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§279.8 Implementation of amendments relating to administrative and judicial review.

(a) *Amendment No. 257*. The program change to §279.3(a)(4) shall be effective September 14, 1984.

(b) *Amendment No. 274*. The program change of *Amendment No. 274* at §279.10(d) is effective retroactively to December 23, 1985.

(c) *Amendment No. 334*. The program changes made to part 279 by this amendment are effective February 1, 1992.

[Amdt. 257, 49 FR 32539, Aug. 15, 1984; Amdt. 262, 49 FR 50598, Dec. 31, 1984, as amended by Amdt. 274, 51 FR 18752, May 21, 1986; Amdt. 334, 57 FR 3913, Feb. 3, 1992. Redesignated at 68 FR 41053, July 10, 2003]

PART 280—EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF DISASTERS

AUTHORITY: 7 U.S.C. 2011–2036.

EDITORIAL NOTE: OMB control numbers relating to this part 280 are contained in §271.8.

§280.1 Interim disaster procedures.

The Secretary shall, after consultation with the official empowered to exercise the authority provided for by section 302(a) of the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, establish temporary emergency standards of eligibility for the duration of the emergency for households who are victims of a disaster which disrupts commercial channels of food distribution, if such households are in need of temporary food assistance and if commercial channels of food distribution have again become available to meet the temporary food needs of such households. Such standards as are prescribed for individual emergencies may be promulgated without regard to section 4(c) of this Act or the procedures set forth in section 553 of Title 5 of the United States Code. In addition to establishing temporary emergency standards of eligibility, the Secretary shall provide for emergency allotments to eligible households to replace food destroyed in a disaster. Such emergency allotments would be equal to the value of the food actually lost in such disaster but not greater than the applicable maximum monthly allotment for the household size. The Secretary may also approve alternate methods for issuing food stamp benefits during a disaster when reliance on Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) systems is impracticable.

[Amdt. 192, 46 FR 8922, Jan. 27, 1981, as amended by Amdt. 338, 56 FR 63617, Dec. 4, 1991; Amdt. 397, 70 FR 72354, Dec. 5, 2005]

PART 281—ADMINISTRATION OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM ON INDIAN RESERVATIONS

Sec.

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AUTHORITY: 7 U.S.C. 2011–2036.

SOURCE: 44 FR 35925, June 19, 1979, unless otherwise noted.

§281.1 General purpose and scope.

(a) These regulations govern the operation of the Food Stamp Program on Indian reservations either separately or concurrently with the Food distribution program. In order to assure that the Food Stamp Program is responsive to the needs of Indians on reservations, State agencies are required to consult with Indian tribal organizations about the implementation and operation of the Food Stamp Program on reservations. Also, under certain specified conditions Indian tribal organizations on reservations can administer the Food Stamp Program. The Act authorizes the Secretary to pay such amounts for administrative costs as are determined to be necessary for the effective operation of the Food Stamp Program on Indian reservations.

(b) The operation of the Food Stamp Program on Indian reservations is governed by all of the terms and conditions set forth in the Food Stamp Act of 1977 as amended and the regulations of this chapter.

(c) Additionally, under no circumstances shall any household participate simultaneously in the Food Stamp Program and the Food Distribution Program. Policy governing this prohibition is found in § 283.7(e).

§ 281.2 Administration.

(a) *Qualification.* (1) The appropriate ITO of an established Indian reservation will qualify for participation under the provisions of this part, when that ITO files an application which demonstrates the status of an area as an established reservation, unless FNS determines that such area(s) does not qualify as a reservation, as that term is defined in these regulations. For purposes of this part, established reservation means the geographically defined area(s) currently recognized and established by Federal or State treaty or by Federal statute whereby such geographically defined area(s) is set aside for the use of Indians. Where such established areas exist, the appropriate ITO is presumed to exercise governmental jurisdiction, unless otherwise determined by FNS:

(2) The appropriate ITO for other areas, in order to qualify as reservations for the provisions of this part, must show to FNS:

(i) That the ITO exercises governmental jurisdiction over a geographic area(s) which enjoys legal recognition from the Federal or a State government and is set aside for the use of Indians.

(ii) A clear and precise description of the boundaries of such geographic area(s).

