



Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore MD 21201

FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

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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 E. HENRY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RE: RECERTIFICATION

PROGRAM AFFECTED: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY, RESEARCH AND SYSTEMS

SUMMARY

This Action Transmittal is one of several that we will issue about the recently published Food Stamp regulation changes. We must implement many of the changes by June 1, 2001. The revised rules change the requirement for face-to-face interviews at recertification, require that we send a notice of missed interview when a household misses the recertification appointment and streamlines the procedures for delays in processing at recertification.

OLD POLICY

As part of the recertification process the case manager must conduct a face-to-face interview with a member of the household or its authorized representative at each recertification.

NEW POLICY

Face-to-face Interview

- ◆ As part of the recertification process the case manager must conduct a face-to-face interview with a member of the household or its authorized representative at least every 12 months for households certified for 12 months or less.

◆ **Local Department Option:**

- The local department may choose not to interview households at interim recertifications within the 12-month period.
- **This cannot be on case-by-case basis. The local department must establish categories and procedures that will be applied consistently to all cases to ensure non-discriminatory treatment.**

Example: The case manager assigns a 4-month certification period to a household that is in an unstable situation. The local department can send the household a mail-in application for the next two recertifications and schedule a face-to-face interview at the 12-month interval.

The policy about waiving the face-to-face interview for hardship reasons applies to the required face-to-face interview at 12-month intervals.

- ◆ The local department may also waive the face-to-face interview at recertification for hardship reasons.
- ◆ The local department must schedule the interview so that the household has at least 10 days after the interview to provide verification before the certification period expires.

Note: CARES will schedule recertification interviews for most cases well before the end of the certification period.

- ◆ If a household misses its scheduled interview, CARES sends a notice of missed interview along with the notice of closing.
- ◆ If the household misses its scheduled interview and requests another interview, the local department must schedule a second appointment.

Delayed Processing

◆ Household Files an Application before the end of the Certification Period

1. If an eligible household files an application before the end of the certification period but the recertification process cannot be completed within 30 days after the date of reapplication because of local department fault (see 406.5 of the Food Stamp Manual), the case manager must:
 - (a) Continue to process the case, and

- (b) Provide a full month's allotment for the first month of the new certification period.
- 2. If a household files an application before the end of the certification period, but fails to take a required action (i.e. submit verification), the case manager will deny the case at the end of the certification period. (The case will automatically close if required verification is not updated.)
 - (a) The household has 30 days after the end of the certification period to complete the process and have its application be treated the same as an application for recertification. Counties that have simplified recertification applications could use these instead of a longer application. Also policy for verification at recertification would apply.
 - (b) If the household takes the required action before the end of the certification period, the local department must provide a full month's benefits for the initial month of the new certification period.
 - (c) If the household takes the required action after the end of the certification period but within 30 days after the end of the certification period, the case manager will reopen the case and provide benefits back to the date that the household took the required action.

Example: The household was interviewed for recertification on May 5, 2001 at which time the agency requested verification of new shelter costs and earnings. The certification period ends May 31. The household provided the information on June 10. The case manager opens the household's case and prorates benefits from June 10.

◆ Household files an Application after the End of the Certification Period

- 1. If the household files an application within 30 days after the end of the certification period, the case manager will consider it as an application for recertification, but the benefits will be prorated from the date of the new application.
- 2. If a household's application for recertification is delayed beyond the first of the month of what would have been its new certification period through the fault of the local department, the case manager must restore benefits back to the date the household's certification should have begun.

CARES ACTION REQUIRED

The current CARES procedures are still in effect.

ACTION DUE

This policy is effective with recertification after June 1, 2001.

The option permitting the local department to choose not to interview households at interim recertifications within the 12-month period is an agency option. The local department may implement this policy at any time.

INQUIRIES

Please direct policy questions to Kay Finegan at (410) 767-7939.

cc: DHR Executive Staff
FIA Management Staff
Constituent Services
OIM Help Desk
RESI