



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

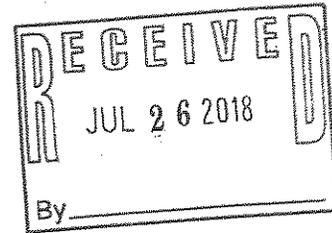
Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

Northeast Region

10 Causeway St.  
Room 501  
Boston, MA 02222

JUL 16 2018

Courtney Hawkins, Director  
Department of Human Services  
Louis Pasteur Building  
57 Howard Avenue  
Cranston, RI 02920



Dear Director Hawkins:

Federal law requires that each State participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) have a State Plan of Operation specifying the manner in which the State conducts the program. The State Plan of Operation is comprised of forms, plans, agreements, and policy descriptions required by Federal regulation. Under Federal rules, State agencies must submit any revisions or amendments to the State Plan of Operation to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Relevant authority includes Section 11(e) of the Food and Nutrition Act, as amended, and regulations at 7 CFR 272.2.

Attached is an updated State Plan of Operations Guide. The Guide includes instructions for completing State Plans of Operations, a checklist of current State Plan of Operation requirements, an annex explaining each requirement, a Federal-State Agreement template that provides policy guidance to clarify civil rights requirements, a naming guide for State Plan documents and a guide for using the SharePoint Site.

By August 15, 2018, all States must submit a completed State Plan Checklist and all required forms, plans, agreements, and policy descriptions, to the National SharePoint Site.

In order to ensure accurate recordkeeping, we ask that all States upload each appropriate item (based on their State) each year. This will ensure that all information for each State is current and correct on an ongoing annual basis. (Please note that unless your State has had a change in leadership, it is not necessary to get a new Federal-State Agreement signed. If a new agreement is not needed, simply upload the current Federal-State agreement on file for your State.)

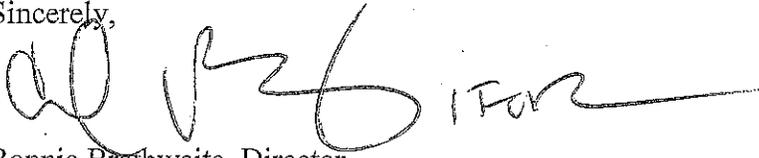
As a reminder, consultation with Indian Tribal Organizations is required for changes to program operations on reservations. Please be mindful that, as provided by 7 CFR 272.1(d), items submitted to FNS as part of the State Plan of Operation will be made available to members of the public upon request. While FNS expects Plans to be complete and fully explanatory, please consider this fact in preparing your State Plan package and avoid including any sensitive information that is not necessary.

Please have your staff contact my team with any questions. We have designated Matthew Henschel and Robin Magee as the overall point of contacts for this year's

State Plan collection. Matthew can be reached at 617-565-1610 and [matthew.henschel@fns.usda.gov](mailto:matthew.henschel@fns.usda.gov). Robin can be reached at 617-565-4677 and [robin.magee@fns.usda.gov](mailto:robin.magee@fns.usda.gov).

Thank you, as always, for your thoughtful attention effort and your continued work to provide critical nutrition assistance to Americans in need consistent with Federal law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bonnie Brathwaite', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bonnie Brathwaite, Director  
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
Northeast Region

Enclosure

cc: Maureen Donnelly  
Kimberly Nikolaidis  
William O'Donnell  
Deborah Barclay

# 2018 STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS GUIDE

## I. INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

Section 11(e) of the Food and Nutrition Act, as amended, and the regulations at 7 CFR 272.2, requires that State agencies participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) have a State Plan of Operation specifying the manner in which the State conducts the program. Under Federal rules, State agencies must submit any revisions or amendments to the State Plan of Operation to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

This guide is intended to assist State agencies submit a complete State Plan of Operation that is accurate, up-to-date, and compliant with Federal requirements.

The State Plan Guide includes the following sections:

- I. *Introductions and Instructions.* This section includes information about Federal requirements and the process for compiling State Plans of Operation.
- II. *State Plan of Operations Checklist.* The checklist includes items that are federally required to be included in a State Plan of Operation.
- III. *Checklist Annex.* The enclosed Annex summarizes what Federal rules require for each item, notes the Federal citations, and where possible, offers tips that can reduce the administrative burden on the State.
- IV. *Federal-State Agreement Template.* The Federal-State Agreement is Item 1 on the checklist and a template is provided with updated civil rights policy guidance.
- V. *Naming Scheme Guidelines.* The guide offers sample document file names.
- VI. *National SharePoint Site Guidance.* This section offers information about using the SharePoint site

The State Plan of Operation is comprised of forms, plans, agreements and policy descriptions required by Federal regulation. States should begin by gathering or preparing the necessary documents listed in the checklist. State agencies should submit all State Plan documents through the National State Plans of Operation SharePoint Site.

Please be mindful that, as provided by 7 CFR 272.1(d), items submitted to FNS as part of the State Plan of Operation may be subject to public release and State agencies should carefully consider sensitive information. States are required to upload all items, including the checklist and all amendments, for the State Plan to ensure a complete plan is on file for each year. This may mean that a State will be uploading the same documents as the prior year; however, it ensures all documents are current and correct.

