



Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore MD 21201

FIA INFORMATION MEMO

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**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