



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: KEVIN M. MCGUIRE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**RE: WITHDRAWING FOOD STAMP APPLICATIONS**

**PROGRAM AFFECTED: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM**

**ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY, RESEARCH AND SYSTEMS**

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has advised us that they are becoming increasingly concerned about the number of customers who have contacted them about food stamp (FS) application processing. FNS indicates that case managers may not be respecting the voluntary nature of application withdrawals.

### **SUMMARY**

Food stamp regulations encourage people to apply for the Program. The withdrawal of a FS application must be a voluntary action by the customer. Any recommendation or suggestion by an agency employee that a customer withdraw the application impinges on the customer's right to file an application and is contradictory to FS regulations.

Case managers may be suggesting a withdrawal because they think the household is ineligible. This is essentially an eligibility decision made outside the scope of monitoring or record keeping. Case managers must not make informal decisions about eligibility.

Customers have the right to have their applications reviewed and eligibility determined based on all policy factors.

## **ACTION REQUIRED**

Case Managers **must**:

- Encourage customers to file an application for FS even if they are discouraged from filing a cash assistance application.
- Encourage customers to file an application at first contact with the local department.
- Remember the decision to withdraw an application must be the customer's decision for the customer's own reasons.
- Document in the case record narration why the customer withdrew the application and that contact was made with the household to confirm the withdrawal.
- Advise customers of the right to reapply at any time after a withdrawal.

**Case managers must not suggest that customers withdraw their FS application.**

Customers may **voluntarily** withdraw an application at any time prior to the determination of eligibility.

## **INQUIRES**

Please direct policy questions to Marilyn Lorenzo at 410-767-7333 or Kay Finegan at 410-767-7939.

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