Contact the FNS Regional Office with any questions or for additional technical assistance.

**States must submit their State Plans of Operation via the National State Plans of Operation SharePoint Site no later than August 15, 2018.**

## II. CHECKLIST

States agencies must complete the checklist below and submit it as part of the State Plan of Operations. The checklist includes five sections: required items, program options, policy options, Tribal Organization Options, and State Policy Manual. The State should check a box for every item provided on the checklist or mark N/A to indicate the item is not applicable.

All items in the checklist require additional information if selected, unless noted otherwise. States selecting the deduction for homeless shelters and the deduction, rather than exclusion, for court-ordered child support only need to select the option in the checklist; no additional information is required. For items requiring attachments, please include the file name of the electronic file. For all other checklist items, the State must provide the policy citation from the State's SNAP Policy Manual (or comparable policy document). The State can also copy the policy citation into a separate document and provide the file name on the checklist. If the State chooses to list policy manual citations, FNS encourages the State to provide a link to or an electronic copy of the most recent manual to FNS to ensure that the latest State policy is represented. Please be sure to label all attachments using the naming scheme in section V of this Guide.

### Required Items

Items 1-14 must be provided by all State agencies. Most take the form of attachments, such as plans and agreements. Section IV of this guide includes a Federal-State Agreement template including an addendum providing policy guidance to clarify civil rights requirements to assist with Item 1. Items 2 and 3 should be submitted through the Food Program Reporting System (FPRS) as usual and a copy uploaded to the State Plan Site.

### Program Options

Items 15-20 include plans that must be submitted by any State that chooses those program options.

### Policy Options

Items 21-38 include policy options available to States. Federal regulations require States electing these policy options indicate the chosen policy as part of the State plan. For a few of these items, as noted in the checklist, the State need only indicate that the option has been taken. Others require some information about the State's chosen policy, which can be provided as a citation to the State Policy Manual or in a separate attachment. Item 39 is the requirement that States submit justifications for any waiver they wish to extend; rather than duplicating the waiver request process, FNS will accept a list of the State's currently active waivers (please refer to Annex). Item 40 affirms that the State has consulted with the appropriate Indian Tribal Organization (ITO) for any portion of the State Plan of Operation involving implementation of SNAP on all or part of an Indian reservation.

### Consultation with Tribal Organizations

This checklist item is for States operating programs on tribal reservations.

### Optional State Policy Manual

If the State has chosen to provide citations to the State's SNAP Policy Manual to meet the requirements listed above, please provide a website to the latest version of the online policy manual or provide an electronic copy of the manual as an attachment.

**STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS CHECKLIST**

*Required Items: all States must provide the following.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Item	Attachment file name or manual citation
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal-State Agreement	
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Budget Projection Statement (FNS-366A)	
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Program Activity Statement (FNS-366B)	
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Quality Control (QC) Sampling Plan	
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment and Training (E&T) Plan	
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) Plan	
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Outline	
8	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Plan	
9	<input type="checkbox"/> Income and Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) Plan	
10	<input type="checkbox"/> Claims Management Plan	
11	<input type="checkbox"/> Disqualification for Failure to Meet Work Requirements Plan	
12	<input type="checkbox"/> Agreement with SSA for Joint Processing	
13	<input type="checkbox"/> Definition of Fleeing Felon	
14	<input type="checkbox"/> Client reporting system	

State Plan of Operations Checklist

Program Options. States electing these program options must provide the associated plans

	N/A	Item	Attachment file name or manual citation
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed) Plan	
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	Informational Activities to Low-Income Households Plan	
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	Simplified SNAP Plan	
18	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work Supplementation Plan	
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployment Compensation Interception for Claims Plan	
20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Optional Workfare Plan (not part of E&T)	

Policy Options. States electing these policy options must include this information as part of the State Plan

	N/A	Item	Attachment file name or manual citation
21	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transitional Benefits	
22	<input type="checkbox"/>	Simplified resources	
23	<input type="checkbox"/>	Simplified income	
24	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exclusion of educational assistance consistent with Medicaid	
25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exclusion of complementary assistance consistent with Social Security	
26	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deduction for homeless shelter	No additional information necessary.
27	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deduction, rather than exclusion, for court-ordered child support	No additional information necessary.
28	<input type="checkbox"/>	Verification of child support from Child Support Agency	
29	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sanction for custodial parent's non-cooperation with Child Support	

State Plan of Operations Checklist

- 30  Sanction for child support arrears
- 31  Sanction for non-attendance at school
- 32  Penalty for refusal to comply or fraud for another program
- 33  Comparable disqualifications
- 34  Postponed action on deduction changes
- 35  Average Student Work Hours
- 36  Telephonic Interview in Lieu of Face-to-Face Interview
- 37  Reinstate households terminated for missing periodic report
- 38  Telephonic and Gesture Signatures
- 39  Waiver justifications (Please enclose list, per annex.)