(3) Otherwise qualified areas for which the responsible ITO has requested operation of the Food Distribution Program alone in accordance with § 283.4, rather than concurrent operation with the Food Stamp Program, shall be exempt from the requirements of this part, and shall not be considered food stamp areas for any other purposes of this subchapter. Indian tribal households (households in which at least one adult member is recognized by the appropriate ITO as a tribal member) resident in these areas shall be ineligible for food stamp benefits. However, non-Indian tribal households resident in these areas may apply and be certified for food stamps at the State agency's certification office which would otherwise service the area. Otherwise qualified areas for which the responsible ITO has requested operation of the food distribution Program concurrently with the Food Stamp Program or areas within the reservation where FNS has determined that concurrent operation is necessary in accordance with § 283.3(b)(2) shall be subject to all requirements of this part and subchapter.

(b) *State plan.* In addition to the public comment requirements in § 272.2, the State agency shall submit for comment its service plans, and all other portions of the State plan that directly pertains to the operation of the Program for residents on the reservation to the responsible ITO for reservations that qualify under paragraph (a) of this section. The ITO shall have 30 days to provide comments in writing to the State agency. The State agency shall, if appropriate and to the extent practicable, incorporate into its plans any suggestions made by the ITO. Additionally, the State agency shall administer the Food Stamp Program in a manner that is responsive to the needs of the Indians on the reservation, as determined by ongoing consultation with the ITO and by other means, regarding such areas of program operation as project area designation, operating procedures, locations and hours of certification and issuance, staffing and corrective action plans. The State agency shall maintain records of consultations on State plans and ongoing consultations held with ITO's for review by FNS. FNS shall study these records as part of reviews in accord with § 281.3 and Management Evaluation Reviews of the State agency.

(c) *Project area designation.* (1) An Indian reservation shall be designated as a separate project area or areas for the purpose of improving the accessibility of program services to Indians on the reservation unless:

(i) The State agency demonstrates to FNS that the size or population of the reservation does not warrant such designation;

(ii) The State agency demonstrates to FNS that the tribe can be adequately served by the existing or a

planned project area because of the location of certification and issuance offices;

(iii) The State agency demonstrates to FNS that such designation would reduce the availability of certification and issuance offices; or

(iv) The State agency otherwise demonstrates to FNS that such designation would impair its Statewide administration of the Program.

(2) In the case where the Indian reservation boundaries cross State lines, the ITO and the appropriate State agencies may jointly request FNS approval that a single State agency administer the Food Stamp Program on all or part of the Indian reservation. A single agency of the State government would have to administer the Program under the same terms and conditions applied to all other political subdivisions within its jurisdiction. An ITO designated as a State agency pursuant to §281.4(d) would have to administer the Program under the same terms and conditions on all areas of the reservation.

(d) *Contracts with an Indian tribal organization*. The State agency may contract program functions to an ITO. These functions include, but are not limited to, outreach, preparation of bilingual materials on issuance. The State agency may also use the ITO in prescreening, translations, interpretive services and other noncertification functions. The State agency shall not contract responsibility for certification activities such as interviews or eligibility determinations. In all cases, the State agency shall retain full responsibility for program administration.

[44 FR 35925, June 19, 1979, as amended by Amdt. 207, 47 FR 52338, Nov. 19, 1982]

§281.3 Determination of failure.

(a) *Request for determination of State government agency failure*. FNS shall examine State agency adminstration of the Food Stamp Program on all or part of a reservation when requested by the ITO, the State agency or at FNS' discretion. When FNS determines that a deficiency in a State agency operation of the Food Stamp Program on all or part of an Indian reservation may be serious enough to warrant a review, FNS shall advise the State agency and the ITO in writing of the alleged deficiencies and of its plans to conduct the review and document deficiencies, if any are found. Subsequent to October 1, 1979 FNS shall complete these reviews within 90 days from receipt of an ITO's or State agency's request except under unusual circumstances such as the receipt of a large number of simultaneous requests.

