



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Fax 2000- 31
Field Operations Memo 2000-15
April 10, 2000

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: Treatment of Census Earnings

Background

The 2000 census is under way. Some of your clients may be accepting short-term jobs with the Census Bureau. These short-term jobs will generally last four to six weeks and may take place any time between now and 12/31/00.

The Department has received approval of a waiver request from USDA to exclude the income of short-term census employees effective 4/1/00 for food stamp purposes. Census earnings will not impact food stamp (FS/SSFSP) eligibility or benefit levels.

The income from short-term census employment will continue to count for cash assistance purposes.

This Field Operations memo provides instructions for identifying and coding census earnings.

**Identifying
Census 2000
Earnings**

USDA has confirmed that:

- most short-term census employees will be paid by the Census Bureau and employee pay stubs will indicate that *the employee is a temporary hire for Census 2000*; and

**Identifying
Census 2000
Earnings
(Continued)**

- some short-term census employees will not be paid by the census Bureau and the pay statement will not indicate a temporary census 2000 employment. **If the client claims that wages are from a short-term census job but the pay stub does not indicate census 2000 employment, the AU Manager must request additional verification.**
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**PACES
Worksheet
Entries**

To enter income earned from short-term census employment:

For Category 2 and 4 cases with PA food stamps benefits:

- ✓ Enter wages and hours on the PACES Worksheet in accordance with current procedures; **and**
- ✓ **Enter \$.01 in Section 21, Block L (Prin) of the worksheet.** This entry will tell PACES that the income is from short-term census employment. PACES will:
 - exclude this income in determining food stamp eligibility and benefit calculation; *and*
 - count this income in the cash benefit calculation.

Note: Make sure that the \$.01 entry in Block L is on the same line as the entered census income, and that only census income is entered on that line.

For Category 2 and 4 cases without PA Food Stamps:

- ✓ Enter wages and hours on the PACES Worksheet in accordance with current procedures.

For Category 9 cases, do not enter census 2000 wages.

**Issuing Lost
Benefits
Retroactive to
April 1, 2000**

If a client's monthly food stamp benefits for April 2000 were determined using short-term census 2000 earnings, the AU Manager must:

- ✓ for Category 2 and 4 cases with food stamp benefits, properly code the census 2000 income to adjust future monthly food stamp benefits, or for Category 9 cases remove census 2000 income from the worksheet; and
- ✓ issue a supplemental payment for the difference between the monthly food stamp benefits for April and May.

Issue benefits owed to an AU using blocks 60 and 61 of the PACES Input Document (PID).

If the AU Manager subsequently discovers, at a recertification or during an AU maintenance activity, that census 2000 earnings were incorrectly used to calculate food stamp benefits, the AU Manager must:

- ✓ for Category 2 and 4 cases with food stamp benefits, properly code the census 2000 income to adjust future monthly food stamp benefits, or for Category 9 cases remove census 2000 income from the worksheet;
- ✓ manually determine the total amount owed to the AU by adding the difference between the old and new monthly amount for each full month owed; and
- ✓ issue a supplemental payment to the client for the total amount owed.

Issue benefits owed to an AU using blocks 60 and 61 of the PACES Input Document (PID).

Posters

Posters (English and Spanish) will be shipped to each TAO telling food stamp clients that short-term census wages will not impact food stamp eligibility or benefit level. All TAOs must display these posters in a public area.

Questions

Policy-related questions should be referred by your Hotline Designee to the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478. Systems-related questions should be referred to the Customer Service Center at (617) 348-5290.