Consultation with Tribal Organizations. For States operating programs on tribal reservations, relevant portions of the State Plan should reflect:

- N/A  Item
- 40  Consultation with Tribal Organizations

Optional State Policy Manual: If the State has chosen to provide citations to the State's SNAP Policy Manual to meet the requirements listed above, please provide a website to the latest version of the online policy manual or provide an electronic copy of the manual as an attachment.

- N/A  Item Website or file name
- 41  State Policy Manual (Optional)

### III. CHECKLIST ANNEX

This annex explains the items in the checklist, direct States to additional information on the requirements, and offer suggestions to streamline submissions. The descriptions below are not exhaustive. States should contact their FNS Regional Offices with any questions.

#### Required Items:

1. *Federal-State Agreement.* The Federal/State Agreement is the legal agreement between the State and the Department of Agriculture. This Agreement means the State has elected to operate SNAP and to administer the program in accordance with the Food and Nutrition Act, as amended; implementing regulations issued pursuant to the Act; and the State Plan of Operation. Please find the Federal-State Agreement template enclosed including an addendum that provides guidance to clarify civil rights statutory requirements. 7 CFR 272.2(a), 272.2(b), 272.2(e)(1).
2. *Budget Projection Statement (FNS-366A).* The Budget Projection Statement is comprised of the FNS-366A. It projects the total costs for major areas of SNAP operations. States must complete this form each year and submit it through the Food Stamp Reporting System (FPRS). An electronic copy of the most recent, completed form should also be included as an electronic attachment with the State Plan Checklist. 272.2(a)(2), 272.2(c).
3. *Program Activity Statement (FNS-366B).* The Program Activity Statement is comprised of the FNS-366B. It provides a summary of SNAP operations. Federal regulations now provide that the FNS-366B be submitted quarterly. States must complete this form each year and submit it through the Food Stamp Reporting System (FPRS). An electronic copy of the most recent, completed form should also be included as an electronic attachment with the State Plan Checklist. 272.2(a)(2), 272.2(c).
4. *Quality Control Sampling Plan.* Each State agency must develop a quality control sampling plan, which demonstrates the integrity of its sampling procedures and includes a complete description of the frame, the method of the sample selection, and methods for estimating characteristics of the population and their sampling errors. 272.2(a)(2), 272.2(d)(1)(i), 272.2(e)(4), 275.11(a)(4).
5. *Employment and Training Plan.* The State is responsible for submitting its E&T Plan annually, at least 45 days before the start of the Federal fiscal year. Each State should submit its plan through the usual process provided by the Regional Office and enclose an electronic copy of the plan with the checklist submission to FNS. Required components of the E&T Plan are provided by 273.7(c)(6). Guidance on preparing the E&T Plan, including guidance specific to States that opt to submit E&T plan components as part of a WIOA Combined State Plan, is available here: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ET-policy-guidance>. 272.2(a)(2), 273.7(c).
6. *Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) Plan.* A Disaster Plan must be included with every State Plan of Operation. Resources on preparing a D-SNAP Plan are provided on the D-SNAP Resources for State Agencies and Partners webpage, available here: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/d-snap-resources-state-agencies-and-partners>. 272.2(a)(2), 272.2(d)(1)(ii).
7. *Organizational Outline.* The organizational outline contains the following information and changes to the organizational outline must be provided to FNS as they occur:
  - The position heading the State agency responsible for administering SNAP in relation to the overall State organizational structure, i.e., the Program Director in relation to the Commissioner of Social Services;

- A description of the organizational structure through which the State agency will administer and operate SNAP, including whether the Program is State, county, locally, or regionally-administered; whether the workers have only SNAP or multi-program functions; and the title and position of the individual or panel designated as the hearing authority and whether officials conduct both fair and fraud hearings.
  - A description of the funding arrangement by which State, county, and local jurisdictions will contribute to the State agency portion of administrative costs;
  - The position within the State organizational structure of the Performance Reporting System (PRS) coordinator, including whether the PRS coordinator is full or part-time, and is responsible for direct supervision over Quality Control or Management Evaluation or if these functions are handled separately, and whether quality control reviewers have only SNAP or multi-program review responsibilities;
  - The position of the training coordinator and whether this is a full or part-time;
  - The organizational entity responsible for corrective action.
- 272.2(c)(2), 272.2(e)(3).

8. *Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Plan.* States participating in SAVE programs established with the US Citizenship and Immigration Service must have agreements in place that specify the information to be exchanged and the procedures which will be used in the exchange of information. The requirements for participation in the program must be included with the State Plan of Operation. The document included in the Plan shall include a description of procedures used, method of access, and the agreement, including steps taken to meet the requirements of limiting disclosure and safeguarding of information obtained from SNAP households. 272.2(a)(2), 272.2(d)(1)(vii), 272.11.
9. *Income and Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) Plan.* States may use external data matching system to request wage and benefit information from certain agencies and use that information in verifying eligibility for and the amount of benefits due to SNAP-eligible households. Requirements for IEVS are provided by federal regulations at 272.8. 272.2(a)(2), 272.2(d)(1)(ix), 272.5(c).
10. *Claims Management Plan.* States must develop a plan for establishing and collecting claims that provides orderly claims processing and results in claims collections similar to recent national rates of collection. The State must submit its claims management plan as part of the State Plan. 272.2(d)(1), 273.18(a)(3). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
11. *Disqualification for Failure to Meet Work Requirements Plan.* A nonexempt individual who refuses or fails without good cause, to comply with SNAP work requirements is ineligible to participate in the SNAP and will be considered an ineligible household member. Each State agency must prepare and submit a plan detailing its disqualification policies for failure to meet work requirements. The plan must include the length of disqualification to be enforced for each occurrence of noncompliance, how compliance is determined by the State agency, and the State agency's household disqualification policy. 272.2(d)(1)(xiv), 273.7(f). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
12. *Agreement with Social Security Administration (SSA) for Joint Processing.* State Plans must include agreements between the State agency and the Social Security Administration for SNAP

