.usda.gov/NOSBMeetings. Please check the Web site periodically for updates. Meeting topics will encompass a wide range of issues, including: Substances petitioned for addition to or deletion from the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List), substances on the National List that are under sunset review, and guidance on organic policies. Participants and attendees may take photos and video at the meeting, but not in a manner that disturbs the proceedings.

Public Comments

Comments should address specific topics noted on the meeting agenda. Written comments: Written public comments will be accepted on or before 11:59 p.m. ET October 11, 2017 via <http://www.regulations.gov>: Document#AMS–NOP–17–0024. Comments submitted after this date will be provided to the NOSB, but Board

members may not have adequate time to consider those comments prior to making recommendations. The NOP strongly prefers comments to be submitted electronically, however, written comments may also be submitted (*i.e.*, postmarked) by the deadline, via mail to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Oral Comments: The NOSB is providing the public multiple dates and opportunities to provide oral comments and will accommodate as many individuals and organizations as time permits. Persons or organizations wishing to make oral comments must pre-register by 11:59 p.m. ET, October 11, 2017, and can only register for one speaking slot: Either during the webinar(s) scheduled for October 24 (and October 26 if needed) or at the in-person meeting, October 31, 2017. Due to the limited time allotted for in-person public comments, commenters are strongly encouraged to comment during the webinar(s). Instructions for registering and participating in the webinar can be found at www.ams.usda.gov/NOSBMeetings.

Meeting Accommodations: The meeting hotel is ADA Compliant, and the USDA provides reasonable accommodation to individuals with disabilities where appropriate. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this public meeting, please notify the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Determinations for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Dated: May 23, 2017.

Bruce Summers,

Acting Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 2017–10987 Filed 5–26–17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

Agency Information Collection

Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request—Assessment of States' Use of Computer Matching Protocols in SNAP

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on this NEW information collection request. This study will conduct a census of all 53 State Agencies that administer the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to catalog and describe how States are currently using or planning to use computer matching strategies to reduce recipient fraud, payment errors, and administrative burden for both applicants and eligibility workers.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before July 31, 2017.

ADDRESSES: Comments are invited on (1) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments may be sent to Danielle Deemer, Office of Policy Support, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 10.1008, Alexandria, VA 22302. Comments may also be submitted via fax to the attention of Danielle Deemer at 703-305-2952 or via email to Danielle.Deemer@fns.usda.gov. Comments will also be accepted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and follow the online instructions for submitting comments electronically.

All written comments will be open for public inspection at the office of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday) at 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 10.1008, Alexandria, VA 22302.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. All comments will be a matter of public record.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Requests for additional information or copies of the proposed information collection forms should be directed to Danielle Deemer at 703-305-2952.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Assessment of States' Use of Computer Matching Protocols in SNAP.
Form Number: Not applicable.
OMB Number: 0584-NEW.
Expiration Date: Not yet determined.
Type of Request: New information collection request.

Abstract: Almost all Federal and State programs use computer data matching to determine or verify eligibility for benefits. For SNAP, States also use computer data matching to ensure program integrity. In order to receive SNAP, households must meet financial and non-financial eligibility criteria and provide information and verification about their household circumstances. State Agencies administering SNAP use data matching to verify information submitted at the application and recertification stages of an application process and to monitor changes in benefit recipients' household circumstances. This information collection will build on existing knowledge^{1 2 3} by conducting an assessment of computer matching capabilities and activities to describe the data matches, systems, purposes, and administrative costs in each State agency and the challenges facing States and counties in effective data matching.

The primary purpose of this study is to assess the computer matching strategies used by State Agencies and to prepare an updated nationwide data-matching inventory to inform effective practices for SNAP.

This project has four research objectives:

1. To inventory all data matches that State SNAP offices currently use and plan to use in the future.
2. To identify and describe all data systems used for matching by each SNAP State agency. Such systems include automated systems, web-based systems, and/or software that integrate data from multiple sources.
3. To identify and describe the purposes for which States pursue each data match.
4. To calculate the annual and per-usage costs incurred in carrying out data

¹ Borden, William S., and Robbi L. Ruben-Urm. (2002, January). "An Assessment of Computer Matching in the Food Stamp Program." Final Report. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

² U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2014). "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Enhanced Detection Tools and Reporting Could Improve Efforts to Combat Recipient Fraud", GAO-14-641, a report to Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget, U.S. Senate.

³ U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2016). "More Information on Promising Practices Could Enhance States' Use of Data Matching for Eligibility", GAO-17-222, a report to the Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, House of Representatives.

matches, in total and, when possible, for each individual match.

To address the study objectives, three types of data will be collected and analyzed: (1) Extant documentation on State data-matching procedures; (2) extant documentation on administrative costs of data matching; and (3) survey data on all 53 State agencies collected via the National Survey of State SNAP Data-Matching Methods. The study will result in both a report for public release and a database that catalogs data matches and can be updated on an ongoing basis.

