



Food Distribution National Policy Memorandum

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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Alexandria, VA
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POLICY NO: FD-135:Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

SUBJECT: Revised Policy on Certification Periods for Zero Income Households

This memorandum provides revised policy guidance on certification periods pertaining to zero income households in FDPIR. FNS Handbook 501 provides that households who report zero income month after month must be asked as to how they sustain themselves and other household members. The information provided by the household must be documented in the case file. Per prior policy, households reporting zero income were generally assigned a one- to two- month certification period.

FDPIR revised policy for zero income households provides for certification staff to continue to question and document households that report zero income. However, certification periods have been revised to allow for longer certification periods, if the zero income household is verified to be stable with regard to lack of income. Households reporting zero income with unstable circumstances, i.e., households who could receive income soon, must continue to be assigned shorter certification periods. This revised policy is consistent with that of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Please reference FNS Handbook 501, Section 5112 B3 and B4. The revised policy for certification periods of zero income households is as follows:

B3. Households reporting zero income but with circumstances that are verified to be stable and not likely to change soon should be assigned certifications periods consistent with their circumstances, but generally no less than three months.

B4. Households reporting zero income with unstable circumstances, e.g., households who could receive income soon, must be assigned one- or two-month certification periods.

Any additional questions should be addressed to the appropriate FNS Regional Office. Regional Office staff with questions should in turn contact Barbara Lopez at (703) 305-2465.

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