joint application processing. If the State has been unable to secure an agreement with SSA, please notify FNS. 272.2(c)(3).

13. *Definition of Fleeing Felon.* The State Plan must indicate which fleeing felon definition (or “test”) the State agency has adopted. 272.2(d)(1)(xvii), 273.11(n). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State’s policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
14. *Client Reporting.* Any State opting to use simplified reporting must include a description of the types of households to whom the option applies. Any State opting to use quarterly reporting must indicate that it has chosen this option. 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(C), 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(H), 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(F), 273.12(a)(5), 273.12(a)(4). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State’s policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*

Program Options:

15. *Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed) Plan.* The SNAP-Ed Plan must include a comprehensive description of the evidence-based nutrition education and obesity prevention interventions and programming, conforming to standards established in this regulation, SNAP-Ed Plan Guidance, and other FNS policy. SNAP-Ed Plan Guidance is available here: <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/national-snap-ed/snap-ed-plan-guidance-and-templates>. 272.2(a)(2), 272.2(d).
16. *Informational Activities to Low-Income Households Plan (Outreach Plan).* Program informational activities are those activities that convey information about the Program, including household rights and responsibilities, through means such as publications, telephone hotlines, and face-to-face contacts. This is sometimes referred to as the Outreach Plan. More information and guidance on the plan is available here: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/outreach/state-outreach-plan-guidance>. 272.2(a)(2), 272.2(d)(1)(ix), 272.5.
17. *Simplified SNAP Plan.* States may use TANF or SNAP rules, or a combination of both, to create Simplified SNAP programs for TANF households. With FNS approval, States can design Simplified Programs to include households where not all members must be TANF recipients. Program rules are provided by regulations at 273.25. 272.2(a)(2), 273.25.
18. *Work Supplementation Program Plan.* States may operate work supplementation (or support) programs that allow the cash value of SNAP benefits and public assistance, such as TANF, to be provided to employers as a wage subsidy to be used for hiring and employing public assistance recipients. States electing to operate such programs must submit a plan to FNS. 272.2(d)(1)(xv) and 273.7(l)(1).
19. *Unemployment Compensation Interception for Claims Plan.* If a State opts to intercept unemployment compensation (UC) benefits for collecting claims for intentional program violations (IPVs), the State must submit a plan to do so with the State Plan of Operation. 272.2(a)(2), 273.18(g)(6).
20. *Optional Workfare Plan (not part of E&T).* A workfare program for SNAP purposes may be operated as a component of a State’s E&T program or it may be operated independently. If the workfare program is part of an E&T program, it must be included as a component in the State’s

E&T plan. If it is operated independent of the E&T plan, the State must submit a workfare plan, consistent with 272.2(a)(2) and 273.7(m).

Policy Options:

21. *Transitional Benefits.* If a State elects to provide households leaving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) with transitional SNAP benefits (sometimes referred to as Transitional Benefits Alternative, Transitional Benefits Assistance, or TBA), the State must include in the State Plan a statement that transitional SNAP benefits are available and a description of the eligible programs by which households may qualify for transitional benefits; if one of the eligible programs includes a State-funded cash assistance program, whether household participation in that program runs concurrently or sequentially to TANF; the categories of households eligible for such benefits; the maximum number of months for which transitional benefits will be provided; and any other items required. 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(J). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label all attachments.*
22. *Simplified Resources.* If a State elects to simplify the consideration of resources by aligning its policy with TANF or medical assistance, it must include that the option has been selected and provide a description of the resources being excluded under the provision. 7 CFR 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(E), 273.8(e)(19). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
23. *Simplified Income.* If a State elects to simplify the consideration of income by aligning its policy with TANF or medical assistance, it must include that the option has been selected and provide a description of the income being excluded under the provision. 7 CFR 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(G), 273.9(c)(19). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
24. *Exclusion of Educational Assistance Excluded Under Medicaid.* For States electing to exclude educational assistance that must be excluded under State Medicaid rules, the State Plan must include a statement that the option has been selected and a description of the types of educational assistance being excluded under the provision. 7 CFR 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(F), 273.9(c)(3)(v). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
25. *Exclusion of Complementary Assistance Excluded for Social Security.* At the State's option, the State may exclude from income any State complementary assistance program payments excluded for the purpose of determining eligibility under Section 1931 of the SSA for a program funded under Title XIX of the SSA. A State agency that chooses to exclude complementary assistance program payments must specify in its State plan of operation that it has selected this option and provide a description of the types of payments that are being excluded. 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(G), 273.9(c)(18). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
26. *Deduction of Homeless Shelter.* A State agency may provide a standard homeless shelter deduction of \$143 a month to households in which all members are homeless individuals but are

not receiving free shelter throughout the month. A State agency that chooses to provide a homeless household shelter deduction must specify in its State plan of operation that it has selected this option. 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(C), 273.9(d)(6)(i). *STREAMLINING TIP: Checking the appropriate box in the checklist can constitute the State's indication that it has taken this option. No additional documentation or attachments are needed.*

