

# Operations Memorandum

## Cash Assistance

### OPS090504

May 22, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Treatment of Income from Temporary Employment with the United States Census Bureau  
**TO:** Executive Directors  
**FROM:** Joanne Glover, Director, Bureau of Operations

#### Purpose

1. To inform County Assistance Offices (CAOs) that income from Temporary Census Employment is excluded for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Extended TANF (ETANF), General Assistance (GA), and Medical Assistance (MA) Programs.
2. To inform CAOs that earned income from Temporary Census Employment must be counted for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly the Food Stamp (FS) Program).
3. To notify you that the United States (U.S.) Census Bureau is hiring a large number of temporary workers, and ask that the CAO alert applicants and recipients to the availability of these jobs.

#### Background/Discussion

The U.S. Census Bureau has found that the most effective census workers are those recruited from and working in their own neighborhoods. The Census Bureau requested that the TANF and MA programs exempt census income so that the Census Bureau can more successfully recruit persons residing in low-income neighborhoods. The intent of this project is to demonstrate that the training and experience gained from these jobs will help recipients find permanent employment. Although this hiring initiative is intended primarily as a recruiting incentive for census takers, it will apply to all temporary workers hired by the Census Bureau for Census 2010.

The Census Bureau timeline indicates that the recruitment of "enumerators" will take place:

- in early 2009; and
- in the fall of 2009 for non-response follow-up to begin in the spring/summer 2010.

The U.S. Census Bureau will be hiring temporary workers for the 2010 census. Most temporary workers will be employed as enumerators in the field for about four to eight weeks, working in their own neighborhoods to locate and verify addresses and conduct door-to-door interviews. The number of work weeks may vary depending on

the needs of the Census Bureau. An enumerator may work from 20 to 35 hours per week. To qualify for temporary census employment, an individual must:

- Be at least 18 years old (Persons age 16 and 17 may be hired for positions not involving driving, so long as they meet state and local employment requirements);
- Take a written test of basic skills;
- Pass a security background check;
- Not be currently employed as a law enforcement official, tax collector, or tax assessor;
- Agree not to engage in any partisan political activity while on duty;
- Have a reliable vehicle in order to complete job assignments.

These temporary jobs provide an opportunity for our clients to gain valuable training and employment experience. Clients should be informed about this opportunity and encouraged to apply for these temporary jobs. Interested persons may apply for these jobs by calling **1-866-861-2010** or by contacting their local census office.

Early Local Census Offices (ELCOs) were scheduled to be opened in October 2008 with the final offices opening in January 2009. Refer to [Attachment 1](#) for locations of the ELCOs. There will be 19 local census offices opening in the fall of 2009 in Altoona, Allentown, Beaver Falls, Greensburg, Johnstown, Lancaster, Langhorne, Media, Norristown, Philadelphia Frankford, Philadelphia West, State College, Williamsport and York. The sites for these offices have not been determined.

### **CASH ASSISTANCE (TANF/GA)**

Earned income from temporary census employment is excluded in determining eligibility for the TANF and GA Programs. The Department of Public Welfare (DPW) recognizes the advantages of the opportunity for TANF/GA recipients to gain employment experience and of providing a diverse staff to conduct a complete and accurate census; while also improving our work participation rates. The CAO worker must enter exemption code 03 on CAWAGE to exclude temporary census income for the cash program. Even though the income is excluded for TANF and GA, accurate hours worked and gross wages for all programs must be entered on CAWAGE for tracking purposes. These hours count towards the individual's total Work Participation Requirement. To identify these cases, the CAO worker must enter "Census Bureau-Temp Income" in the employer name field, along with the begin date, on CAEMPL.

**NOTE:** Temporary employment with the U.S. Census Bureau does not change the requirement to participate in TANF Random Sampling.

### **MA**

Earned income from temporary census employment is excluded in determining eligibility for MA. The Division of Health Services will file an amendment to Title XIX State Plan with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) concerning wages received by MA recipients and other low-income families who will have temporary employment with the Census Bureau for Census 2010. The CAO worker must enter exemption code 01 on CAWAGE to exclude temporary census income for MA programs.

## **SNAP (FORMERLY FS)**

Earned income from temporary census employment must be counted in determining eligibility for SNAP (FS). For combination cases, the CAO must remember to count this amount for SNAP (FS) and exclude for cash and MA.

## **SAR**

A SAR form is not considered incomplete for the Cash Assistance and MA programs if an individual fails to verify income for temporary census income, but the CAO must verify hours worked for work participation. A SAR form should be considered incomplete for SNAP (FS) if the individual fails to verify the temporary census income.

## **SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

Special allowances for supportive services will be authorized for both cash and SNAP (FS) recipients according to current policy for paid work activity. This includes a temporary census employee who is exempt, but volunteers to participate in ETP. Those clients who will have their transportation costs reimbursed by the Census Program will be required to sign a FIRM 176K Agreement and Authorization Claim reimbursement form before any allowance is authorized.

### **Next Steps**

1. Count verified temporary census income when determining eligibility for SNAP (FS).
2. Exclude verified temporary census income when determining eligibility for TANF, ETANF, GA, and MA Programs.
3. Inform applicants and recipients of the availability of 2010 census jobs and the special exclusion of this temporary income from cash and MA eligibility determinations.
4. This Operations Memorandum will become obsolete when this information is incorporated into the handbooks.