(b) *Review*—(1) *Content of the review for State agency performance*. The review shall be designed to determine whether or not the State agency is properly administering the Food Stamp Program on a specific reservation. When an agency of State government is administering the Program on a reservation, FNS shall as a part of the review consult with the ITO about the operation of the Program on the reservation. The review should, depending on the nature of the complaint, include but not be limited to, an analysis of some or all of the following data:

(i) The records of State agency consultation with the ITO required under §281.2(a);

(ii) The estimated percentage of all eligible Indians on the reservation who are participating the Program;

(iii) The nature and extent of violations, if any, of the 30-day and other processing standards for Indians;

(iv) The percentage of errors made in determining eligibility and/or the amount of benefits overissued or underissued;

(v) Compliance with standards for location and hours of certification and issuance offices as required in §272.5;

(vi) Compliance with bilingual requirements of this regulation, where appropriate;

(vii) Compliance with nondiscrimination requirements of this regulation;

(viii) Compliance with other significant program requirements;

(ix) Comparison with services provided in all other areas of the State; and

(x) Any other relevant information that becomes available during the course of reviews including information received through contacts with the Indian tribe.

(2) *Finding of no or of minor deficiencies.* If after the review FNS determines either that deficiencies do not exist or that only minor deficiencies exist, FNS shall issue a report documenting its findings to both the State agency and the ITO and shall work closely with the State agency to achieve corrective action.

(c) *Formal warning.* After the review is completed, if FNS determines that major deficiencies exist, a formal warning shall be issued to the State, with a copy to the ITO. At a minimum, such warning shall indicate the State agency deficiencies and shall detail the basis upon which deficiencies were determined. The State shall have 30 days to respond with evidence that it is in compliance or to submit a corrective action proposal under part 276. If satisfactory compliance is achieved by the State agency on deficiencies cited in a formal warning, FNS shall notify the State, with a copy to the ITO, that the warning for those deficiences is satisfied.

(d) *Determination of failure and sanctions.* If at any time after the formal warning period, or during or after the corrective action period, FNS determines that major deficiencies still exist which the State agency has not satisfactorily addressed or is not satisfactorily addressing, FNS shall determine State failure and may impose appropriate Federal sanctions on the State agency as specified in part 276.

(e) *ITO operations.* If FNS has determined State failure and FNS has also determined that the ITO is capable of administering a Food Stamp Program in accordance with the terms and requirements for participating State agencies as established in the Act and regulations, then the ITO shall assume adminstration of the Food Stamp Program on the reservation. The State agency shall continue to administer the Food Stamp Program on the reservation until an effective termination and transition arrangement has been completed in accordance with § 281.8.

§ 281.4 Determining Indian tribal organization capability.

(a) *Determining capability of ITO.* If the ITO wishes to administer its own Food Stamp Program on the reservation FNS shall determine the ITO's potential capability for administering the Food Stamp Program in accordance with the criteria listed in § 281.4(b). FNS shall begin to evaluate the ITO's capability for all aspects of Food Stamp Program administration, allowing for fulfillment of that potential through necessary training and technical assistance, not later than the date of the issuance of the formal warning to the State agency.

(b) *ITO responsibility.* (1) The ITO must satisfy FNS that it is capable (if provided with any needed training and technical assistance) of administering the Food Stamp Program effectively and efficiently, and of complying with all provisions of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, and the regulations of this chapter, including provisions governing quality control procedures, fraud determinations, and establishment and collection of claims for both Indian and any non-Indian participants. The ITO shall provide FNS with the following information:

(i) *Operation of government programs.* The ITO shall provide FNS a list of all government programs that the ITO administers and has recently administered. FNS may ask the ITO to provide the names of appropriate officials of the government organizations having jurisdiction over these programs so FNS can obtain all relevant audits, GAO reports, program evaluations and any other documents pertaining to the effectiveness and efficiency of tribal administration of these programs. The ITO shall also provide FNS a list of its recent contractual responsibilities, if any, for the Food Stamp Program under § 281.2(b).

(ii) *Fiscal capabilities.* The ITO shall provide FNS documentation of its bookeeping and accounting procedures, including procedures in use for fiscal accountability under part 277 and for other government programs that the ITO administers.

(iii) *Projected certification and issuance facilities.* The ITO shall provide FNS with a description of the location of projected certification and issuance facilities.

(iv) *Fraud hearings and claims*. The ITO shall provide FNS with a description of how it will pursue fraud hearings and claims against Indian and non-Indian participants.

(v) *Staffing*. The ITO shall provide FNS with sufficient information to determine that personnel who will be used in the certification process will be employed under standards equivalent to current standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration or any standards later prescribed by the Office of Personnel Management under section 208 of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970.