Affected Public: State, Local and Tribal government: Respondent group types identified includes: (1) 53 administrative staff at the State level and (2) 350 administrative staff at the county level.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 403 State, Local or Tribal Respondents (53 State Agencies and 350 County/Local SNAP Staff members). The National Survey of State SNAP Data-Matching Methods will be a self-administered web survey that will include all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and two territories (U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam). We anticipate a 100 percent response rate to the State portion of the survey. There are 350 County/Local SNAP Staff members and we anticipate 50 percent response rate for their portion of the survey. The estimates are delineated in Table 1.

Of the 53 State agencies, 43 administer SNAP at the State level and 10 administer SNAP at the county level. Therefore, the survey will also collect data at the county level from the 10 States that have county-administered SNAP to account for variations in processes and procedures at the county level. Due to the many and varied systems States use to match data for initial and continuing program eligibility, participation, and integrity checks, we anticipate that any particular State with county-administered SNAP could have multiple county/local respondents who can best answer system, process, technical, and cost-related questions. We estimate that about half of the 10 States with county-administered SNAP will ask county administrators to complete the sections of the survey about county-level processes and procedures.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: All administrative staff at the State level and administrative staff at the county level will be asked to participate in one survey—the National Survey of State SNAP Data-Matching Methods. The survey will be web-based and will be completed by the respondents in a secured web portal.

Estimated Number of Total Annual Responses: FNS anticipates 403 estimated total number of annual responses. We anticipate 228 responses and 175 non-responses.

Estimated Time per Response: The response times vary depending on the respondent type identified for county respondents. The time ranges from approximately 15 minutes (0.25), approximately 24 minutes (0.4008) and approximately 42 minutes (0.7014). The breakout is in Table 1.

There is a slight difference in the time required for State and county staff to

complete the survey due to several additional items on the State survey. Time per response for State SNAP staff completing the state portion of the survey only varies from approximately 20 minutes (0.334), approximately 30 minutes (0.50) and approximately 45 minutes (0.75). Time per response for counties completing the county portion of the survey ranges from approximately 15 minutes (0.25), to approximately 24 minutes (0.40), to approximately 42 minutes (0.70). The length of time per response for state SNAP staff completing the survey for states and

counties ranges from approximately 30 minutes (0.50), to approximately 60 minutes (1.00), to approximately 72 minutes (1.20).

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents and Non-Respondents: The total estimated annual burden for respondents is approximately 135.55 burden hours (117.05 hours for respondents and 17.50 for non-respondents) which includes the amount of time to read an email, review a few questions, and decide to exit the survey.

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Table 1: Estimated Total Annual Burden among Respondents and Non-Respondents

Affected Public	Respondent Description	Type of Survey Instrument	Instrument	Sample Size	RESPONDENTS					NON-RESPONDENTS					Grand Total Burden Hours
					Estimated Number of Respondents	Frequency of Responses (Annually)	Total Annual Responses	Average Hours per Response	Subtotal Estimated Annual Burden (Hours)	Estimated Number of Non-Respondents	Frequency of Response	Total Annual Responses	Average Time per Response (Hours)	Subtotal Estimated Annual Burden (Hours)	
STATE-ADMINISTERED (includes the District of Columbia)															
STATE,LOCAL AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENT	State SNAP Staff (low burden)	Web Survey	Survey	4	4	1	4	0.33	1.32	0	0	0	0	0	1.32
	State SNAP Staff (medium burden)	Web Survey	Survey	28	28	1	28	0.5	14	0	0	0	0	0	14
	State SNAP Staff (high burden)	Web Survey	Survey	11	11	1	11	0.75	8.25	0	0	0	0	0	8.25
	Subtotal State 43 SNAP Staff administer SNAP at the State level			43	43	1	43	0.55	23.57	0	0	0	0	0	23.57
	STATES ADMINISTERED SNAP AT COUNTY LEVEL														
	State SNAP Staff Completing for State and County (low burden)	Web Survey	Survey	1	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0.5
	State SNAP Staff Completing for State and County (medium burden)	Web Survey	Survey	2	2	1	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
	State SNAP Staff Completing for State and County (high burden)	Web Survey	Survey	2	2	1	2	1.2	2.4	0	0	0	0	0	2.4
	State SNAP Staff Completing for State only (low burden)	Web Survey	Survey	1	1	1	1	0.33	0.33	0	0	0	0	0	0.33
	State SNAP Staff Completing for State only (medium burden)	Web Survey	Survey	2	2	1	2	0.5	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