27. *Deduction, Rather Than Income Exclusion, for Court Ordered Child Support Payments.* At its option, the State agency may provide a deduction rather than the income exclusion for legally obligated child support payments paid by a household member. A State agency that chooses to provide a child support deduction rather than an exclusion must specify in its State plan of operation that it has chosen to do so. 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(C), 273.9(d)(5), 273.12(c)(17). *STREAMLINING TIP: Checking the appropriate box in the checklist can constitute the State's indication that it has taken this option. No additional documentation or attachments are needed.*
28. *Verification of Child Support from Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Agency.* For verification of legally obligated and actual child support payments, State agencies have the option to rely on information provided by their State CSE agency at certification, recertification, or to verify changes. Any State taking this option must include in its State Plan that this option was selected. These States should indicate if the option was selected for certification, recertification, and/or changes. 7 CFR 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(A), 273.2(f)(1)(xii), 273.2(f)(8)(i)(A), and 273.12(a)(6).
29. *Sanction for Parent's Non-Cooperation with Child Support Agency.* At the option of the State agency, a custodial or a non-custodial parent may be determined ineligible to participate in SNAP if they refuse to cooperate with the State Child Support Agency. States electing this option must describe the policy in the State Plan, including the guidelines the State will use in implementing it. 272.2(d)(1)(xiii), 273.11(o), 273.11(p). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
30. *Sanction for Child Support Arrears.* At the option of the State, an individual delinquent any payment due under a court order for the support of the individual's child can be determined to be ineligible. States electing this option must provide it in the State Plan, including the guidelines the State will use in implementing it. 272.2(d)(1)(xiii), 273.11(q). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
31. *Sanction for Non-Attendance at School.* States are not prohibited from sanctioning a family that includes an adult who receives SNAP assistance if such adult fails to ensure that the minor dependent children of such adult attend school as required by the law of the State. States electing this option must describe the policy in the State Plan, including the guidelines the State will use in implementing it. 272.2(d)(1)(xiii), 273.11(l). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
32. *Penalty for Refusal to Comply or Fraud for another Program.* If a household's benefit under another Federal, State, or local means-tested public assistance program is reduced because of refusal to comply with an action or fraud, the State agency must not increase the household's SNAP allotment as a result of the decrease in income and – at the State's option – may elect to impose a penalty on the household that represents a percentage of the SNAP allotment of up to 25%. If a State chooses to apply such a penalty, it must include in its State Plan of Operation any options it has selected provided by 273.11(j). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by*

*including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*

33. *Comparable Disqualifications.* If a disqualification is imposed on a member of a household for failure to perform an action required under a Federal, State or local means-tested public assistance program, the State agency may impose the same disqualification on the member of the household under SNAP. States electing this option must describe the policy in the State Plan, including identifying which sanctions in other programs the option applies to as well as the guidelines the State will use in implementing it. 272.2(d)(1)(xiii), 273.11(k). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
34. *Postponed Action on Certain Deductions Changes.* States have the option to postpone taking action on certain deduction changes and continue to provide the deduction amount that was established at certification until recertification as provided by Federal rules. A State agency that chooses to postpone changes in deductions must state in its State plan of operation that it has selected this option and specify the deductions affected. 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(I), 273.12(c). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
35. *Average Student Work Hours.* States have the option to average student work hours for the purpose of determining SNAP eligibility as long as they maintained an average of 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month. States must include in the State plan of operation if it has selected this option and include a description of how student work hours will be calculated. 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(D), 273.5(b)(5). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
36. *Telephonic Interview in Lieu of Face-to-Face Interview.* States taking the option to provide telephone interviews in lieu of face-to-face interviews at initial application and reapplication for households other than those that meet the hardship criteria must include it in the State plan of operation and a description of the procedures used under the provision. 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(B), 273.2(e)(2). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
37. *Reinstate Households Terminated for Missing Periodic Report.* State agencies may select the option to reinstate an eligible household that has been terminated for failure to file a complete periodic report if the household files a complete periodic report after the extended filing date under 273.12(a)(5)(iii)(E) but before the end of the issuance month. 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(H). *STREAMLINING TIP: Consider saving time by including a citation to the State's policy manual in the checklist and enclosing a copy of the manual. Please be sure to properly label any attachments.*
38. *Telephonic and Gesture Signatures.* The State agency shall decide whether unwritten signatures are generally acceptable. These may include electronic signature techniques, or recorded gestured signatures. A State agency that chooses to accept telephonic signatures and gestured signatures on the application and reapplication forms (other than for households the State may be required to accept such signatures as a reasonable accommodation under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or in compliance with other civil rights laws) must specify in its State plan of

operation that it has selected this option and include a description of the procedures being pursued under the provision. 272.2(d)(1)(xvi)(A), 273.2(c)(7)(viii)(A).