(vi) *Civil rights assurance*. The ITO shall provide FNS an assurance that the ITO shall comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub. L. 88–352), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Pub. L. 94–135), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Pub. L. 99–112), section 504), and section 11(c) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 and all pertinent regulations or directives to the effect that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of sex, race, color, age, political belief, religion, handicap, or national origin, be denied benefits or otherwise be subject to discrimination under the Food Stamp Program. Where appropriate, FNS shall consider the adequacy of measures taken by the ITO to ensure that there shall be no discrimination.

(2) Prior to the determination of ITO capability, FNS shall consult with other sources such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to obtain any information relevant to the capability determination.

(3) If it is determined by FNS, after consultation with other sources such as the BIA, that the ITO is not capable of operating an efficient and effective Food Stamp Program, the agency of the State government shall continue to operate the Program on the reservation in accordance with §281.3.

(c) *Training and technical assistance*. Upon determining that the State agency has failed to properly administer the Food Stamp Program and that the ITO is potentially capable of operating an effective and efficient Food Stamp Program, FNS shall determine, based on information provided by the ITO and other sources such as BIA, the training and technical assistance which is necessary to assure efficient and effective program administration. FNS will assure that appropriate training and technical assistance is provided as expeditiously as possible prior to the ITO's assumption of the administration of the Food Stamp Program.

(d) *Assumption of duties*. When FNS is satisfied that the ITO has successfully completed (c) of this section, FNS shall designate the ITO as a State agency, contingent on the following:

(1) *State plans*. The ITO shall prepare and submit to FNS a Plan of Operation as provided in §272.2. In completing the Plan of Operation the ITO shall affirm that it will comply with the Civil Rights assurances detailed in (b)(1)(vi) of this section.

(2) *Proposed budget*. As part of the Plan of Operation, the ITO shall annually submit to FNS a proposed statement which shall provide a summary of program information and amounts budgeted to carry out the various program functions. This information shall be submitted to FNS for approval prior to the commitment of any Federal funds for administrative costs for that year. FNS shall provide the ITO any technical assistance which is necessary to prepare this information.

(3) *Termination and transition arrangement*. An effective termination and transition arrangement shall be established as required in §281.8.

§281.5 Responsibilities of an Indian tribal organization designated as State agency.

An ITO administering the Food Stamp Program on a reservation shall adhere to the Food Stamp Act of 1977, all subsequent amendments, and all regulations issued pursuant to that law in the same manner as any other State agency. The ITO may contract certain administrative functions to private organizations as provided in parts 274 and 277. The ITO may not, however, contract responsibility for certification activities such as interviews or eligibility determinations. The ITO shall retain full responsibility for program administration.

§281.6 Liabilities and sanctions.

An ITO administering the Food Stamp Program on a reservation is

subject to the same liabilities and Federal sanctions as is any other State agency. FNS shall monitor administration of the Program and conduct reviews through the Performance Reporting System described in part 275. When necessary, warning procedures and other Federal sanctions prescribed in part 276 will be implemented.

§ 281.7 Indian tribal organization failure.

When Performance Reporting System reviews indicate that continuing deficiencies exist and corrective action proposals (including training and technical assistance to overcome these deficiencies), and/or appropriate sanctions have not, in the opinion of FNS, resulted in a sufficient degree of improvement, FNS will conduct a review to determine if the ITO has failed to properly administer the Food Stamp Program. FNS shall examine the relevant factors specified in § 281.3(b)(1) and shall follow the notification and determination procedures set forth in § 281.3 (c) and (d). If ITO failure is determined, FNS shall require the appropriate agency of the State government to resume administration of the Program on the reservation in accordance with an approved termination and transition arrangement.

§ 281.8 Transfer of program administration.

The transfer of program administration from an agency of the State government to an ITO pursuant to a determination of failure as provided for in § 281.3, or from an ITO to an agency of the State government pursuant to § 281.7, shall be contingent on the establishment of an effective termination and transition arrangement and an approved Plan of Operation from the State agency assuming program administration. Grant closeout procedures shall be followed in accordance with part 277. FNS shall approve the transition plan, monitor its implementation and resolve any issues which may arise during the transition and after the transfer of program administration.

§ 281.9 Funding.

