

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Food and Nutrition Service****Agency Information Collection  
Activities: Proposed Collection;  
Comment Request—Food Stamp  
Program—Food Stamp Application for  
Meal Services (Form FNS-252-2) and  
New Addendum for Corporations  
(Form FNS-252-C)**

**AGENCY:** Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has revised its Food Stamp Program Application for Meal Services, Form FNS-252-2. The form was revised to make it easier to read and to simplify information collected from meal services during the application process. In addition, FNS has developed a new, abbreviated addendum to the revised retailer application for corporations (chain stores). We are soliciting public comments on the content, format and design of the revised Form FNS-252-2 and the new Form FNS-252-C. We will begin using both forms when the new Store Tracking and Redemption Subsystem (STARS II) is in operation, approximately the fourth quarter of 2004.

**DATES:** Written comments must be submitted on or before February 23, 2004.

**ADDRESSES:** 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 practical utility; (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; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information of those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments are invited on the content, format and design of the revised Form FNS-252-2, Food Stamp Program Application for Meal Services, and the addendum for corporations, Form FNS-252-C. Comments should be sent to Karen Walker, Chief, Retailer Management Branch, Benefit Redemption Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of

Agriculture, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 404, Alexandria, VA 22302; FAX number (703) 305-1863; E-mail: [BRDHQ-WEB@fns.usda.gov](mailto:BRDHQ-WEB@fns.usda.gov). All submitted comments should refer to the title of this notice and/or the OMB approval number.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** The public can download copies of the revised Form FNS-252-2 or Form FNS-252-C from the FNS public Web site at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/retailers>. Readers may also request copies of these forms, or make requests for additional information, by contacting Karen Walker at (703) 305-2418 or via e-mail at [BRDHQ-WEB@fns.usda.gov](mailto:BRDHQ-WEB@fns.usda.gov). Requests submitted over e-mail should refer to the title of this notice and/or the OMB approval number in the subject line.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Title:** Food Stamp Program: Food Stamp Program Application for Meal Services, Form FNS-252-2, and the new addendum to the revised retailer application for corporations, Form FNS-252-C.

**OMB Number:** 0584-0008.

**Expiration Date:** May 31, 2004.

**Type of Request:** Revision of a currently approved collection.

**Abstract:** Section 9 of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2018) requires retail food stores to submit applications to FNS for approval prior to participating in the Food Stamp Program. This includes meal services and corporations. FNS field offices review applications to ensure that the firm is eligible and then authorize or deny a firm to accept and redeem Food Stamp Program benefits.

**Revised Meal Service Application  
(Form FNS-252-2)**

We know many applicant meal services have submitted incomplete or erroneous applications to field offices. This may be attributed to the ambiguity of the current meal service application and the technical language used. It is our belief that a simpler Form FNS-252-2 will result in fewer mistakes upfront and will reduce the time it takes for a field office to process it. Meal services will also benefit from a simplified application because they will better understand what information is being asked of them initially, and it is more likely a meal service will submit a complete application the first time.

To begin the revision process for the meal service application, a workgroup of FNS regional and field office staff were charged with identifying areas where the current Form FNS-252-2 could be improved to reduce and streamline information collected on the

application. While the revised Form FNS-252-2 has more pages than the current meal service application, it is a significant improvement over the current application in many ways. First, the language on the revised meal service application is clearer. We have provided applicants with a detailed explanation of the eligibility requirements for different types of meal services, specified which documentation is required for each type and asked better targeted questions. Secondly, we have increased the font size to aid in the readability of the form. Third, the form supports the President's E-GOV efforts and conforms to the requirements of the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) (Pub. L. 105-277, 44 U.S.C. 3504) by making the form compatible with current technology; it can easily be converted into an online application. A few questions have also been added to enable us to better determine the business integrity of the applicant.

**Addendum to Revised Retailer  
Application for Chain Stores (Form  
FNS-252-C)**

Form FNS-252-C is a shortened version of the revised retailer application, Form FNS-252, which was described in the 60-day notice published in the **Federal Register** on January 2, 2003 at 68 FR 79. All chain stores that participate in the Food Stamp Program will benefit from using Form FNS-252-C because it eliminates the need for each store to complete its own application. Instead, the corporation only completes one retailer application (Form FNS-252) for all of its chain stores and an abbreviated Form FNS-252-C for each store. The retailer application, Form FNS-252, will collect information that is universal to all of the chain's stores while the addendum, Form FNS-252-C, will collect information that is unique to each store such as the location and telephone number. This is a tremendous timesaving, especially to large corporations as it takes an average of 27 minutes to complete one Form FNS-252 as compared to 5 minutes to complete one Form FNS-252-C.

STARS I is in the process of being upgraded to STARS II to meet the growing needs of the field offices. The FNS contractor who is developing STARS II has developed a screen in STARS II for the new Form FNS-252-C that corporations can access online and enter information on each store under the corporation. With the online version, the information provided on Form FNS-252-C can be uploaded directly into STARS II. As such, corporations can easily enter