	State SNAP Staff Completing for State only (high burden)	Web Survey	Survey	2	2	1	2	0.75	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	1.5
	10 State Staff administer SNAP at County Level Subtotal			10	10	1	10	0.773	7.73	0	0	0	0	0	7.73
	GRAND TOTAL OF STATE BURDEN			53	53	1	53	0.590566	31.3	0	0	0	0	0	31.3
	SNAP ADMINISTERED AT COUNTY LEVEL														
	County/Local SNAP Staff (low burden)	Web Survey	Survey	70	35	1	35	0.25	8.75	35	0	35	0.1	3.5	12.25
	County/Local SNAP Staff (medium burden)	Web Survey	Survey	140	70	1	70	0.4	28	70	1	70	0.1	7	35
	County/Local SNAP Staff (high burden)	Web Survey	Survey	140	70	1	70	0.7	49	70	1	70	0.1	7	56
	Subtotal State/County/Local SNAP Staff			350	175	1	175	0.51	85.75	175	1	175	0.1	17.5	103.25
	GRAND TOTAL			403	228	1	228	0.52	117.05	175	1	175	0.1	17.5	134.55

Table 1:

*Assumes 50 percent of counties will respond to the survey.

Dated: May 18, 2017.

Jessica Shahin,

Acting Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service.

[FR Doc. 2017-11029 Filed 5-26-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-30-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

Agency Information Collection Activities, Comments Request: Evaluation of Alternatives To Improve Elderly Access

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on the proposed collection of information for the Evaluation of Alternatives to Improve Elderly Access. This is a NEW information collection. This study will provide FNS with a better understanding of the barriers to serving elderly populations in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the extent to which available policy options improve program access, whether certain program models or combinations are more effective than others, and what tradeoffs exist between program simplification/access goals and ensuring benefit adequacy.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before July 31, 2017.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be sent to Kameron Burt, Social Science Policy Analyst, Office of Policy Support, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22302. Comments may also be submitted via fax to the attention of Kameron Burt at 703-305-2576 or via email to kameron.burt@fns.usda.gov. Comments will also be accepted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>, and follow the online instructions for submitting comments electronically.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval. All comments will be a matter of public record.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To request more information on the proposed project, or to obtain a copy of the data collection plans contact Kameron Burt, Social Science Policy Analyst, Office of Policy Support, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park

Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22302; Fax: 703-305-2576; Email: kameron.burt@fns.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions that were used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Title: Evaluation of Alternatives to Improve Elderly Access.

Form Number: [If applicable, insert number].

OMB Number: Not yet assigned.

Expiration Date: Not yet determined.

Type of Request: New collection.

Abstract: The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), under authorization of SEC. 17. [7 U.S.C. 2026] of the FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008, as amended, intends to conduct the Evaluation of Alternatives to Improve Elderly Access. FNS is interested in exploring whether policy options designed to improve access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for the elderly are effective. The objective of the study is to better understand how to maximize elder (60+) access to SNAP. The evaluation will have four key components:

(1) Exploratory Study: To ground the study plan and subsequent components of the study, the project began with an initial exploratory research phase to determine what is known about elder SNAP participation levels and caseload dynamics over time, factors influencing elder participation in SNAP, and the scope, range, and effects of State interventions for elders to date. The exploratory study drew primarily on existing data, including SNAP Quality Control (QC) data from Fiscal Years 2010 to 2015 and an index of State policy options, and a literature review, supplemented by discussions with FNS Regional and National office staff and experts from advocacy groups.

(2) Study of State Interventions: The Study of State Interventions will document the design, implementation,

and operation of interventions intended to increase access to SNAP among the elderly population in the selected States. This component will provide a comprehensive understanding of the interventions, helping us to interpret the effects or lack thereof observed in the Study of Intervention Effects, draw lessons on how aspects of the interventions may be improved, and assess whether the interventions, if implemented in other locations or contexts, might yield similar outcomes. The primary source of data for this study component will be the extensive information collected during three-day site visits to each of the ten selected States.

(3) Study of elder participant perspectives: The purpose of the study is to gather direct input from elders about their awareness of SNAP, perceptions of the program, and experiences applying for and receiving SNAP benefits. Key data collection activities for this component will include: Phone screenings with elderly individuals to confirm eligibility and schedule interviews (560 individuals will be screened to result in 280 scheduled interviews); semi-structured interviews with 200 elderly eligible individuals (out of the 280 scheduled interviews) grouped into three categories (SNAP participants, non-participating applicants, and non-participants). FNS plans to contact or recruit another 115 individuals 60+ to participate in the focus group. Out of the 115 contacted, 80 will go on to participate in the actual focus group. These focus groups will be used to validate and explore key themes that emerge in the interviews. Overall, the expectation is that out of the total 675 elderly individuals contacted, 395 will not respond or choose not to take part in the study.

(4) Study of State Intervention Effects: The objective of the Study of State Intervention Effects is to assess the relative association between State interventions and key program outcomes, including elderly SNAP application trends and caseloads, and rates of churning. The focus of this analysis will be on the interventions that are specifically targeted to elderly households (in addition to the Community Partner Interview Demonstration (CPID)). The study team identified the following interventions as being of particular interest to the study because they either aim at increasing the enrollment of elderly participants or hold particular promise in this regard: Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP); Standard Medical Deduction (SMD); CPID; Combined Application