

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection, Comment Request—Food Stamp Program: Operating Guidelines, Forms, and Waivers

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is publishing for public comment a summary of new information collection being required by proposed regulations. The proposed collection is an addition to collection currently approved under OMB No. 0584-0083.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by December 13, 1999, to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Send comments and requests for copies of this information collection to Jeffrey N. Cohen, Chief, Electronic Benefits Transfer Branch, Benefit Redemption Division, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302. Comments may also be datafaxed to Mr. Cohen at (703) 605-0232 or they may be transmitted by e-mail to jeff.cohen@fns.usda.gov.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information has a practical use; (b) the accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including

through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All comments will be summarized and included for the Office of Management and Budget approval of the information collection. All comments will become a matter of public record.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeffrey N. Cohen, telephone number (703) 305-2517.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Operating Guidelines, Forms and Waivers.

OMB Number: 0584-0083.

Expiration Date: October 2002.

Type of Request: Addition to a currently approved collection.

Abstract: On February 23, 1999, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published a proposed rule at 64 FR 8733 without including separate notice of a new information collection burden in OMB No. 0584-0083. This notice corrects that omission and explains the new information collection burden for Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system reporting.

EBT systems currently deliver about 67% of all Food Stamp Program (FSP) benefits. Forty-one States and the District of Columbia have EBT systems and thirty-four of those are implemented throughout the entire State or the District. In 1990, Congress allowed EBT as an option to States for the delivery of FSP benefits. In 1996 Congress mandated that all State agencies must deliver FSP benefits using EBT systems by October 1, 2002.

For the FSP, EBT systems move money from Federal accounts held in the name of each State to accounts at banks and other financial institutions held by or for food retailers. Retailers must first be authorized by FNS to accept food stamp benefits. States determine the eligibility and the monthly FSP allotments for recipients. They give each household a plastic EBT card and a Personal Identification Number (PIN). State EBT systems operate like a debit card system with an immediate decrement to the household account when the card and PIN are used for a food purchase. The amount of the purchase is credited to the food retailer account and funds are settled each bank working day through the Automated Clearinghouse (ACH) process.

The FSP EBT regulations are being revised to require the SAS No. 70 examinations and this will add new information collection burdens for States and auditors conducting SAS No. 70 examinations of EBT service providers. The SAS No. 70 examination results in a report on the policies and procedures placed in operation by the service provider and tests of their operating effectiveness. This kind of report is commonly referred to by auditors as a SAS No. 70 type 2 report. The new burden on State agencies is recordkeeping. The new burden on auditors is the examination and report.

Respondents: State agencies with Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) systems delivering Food Stamp Program benefits and auditors of EBT transaction processing service providers.

Number of respondents: 53 State agency respondents and 10 auditors of EBT transaction processing service providers.

Estimated number of responses per respondent: 1 response per State agency to retain and provide copies of SAS No. 70 examination reports annually. 10 auditors performing 2 SAS No. 70 examinations annually.

Estimate of the burden:

10 auditors at an estimated 2,704 hours or 27,040 hours annually.

53 State agencies at an estimated 0.25 hours or 13.25 hours annually.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 27,053.25 hours annually. [Operating Guidelines, Forms, and Waivers]

Dated: October 5, 1999.

Samuel Chambers, Jr.,

Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service.

[FR Doc. 99-26496 Filed 10-8-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 99-044N]

National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection will hold a public meeting