39. *Waiver Extension Justifications.* States must submit appropriate justification for any administrative waiver extensions as part of the State Plan of Operation. 272.3(c)(3). Note: States must follow the waiver request process in order to receive initial approval, modifications, or extensions to waivers. Submission of this State Plan update does not substitute for the waiver approval process. *STREAMLINING TIP: In consideration of the existing waiver request process whereby States request and justify extensions throughout the year as part of the waiver approval process, FNS will accept a simple list of active waivers by the State in order to meet this requirement. FNS' list of current waivers is found here: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/waivers-rules>.*

For States with Tribal Organizations:

40. *Consultation with Tribal Organizations.* The State must consult with the appropriate Indian Tribal Organization (ITO) for any portion of the State Plan of Operations that pertains to the implementation of SNAP on all or part of an Indian reservation where the ITO exercises governmental jurisdiction. The State shall submit all portions of its plan pertaining to the operation of SNAP on a reservation to the appropriate ITO, and the ITO shall have 30 days to provide comments in writing before that plan is submitted to FNS. The State should, where appropriate and practical, incorporate the ITO's suggestions into the State plan. The State must implement the program in a manner that is responsive to the special needs of the residents of reservations as determined by ongoing consultation with the ITO. This includes consultation regarding project area designations, operating procedures, locations and hours of certification and issuance, staffing, and corrective action plans. The State agency shall maintain records of consultations on State plans and ongoing consultations held with ITO's and make them available for review by FNS. These records need not be submitted with the State Plan of Operations, but any portion of the Plan pertaining to Program implementation for members of the tribe on reservations should reflect these consultations. 7 CFR 272.2(b), 272.2(e)(7), 281.2(b).

#### IV. FEDERAL-STATE AGREEMENT TEMPLATE

Below is the Federal-State Agreement template that includes the civil rights policy guidance clarification. A file name for this document should be: "FY19 STATE INITIAL 1 Fed State Agreement.pdf"

<b>Item number and name:</b> 1 - Federal-State Agreement <b>Date of last update:</b> <b>State Agency point of contact:</b>
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#### Federal-State Agreement

The State of \_\_\_\_\_ and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), hereby agree to act in accordance with the provisions of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, implementing regulations and the FNS-approved State Plan of Operation. The State and FNS (USDA) further agree to fully comply with any changes in Federal law and regulations. This agreement may be modified with the mutual written consent of both parties.

#### PROVISIONS

The State agrees to: 1. Administer the program in accordance with the provisions contained in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, and in the manner prescribed by regulations issued pursuant to the Act; and to implement the FNS-approved State Plan of Operation.

2. Comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub. L. 88-352), section 11(c) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Pub. L. 94-135) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Pub. L. 93-112, sec. 504) and all requirements imposed by the regulations issued pursuant to these Acts by the Department of Agriculture to the effect that, no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of sex, race, color, age, political belief, religion, handicap, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subject to discrimination under SNAP.

3. (For States with Indian Reservations only). Implement the Program in a manner that is responsive to the special needs of American Indians on reservations and consult in good faith with tribal organizations about that portion of the State's Plan of Operation pertaining to the implementation of the Program for members of the tribe on reservations.

FNS agrees to: 1. Pay administrative costs in accordance with the Food Stamp Act, implementing regulations, and an approved Cost Allocation Plan.

2. Carry-out any other responsibilities delegated by the Secretary in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended.

Date

Signature

(Governor or Authorized Designee)

Date

Signature

(Regional Administrator, FNS)

## Addendum

### **Clarification of SNAP Civil Rights Requirements - Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)," and Title II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act**

This addendum clarifies core civil rights requirements to ensure meaningful access to programs, services, and information for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and persons with disabilities in accordance with Federal law, regulations and current guidance from the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

#### *Meaningful Access for LEP Individuals*

State agencies that participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) must take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to programs, services, and benefits. This includes the requirement to provide bilingual program information and certification materials and interpretation services to single-language minorities in certain project areas. SNAP State agencies that do not provide meaningful access for LEP individuals risk violating prohibitions against discrimination based on National Origin in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), and SNAP program regulations.

Federal LEP regulations and guidance include:

- SNAP regulations provided by 7 CFR Part 272.4(b), "Bilingual requirements";
- Executive Order 13166 of August 11, 2000, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency," reprinted in 65 FR 50121, 50122 (August 16, 2000);
- DOJ policy guidance titled, "Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons," published in 67 FR 41455, 41457 (June 18, 2002); and
- USDA policy guidance titled, "Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons", published in 79 FR 70771 - 70784 (November 28, 2014).

