**DATE: September 12, 2019**

**OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #19-09-01**

**SUBJECT:** Treatment of Income from Temporary Census Bureau Employment

**TO:**  Executive Directors

**FROM:** Inez Titus

 Director

 Bureau of Operations

**PURPOSE**

 To announce how income from temporary employment with the Census Bureau is treated for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Medical Assistance (MA).

 To request County Assistance Offices (CAOs) to encourage applicants and recipients to apply for temporary Census Bureau employment.

**BACKGROUND**

 The United States (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 timeline indicates that the recruitment of “enumerators” will take place:

* in early 2019; and
* in the fall of 2019 for follow-up to individuals who have not yet responded to the initial Census outreach, beginning in spring/summer 2020.

 The U.S. Census Bureau will be hiring temporary workers for the 2020 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.
* Have a valid Social Security number.
* Be a U.S. citizen.
* Have a valid email address.
* Complete an online application and answer assessment questions. (Some assessment questions are available in Spanish; however, an English proficiency test may also be required.)
* Be registered with the Selective Service System or have a qualifying exemption, if you are a male born after Dec. 31, 1959.
* Pass a Census-performed criminal background check and a review of criminal records, including fingerprinting.
* Commit to completing training.
* Be available to work flexible hours, which can include days, evenings, and/or weekends.

 Most jobs require employees to:

* Have access to a vehicle and a valid driver’s license, unless public transportation is readily available.
* Have access to a computer with internet and an email account (to complete training).

 These temporary jobs provide an opportunity for individuals to gain valuable training and employment experience.  Clients should be informed about this opportunity and encouraged to apply for these temporary jobs.  Interested persons must apply for these jobs by completing the job application on the United States Census Bureau site <https://2020census.gov/en/jobs.html>.

**DISCUSSION**

**TANF**

 Earned income from temporary census employment is excluded in determining eligibility for TANF.  The Department of Human Services recognizes the advantages of the opportunity for TANF 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 must select code 03 from the Exemption Code dropdown on the Employment and Wages screen to exclude temporary census income for the cash program.  Even though the income is excluded for TANF, accurate hours worked and gross wages for all programs must be entered for tracking purposes.  These hours count towards the individual’s total Work Participation Requirement.  To identify these cases, the CAO must enter “Census Bureau-Temp Income” in the employer name field, along with the begin date on the Employment and Wages screen.

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

**MA**

 **Non-Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) MA**

Earned income from temporary census employment is excluded in determining eligibility for Non-MAGI MA.

**MAGI MA**

Earned income from temporary census employment must be counted for MAGI MA. If the total household monthly income exceeds the monthly income limit for MAGI MA, the CAO will complete an annualized income calculation. See MAEH Chapter 312.43.

For cases with a MAGI MA budget and another budget where census employment income is excluded, the CAO will review MA eligibility. The CAO should perform a manual calculation, use an exclusion code, and/or complete an override as necessary.

 **Example:**

Dennis and his 19-year-old tax dependent daughter, Farrah, are open for MA only. Dennis receives PH 00 M and Farrah receives MG 90 N with zero income. Dennis begins working for the census part-time and receives $680/week. He is expected to be finished working in three months (12 weeks).

* The gross monthly earned income is $2,720. For Supplemental Security Income-related MA, the net income is $1,317.50. For MAGI, the net income is $2,649.50 after the five percent earned income disregard.

ᵒ Dennis remains eligible for PH 00 M as the net income is under the two-person limit of $1,410.

▪ If Dennis’s category had changed, an override would need to be performed as this income is excluded for Non-MAGI MA.

ᵒ Farrah is determined over-income for MG 91 as the net income is over the two-person limit of $1,875.

* Complete an annual income calculation for Farrah.
* The annual gross income is $8,160 (three months at $2,720, nine months zero income). This is over the two-person Enhanced MNO limit of $7,020, but under the two-person MG 91 limit of $22,491.
* Perform an override to make Farrah eligible in MG 91. Narrate.

**SNAP**

 Earned income from temporary census employment is excluded in determining eligibility for SNAP. The CAO must select code 02 from the Exemption Code dropdown on the Employment and Wages screen to exclude temporary census income for the SNAP program. On July 19, 2019, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approved Pennsylvania’s request to participate in a demonstration project which allows states to exclude earned income from temporary census employment. This demonstration project is effective April 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020.

 Even though temporary census income is excluded for SNAP, the CAO will assign SNAP Qualification Code 05 to Able-Bodied Adult without Dependents (ABAWDs) who are working at least 20 hours per week averaged monthly, and who are not otherwise exempt from the ABAWD time limit.

**SAR**

 A SAR form is not considered incomplete for the TANF and Non-MAGI MA programs if an individual fails to verify income for temporary census income, but the CAO must verify hours worked for work participation.

**SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

 Special allowances for supportive services (SPALs) will be authorized for cash recipients according to current policy for paid work activity.  This includes a temporary census employee who is exempt, but volunteers to participate in an Employment and Training Program.  For SNAP-only participants, a SPAL may **only** be issued if the individual is enrolled in the job retention activity (AC 93). 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 MAGI MA.

2. Exclude verified temporary census income when determining eligibility for SNAP, TANF, Extended TANF, and Non-MAGI MA Programs.

3. Inform applicants and recipients of the availability of 2020 census jobs and the special exclusion of this temporary income from TANF and SNAP eligibility determinations.

4. Inform applicants and recipients of how census income is counted for MAGI and non-MAGI MA.

5. This Operations Memorandum will become obsolete in December 2020.