

DATE: May 1, 2019

TO: Subscribers

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION: Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, TA Directors,
Employment Coordinators, WMS Coordinators

FROM: Jeffrey Gaskell, Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Employment and Income Support Programs

SUBJECT: Treatment of 2020 Census Income for Temporary Assistance (TA),
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Home Energy
Assistance Program (HEAP)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: Temporary Assistance Bureau: (518) 474-9344
State Nutrition Assistance Program Bureau: (518) 473-1469
Home Energy Assistance Program Bureau: (518) 473-0332
Medicaid: Local District Supports Units: Upstate (518) 474-8887
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The purpose of this General Information System (GIS) message is to inform districts of program implications for Temporary Assistance (TA), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and Medicaid (MA) relating to income received from temporary employment through the United States Census Bureau (Census Bureau).

Income from temporary Census Bureau employment is defined as earnings of an individual employed to assist during the period of the 2020 Census enumeration.

The Census Bureau has begun hiring temporary employees to help conduct the 2020 Census. Positions will occur intermittently through the remainder of 2019 and 2020 based on work availability. Most positions are expected to last about four to eight weeks and have schedules of between 20 and 35 hours per week. These positions are not expected to lead to permanent Census Bureau employment.

Social Services Districts (districts) must inquire when a TA, SNAP, HEAP or MA applicant/recipient (A/R) reports Census Bureau earnings whether the employment is expected to be temporary or permanent. If the A/R is permanently employed with the Census Bureau, such income will not be exempted.

Temporary Assistance (TA)

Temporary Income from the Census Bureau as part of the 2020 Census shall be excluded as income when determining a household's TA eligibility and benefit amount. **This income**

exclusion is effective immediately through September 30, 2020. Districts will be notified if the exclusion of temporary Census Bureau income is extended beyond September 30, 2020.

The exclusion of census income must not be allowed prior to today, May 1, 2019. TA recipient households that currently have temporary Census income must have the income removed from the TA budget effective May 1, 2019. Additionally, households that were denied benefits based on the receipt of temporary Census income must be re-evaluated for eligibility. There is no change that income earned from permanent Census employment is not exempt and must be budgeted as earned income with all appropriate disregards.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

To encourage the recruitment of enumerators in communities with high participation in SNAP, and to recruit individuals who receive SNAP, but who have limited or no employment history, so that they may gain valuable work experience without reducing their SNAP benefits, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is making waivers available to interested states allowing them to exclude temporary 2020 Census Bureau income as income for-SNAP. New York State has requested and received such a waiver. Under this option, from now through September 30, 2020, temporary Census Bureau income shall be excluded and not counted as income when determining a household's SNAP eligibility and benefit amount.

This exclusion is effective immediately. Additionally, earned income from temporary employment in the 2020 Census must be removed from the SNAP budget effective immediately for any households for which the income is currently budgeted.

Households are required to report and verify earned income from temporary employment in the 2020 Census consistent with SNAP reporting and verification requirements and districts must maintain documentation of the income in the casefile. **However, the excluded income *must not be entered on the ABEL budget or in myWorkspace.***

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

Census income will be excluded from HEAP eligibility and benefit determinations and must ***not*** be counted in the HEAP budget as long as the applicant/recipient earned the income for services related to the 2020 Census operation, regardless of their hiring date for temporary Census employment. This applies to basic eligibility for Regular HEAP, Emergency, Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement (HERR), Heating Equipment Clean and Tune (C&T), and Cooling Assistance benefits.

Census Bureau income is not considered a liquid resource for the Emergency and HERR benefit components.

Medicaid (MA)

Income received from temporary employment with the U.S. Census Bureau continues to be excluded for individuals in the ADC-R and the SSI-R Medicaid categories of assistance. For individuals receiving Medicaid only, in a modified adjusted gross income category, the earned income received from the Census Bureau is countable income since it is taxable income.

Additional Information

Further information about the 2020 US Decennial Census can be found by visiting: www.2020census.gov. Further information about job opportunities with the US Census Bureau can be found by visiting: www.2020census.gov/jobs.