#### *Four Factor Analysis for Assessing LEP Needs*

To be in compliance, the Title VI guidance provided by DOJ and USDA instructs State Agencies to assess the LEP needs of the population served and determine the LEP services required by balancing four factors:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered within the area serviced by the recipient;
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program;
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service to people's lives; and
4. The resources available to the recipient and costs.

SNAP State Agencies must also comply with the specific requirements established by 7 CFR Part 272.4(b) and should include these obligations in the LEP assessment.

### *Developing an LEP Plan*

After completing an assessment of LEP needs, SNAP state agencies should develop an implementing plan to address the LEP needs of the population served. This may include contracting for oral interpretation services, hiring bilingual staff, arranging telephone interpreters and/or language lines, coordinating community volunteers, translating vital documents, and providing written notice that language services are available in appropriate languages. Quality and accuracy of the language service is critical in order to avoid serious consequences to the LEP person and to the recipient. LEP needs should be considered in developing State and local budgets and front line staff should understand how to obtain LEP services.

USDA's 2014 policy guidance includes detailed information on assessing LEP needs, identifying practices for translating documents that will be seen as strong evidence of compliance. For additional assistance and information regarding LEP matters, please also visit <http://www.lep.gov>. The website includes online LEP mapping tools designed to help assess the language needs of the population served by a particular program or facility.

### *Ensuring Equal Opportunity Access for Persons with Disabilities*

SNAP State agencies must also ensure equal opportunity access for persons with disabilities. This includes ensuring that communications with applicants, participants, members of the public, and companions with disabilities are as effective as communications with people without disabilities. State Agencies that do not provide persons with disabilities equal opportunity access to programs may risk violating prohibitions against disability discrimination in the Rehabilitation Act of 1978, the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), and SNAP program regulations.

DOJ published revised final regulations implementing Title II and Title III of the ADA on September 15, 2010. These regulations are codified at 28 CFR Part 35 "Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in State and Local Government Services" and 28 CFR Part 36, "Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Public Accommodations and Commercial Facilities". In accordance with the implementing regulations, State Agencies must providing auxiliary aids and services where necessary to ensure effective communication and equal opportunity access to program benefits for individuals with disabilities. The type of auxiliary aids and services required will vary, but a State agency may not require an individual with a disability to bring another individual to interpret, and may rely on a person accompanying a disabled individual only in limited circumstances. When a State agency communicates with applicants and beneficiaries by telephone, it must provide text telephone services (TTY) or an equally effective electronic telecommunications system to communicate with individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing impaired. State agencies must also ensure that interested persons, including persons with impaired vision or hearing, can obtain information as to the existence and location of accessible services, activities, and facilities. For more information, please visit the ADA website: <http://www.ada.gov>.

## V. NAMING SCHEME GUIDELINES

Please label every attachment include in the State Plan of Operations using the following naming scheme:

Fiscal Year, State Abbreviation, Checklist Item Number, Item Name

Below is a list of documents in the checklist with appropriate file names according to this scheme, using Georgia as an example.

If that State needs to upload documents in multiple parts, include Part 1, Part 2, etc. at the end of the file name. For examples, FY19 GA 4 QC Sample Plan Part 1.

Within each attachment, include the name of the item from the checklist, the date, and a State agency point of contact who can be contacted with any questions regarding the attachment. This information should appear on the upper right side of the first page of each attachment. This will help streamline the process.

### State Plan of Operation Checklist File Names

<input type="checkbox"/>	Item	Suggested File Name
0	<input type="checkbox"/> State Plan Checklist	FY19 GA 0 Checklist
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal-State Agreement	FY19 GA 1 Fed State Agreement
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Budget Projection Statement (FNS-366A)	FY19 GA 2 Budget Project 366A
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Program Activity Statement (FNS-366B)	FY19 GA 3 Prog Act 366B
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Quality Control (QC) Sampling Plan	FY19 GA 4 QC Sample Plan
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment and Training (E&T) Plan	FY19 GA 5 ET Plan
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) Plan	FY19 GA 6 DSNAP Plan
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Outline	FY19 GA 7 Org Outline
8	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Plan	FY19 GA 8 SAVE Plan

9	<input type="checkbox"/>	Income and Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) Plan	FY19 GA 9 IEVS Plan
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Claims Management Plan	FY19 GA 10 Claims Plan
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disqualification for Failure to Meet Work Requirements Plan	FY19 GA 11 Failure Meet Work
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agreement with SSA for Joint Processing	FY19 GA 12 SSA Agree
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	Definition of Fleeing Felon	FY19 GA 13 Fleeing Felon
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	Client reporting system	FY19 GA 14 Client Reporting
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed) Plan	FY19 GA 15 SNAP Ed Plan
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	Informational Activities to Low-Income Households Plan	FY19 GA 16 Activities Outreach
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	Simplified SNAP Plan	FY19 GA 17 Simplified SNAP
18	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work Supplementation Plan	FY19 GA 18 Work Supplement
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployment Compensation Interception for Claims Plan	FY19 GA 19 UB for Claims
20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Optional Workfare Plan (not part of E&T)	FY19 GA 20 Option Workfare
21	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transitional Benefits	FY19 GA 21 Trans Benefits
22	<input type="checkbox"/>	Simplified resources	FY19 GA 22 Simplified Resource
23	<input type="checkbox"/>	Simplified income	FY19 GA 23 Simplified Income
24	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exclusion of educational assistance consistent with Medicaid	FY19 GA 24 Exclusion Education
25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exclusion of complementary assistance consistent with Social Security	FY19 GA 25 Exclusion Comp Assist
26	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deduction for homeless shelter	No additional information necessary.

