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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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Alexandria, VA
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SUBJECT: Food Stamp Nutrition Education Multi-Year Plan Guidance
Fiscal Years 2008, 2009, and 2010

TO: Food Stamp Program Directors
All Regions

Purpose: This memorandum provides instructions to State agencies selected to pilot test the submission of multi-year Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) State Plans. These supplementary instructions should be used along with the FSNE Guidance.

History: The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) expressly permitted the use of multi-year FSNE State Plans in past years but provided little specific guidance to assure that such plans were sufficient.

Multi-Year Concept: FNS is again exploring the concept of multi-year plans since the concept of such plans shows considerable promise of facilitating long term planning and reducing the burdens of the development, approval and clearance processes. As such, FNS would like to pilot test multi-year plans in a limited number of States and with more specific guidelines starting in Fiscal Year (FY) 2008. Testing it with select pilot States likely to succeed is an acceptable way to move the effort forward. If the pilot is successful, it may lead to additional roll out to other States in the future.

This pilot testing phase is subject to the following terms and conditions:

Selection Criteria: FNS developed objective criteria for selection of pilot test States. On the basis of those criteria, one State with high potential for successful implementation was selected from each region.

The selection criteria are based on States' past performance in the following areas:

- *Use of Templates:* The State agency utilizes all aspects of FNS templates provided in the Guidance within its plan. The templates are used to guide the process of developing a State Plan, ensuring that all requested information is timely, concise, and accurate.
- *Clarity of Goals and Objectives:* The State Plan has a maximum of three to four measurable objectives that are part of a well-organized and precisely written plan.
- *Annual FSNE Summary Reports:* Annual reports are consistently submitted and discuss the key FSNE interventions and outcomes of previous years' projects.
- *History of Past Compliance:* The State agency has an established ongoing record of fiscal and program integrity.
- *Program Stability:* The State has shown a high degree of program stability resulting from experienced and tenured staff, consistent and reliable partners, long-term proven projects, and stability in both project funding and size.

Pilot States: The following States are invited to pilot test multi-year plans.

- MARO - Virginia
- MWRO - Ohio
- SERO - Florida
- WRO - Idaho
- MPRO - Wyoming
- NERO - Vermont
- SWRO - Louisiana

These States are not required to participate. If a State declines to participate in the pilot, the region can offer the opportunity to another State within the same region that most closely meets the approved criteria.

Implementation:

- The pilot testing of multi-year plans will begin with FY 2008 and will cover a 3-year period, FYs 2008, 2009 and 2010.
- Annual FSNE summary reports are required.
- Continued use of all templates in the FSNE Guidance is required.
- All State plans must adhere to submission deadlines in the Guidance.
- Template 2 of the Guidance is pivotal in accurately detailing a State's approach to implementing a multi-year FSNE plan.
- See Attachment 1: Multi-Year Planning Implementation Guide, which describes what templates are to be submitted for each year of the multi-year cycle.

Non-Pilot States: States not participating in the pilot test group will continue to submit annual plans. At the conclusion of the 3-year pilot phase, or at a selected point during this period, FNS will determine whether the multi-year plan concept may effectively be extended to other State agencies. If so, any State agency that, in the opinion of FNS, meets the identified selection criteria would be entitled to multi-year status designation. This status would be dependent upon a State agency's continuing ability to meet the multi-year status criteria. "Multi-year status" States that continue to meet the set of established criteria for using a multi-year plan would continue in that status.

Assistance: FNS Regional Offices will provide technical assistance to State agencies regarding this pilot process, and encourage other States that are not part of the multi-year pilot to review and strengthen their plans. If this concept proves promising during the pilot phase, such State agencies will be well positioned for consideration for a multi-year status at the earliest opportunity.



Karen J. Walker
Director
Program Accountability Division

Attachment

Attachment 1: Multi-Year Planning Implementation Guide

Template Name	Completed In Year 1 For:			Year Submitted:	Submission Details
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Template 2. Section A Identifying and Understanding the Target Audience	Yes	No	No	1 st Year only*	Complete once during the 3-year cycle, assuming no changes. Submit the first year with the initial comprehensive State plan submission.
Template 2. Section B. Part 1.a. State Level FSNE Goals	Yes	No	No	1 st Year only*	States should use consistent goals over the 3-year cycle.
Template 2. Section B. Part 1.b. State Level Objectives	Yes	Yes	Yes	1 st Year Only*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete three separate times, once for each year of the multi-year cycle and submit together with the initial comprehensive State plan submission. • Objectives should be progressive and reflect the dynamic nature of a multi-year system as they evolve over 3-years in support of the program's FSNE goals. • States may amend nutrition education activities as necessary during the 3-year cycle; however, each amendment will require an updated plan submission.
Template 2. Section B. Part 2. FSNE Projects, Campaigns	Yes	Yes	Yes	1 st Year Only*	
Template 2. Section B: Part 3. FSNE Evaluation and Part 4. Coordination	Yes	Yes	Yes	1 st Year only*	
Template 3. Staffing	Yes	Yes	Yes	1 st Year only*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete three separate times, once for each year of the multi-year cycle. • Submit three templates together with the initial comprehensive State plan submission.
Template 5. Assurances	Yes	No	No	1 st Year only*	Complete and submit in year 1 for the full 3-year cycle.
Template 6: Waiver Request	Yes	Yes	Yes	1 st Year only*	Complete once for each project that requires a waiver over the three years. Under item #12 indicate the full period over the 3-years that the waiver will be in effect.

*Submission of information is required in year 1 only. If a change in the original focus occurs after year 1, an amendment of information is required in the year of the change.

Attachment 1 continued: Multi-Year Planning Implementation Guide

Template Name	Completed Annually			Year Submitted:	Submission Details
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Template 4. Budget Summary	Yes	Yes	Yes	3-year projected budget with annual submissions for each upcoming year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete once showing a <i>projected</i> budget for the 3-year cycle; and • Submit annually showing actual details for upcoming fiscal year. Due by August 15.
Template 7: Signatures	Yes	Yes	Yes	With each submission of a plan document or amendment	For each document or amendment that is provided to FNS, complete a signature page.
Template 8: Time and Effort Documentation	Yes	Yes	Yes	As required by regulations	Complete this document weekly as ongoing supportive documentation for staff paid through the FSNE funds and those contributing to this work through cost share. This includes volunteers. (Appendix C A.10)
Template 9: EARS Implementation Plan. Report on all applicable components of EARS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Annually starting FY 2008	<p>Submit an EARS Implementation Plan as part of the FY 2008 FSNE State Plan (see Template 9). The State's EARS Implementation Plans should clearly outline when the State anticipates it will be reporting data and information for each aspect of the EARS form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit an EARS implementation timeline as part of FY 2008 FSNE plan (See Template 9.) • By FY 2010, all State agencies must report all applicable components of EARS. • See appendix I for a copy of the EARS Form and instructions.