TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
   DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
   FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF

FROM: CHARLES HENRY, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RE: INTERVIEWING, COMPLETING FORMS AND REVIEWING CASE
    RECORDS OF FAMILY MEMBERS

PROGRAM AFFECTED: ALL PROGRAMS

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY, RESEARCH AND SYSTEMS

SUMMARY:

The Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 15-501(a) (1) states that “an official or
employee may not participate in a matter if: the official or employee or a qualifying relative
of the official or employee has an interest in the matter and the official or employee know of
the interest…” Section 15-102 (2) (gg) defines a qualifying relative as “a spouse, parent,
child, brother.”

This information memo addresses how DSS staff should handle processing and review of
cases when the applicant is a relative or close associate of that DSS staff.

REQUIRED ACTION:

Effective immediately, whenever possible a case shall be reassigned to an impartial
unrelated DSS staff to be worked or reviewed. The staff shall have no close association or
kinship with any household member of the case. Where there is a close association or
kinship the local staff shall disqualify himself or herself from the eligibility process. The
supervisor or designated agency staff shall reassign the case, immediately upon
discovering that the assigned staff person has an interest in the case. The disqualified staff
person shall have no participation in or discussion of the eligibility determination of the
case once it has been reassigned. The newly assigned staff shall not seek information
from or discuss the case with the disqualified staff.
In the smaller jurisdictions where there is only one local department staff person handling a particular program and no one else is available to process or review the case, the supervisor must review and approve the case before benefits are issued. If the supervisor or reviewer is a relative of anyone on the case then a supervisor or reviewer in another unit must review and approve the case before benefits are issued. The staff shall document thoroughly the circumstances of the case in the narrative along with the regular eligibility process.

**INQUIRIES**

Please direct policy questions to Gretchen Simpson (410) 767-7937.

cc: FIA Management Staff  
    Constituent Services  
    Help Desk  
    CTF