27	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deduction, rather than exclusion, for court-ordered child support	No additional information necessary.
28	<input type="checkbox"/>	Verification of child support from Child Support Agency	FY19 GA 28 Verify CS
29	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sanction for custodial parent's non-cooperation with Child Support	FY19 GA 29 Noncoop CS
30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sanction for child support arrears	FY19 GA 30 CS Arrears
31	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sanction for non-attendance at school	FY19 GA 31 Non School
32	<input type="checkbox"/>	Penalty for refusal to comply or fraud for another program	FY19 GA 32 Penalty Refusal
33	<input type="checkbox"/>	Comparable disqualifications	FY19 GA 33 Comp Disq
34	<input type="checkbox"/>	Postponed action on deduction changes	FY19 GA 34 Deduction Changes
35	<input type="checkbox"/>	Average Student Work Hours	FY19 GA35 Average Student Hours
36	<input type="checkbox"/>	Telephonic Interview in Lieu of Face-to-Face Interview	FY19 GA36 Telephonic Interview
37	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reinstate households terminated for missing periodic report	FY19 GA37 Reinstate HH for Periodic
38	<input type="checkbox"/>	Telephonic Signature	FY19 GA38 Telephonic Signature
39	<input type="checkbox"/>	Waiver justifications (Please enclose list, per annex.)	FY19 GA 39 Waivers
40	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consultation with Tribal Organizations	FY19 GA 40 Tribal Org
41	<input type="checkbox"/>	State Policy Manual	FY19 GA 41 State Policy Manual Link

## VI. NATIONAL SHAREPOINT SITE GUIDANCE

All State Plans of Operation are stored on the National State Plans SharePoint site.

### Accessing the Site

The National State Plans SharePoint site requires visitors to login. If you have access to the SharePoint site, you should have received an email from a PartnerWeb email address with the subject "New User Welcome Message." This message includes your login information.

The login page is accessible at:

<https://partnerweb.usda.gov/layouts/15/FNS.PartnerWeb.LoginPages/PartnerWeb.Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f%2flayouts%2f%2fAuthenticate.aspx%3fSource%3d%2f252F&Source=%2F>. In order to access the State Plan Community, a user must first get access to PartnerWeb. State staff should contact their FNS Regional office if they need access to PartnerWeb and FNS staff should contact their regional representative that handles request for PartnerWeb.

If State staff has difficulty logging into the site, contact your regional representative.

### Site Structure

The site is designed around two separate libraries, "Submit-Edit-Review" and "Published Final." Each State has a designated folder in both libraries. State agencies should upload their various State Plan of Operation documents in the State's folder in the Submit-Edit-Review library. The Regional Office then reviews the plan documents, and moves them to the Publish Final library to indicate approval. Only approved documents should be in the Published Final library.

The Submit-Edit-Review library is located at the bottom of the left-hand navigation menu. The Published Final library is located in "Documents" at the top of the left-hand navigation menu.

When State agencies upload State Plan of Operation documents to the Submit-Edit-Review library, one way to communicate the status of the document is by using the Status of Document identifiers when uploading or revising documents. These labels are intended to help State agencies and the Regional reviewers track a document as it moves through the review process.

In the submit-edit-review library, the status options include:

**New Submission** – The State selects this option when it submits an initial document

**New Amendment Submission** – The State selects this option when it submits an amendment to an approved document

**Changes required by State** – The Region selects this option once they have reviewed the initial document or amendment document and identified that edits are needed

**Revised Amendment Completed** – The State selects this option once the necessary edits to the amendment are completed by the State

**Revised Submission Completed** – The State selects this option once the necessary edits to the initial document are completed by the State

**RO Reviewed** – The Region selects this option once the assigned staff member reviews the document

**Approved by FNS** – The Region selects this option once the Team Lead/Branch Chief approves the document and is ready to move the document to the Published Final Library

**Additional Guidance**

FNS posted the following guidance documents on the SNAP State Plan of Operations QA Home Page under the Help and Training Section, located at the bottom right side of the page.

Uploading Documents

FNS updated the instruction for accessing the site and uploading documents in the “National SharePoint Step by Step Guide” PDF.

Assigning Staff to Specific Documents

New this year, the SharePoint site allows State and Regional staff to assign various State Plan of Operation documents to specific colleagues. Instruction for how to make such assignments is included in “SharePoint Guide-Assigning Work” PDF.

Creating and Managing Alerts

Also new, the site now allows users to create individual alerts to track new submissions and revisions. The “SharePoint Guide-Creating Alerts” PDF offers instructions for creating new alerts. The “SharePoint Guide-Managing Alerts” PDF provides instruction for managing alerts.