(a) *Agency of State government*. From the funds available to carry out this provision beginning July 1, 1979, FNS may pay to each agency of State government administering a Food Stamp Program on a reservation, 75 percent of all approved administrative costs, such as: Certification, issuance, outreach, fair hearings and quality control, incurred on the reservation for residents of the reservation and approved by FNS to meet standards set by the 1977 Food Stamp Act. FNS may pay each agency of State government administering a Food Stamp Program on a reservation 75 percent of all approved administrative costs incurred off the reservation for activities begun after the effective date of these regulations that are primarily directed at providing better services for Indians on the reservation, such as hiring an interpreter or an Indian outreach worker, or moving a certification or issuance center closer to a reservation. The provisions of part 277 apply to any funds received under this section.

(b) *Indian tribal organization acting as State agency*. From the funds available to carry out the provisions of this part beginning October 1, 1979, FNS is authorized to pay to each ITO acting as a State agency and administering a Food Stamp Program on a reservation 75 percent of all administrative costs approved by FNS as needed for operation of a Food Stamp Program on a reservation. Any approval for payment of funds in excess of 75 percent must be based on compelling justification that such additional amounts are necessary for the effective operation of the Food Stamp Program on the reservation. The provisions of part 277 apply to any funds received under this section.

§ 281.10 Appeals.

(a) *Failure/capability*. (1) Any State agency or ITO may appeal the determination made by FNS on:

(i) Whether or not the reservation definition is met;

(ii) The failure or absence of failure of an agency of State government to properly administer the Food Stamp Program;

(iii) The capability or incapability of an ITO to administer the Food Stamp Program;

(iv) The failure of an ITO to properly administer the Food Stamp Program;

(v) The Federal matching percentage level of administrative funding made available by FNS. To prevail the State agency must show a compelling justification that additional funding is needed for the effective administration of the Program on the reservation.

(2) At the time FNS advises the State agency or ITO of its determination, FNS shall also advise the State agency or ITO of its right to appeal and, except for appeals of funding determinations, shall advise the State agency or ITO of its right to request either a meeting to present its position in person or a review of the record. On appeals of funding determinations, FNS shall advise the State agency or ITO that it may indicate if it wishes a meeting, however, FNS need schedule a meeting only if FNS determines a meeting is warranted to reach a proper adjudication of the matter. Otherwise, FNS shall review supportive information submitted by the State agency or ITO in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(b) *Procedures*—(1) *Time limit*. Any State agency or ITO which wants to appeal an initial FNS determination under paragraph (a) of this section must notify the Administrator of FNS, in writing within 15 days from the date of the determination and must advise FNS if it wishes a meeting or a review of the record.

(2) *Acknowledgment*. Within five days of receipt by the Administrator of FNS of a request for review, FNS shall provide the State agency or ITO by certified mail, return receipt requested, with a written acknowledgement of the request. The acknowledgment shall include the name and address of the official designated by the Administrator to review the appeal. The acknowledgment shall also notify the State agency or ITO that within ten day of receipt of the acknowledgment, the State agency or ITO shall submit written information in support of its position.

(3) *Scheduling a meeting*. If the Administrator, FNS, grants a meeting FNS shall advise the State agency or ITO by certified mail, return receipt requested, of the time, date and location of the meeting at least ten days in advance of the meeting. FNS shall schedule and conduct the meeting and make a decision within 60 days of the receipt of the information submitted in response to paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(4) *Review*. If no meeting is conducted, the official designated by the Administrator, FNS, shall review information presented by a State agency or ITO which requests a review, and shall make a final determination in writing within 45 days of the receipt of the State agency's or ITO's information submitted in response to paragraph (b)(2) of this section setting forth in full the reasons for the determination.

(5) *Final decision*. The official's decision after a meeting or a review shall be final.

(c) *Funding and other sanctions*. Any State agency or ITO that wishes to appeal a funding determination made by FNS other than under (a)(5) of this section, or the application of a Federal sanction, shall follow the Administrative Review Procedures set forth in part 276.

PART 282—DEMONSTRATION, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION PROJECTS

Sec.
282.1 Legislative authority and notice requirements.
282.2 Funding.

AUTHORITY: 7 U.S.C. 2011–2036.

SOURCE: Amdt. 134, 43 FR 54215, Nov. 21, 1978, unless otherwise noted.

§ 282.1 Legislative authority and notice requirements.

(a) *Legislative authority*. Section 17 of the Act authorizes the Secretary to conduct demonstration, research, and evaluation projects. In conducting such projects, the Secretary may waive all or part of the requirements of the Act and implementing regulations necessary to conduct such projects, except that no project, other than a project involving the payment of the average value of allotments by household size