



Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore MD 21201

FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

Control Number: #11-07

Effective Date: October 1, 2010

Issuance Date: October 4, 2010

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

FROM: KEVIN M. MCGUIRE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**RE: CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY FOR THE FOOD SUPPLEMENT
PROGRAM**

PROGRAM AFFECTED: FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF PROGRAMS

SUMMARY

In an effort to simplify the Food Supplement Program (FSP) eligibility process, we are expanding categorical eligibility to most households with income at or below 200 percent of the poverty level. This policy will also make more households potentially eligible for FSP benefits because there will be no asset test. The only households that are not included in expanded categorical eligibility are those that are excluded by federal rules.

To make this change we are applying federal policy that allows us to use a non-cash Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funded program to confer broad based categorical eligibility to FSP households. TANF funds were used to print the brochure, Family Planning, A Guide for You. This meets the criteria for broad based categorical eligibility. With broad based categorical eligibility, there is no requirement that there be minor children in the household.

A supply of these brochures was sent to local departments for you to give to customers if they request one. Give the customer the Family Planning brochure when the customer requests a copy. There is no requirement to give it to everyone. A copy of the brochure is attached. It is also translated into Spanish.

We are adding the following information to applications that are used for FSP:

Authorization to Receive Family Planning Information

If you want information, you can ask your case manager for a Family Planning Guide. You may also contact:

- 1-800-546-8900 if you need help in finding a provider for birth control or arranging prenatal care, or
- The Center for Maternal and Child Health at 410-767-6713
www.fha.state.md.us/mch

REVIEW OF CURRENT AND ONGOING POLICY:

- Categorical eligibility policy is in section 115 of the Food Supplement Program Manual.
- A household is not categorically eligible and is subject to all FSP eligibility and benefit provisions if:
 - Any member is disqualified for an intentional program violation (IPV) in accordance with Section 480.4 (Intentional Program Violation Disqualification Determination) of the FSP manual; or
 - The head of household is disqualified for failure to comply with the work requirements in accordance with Section 130.12 (Failure to Comply with Work Registration Requirements) of the FSP manual.
- Categorically eligible households are not subject to the gross and net income test and do not have to meet resource limits. This means we no longer verify vehicle or bank account ownership for the FSP.
- Categorical eligibility also extends to:
 - Individuals authorized to receive but who have not yet received a benefit;
 - Eligible TCA, SSI or PAA individuals whose benefits are suspended or recouped; or
 - Eligible TCA households that are not paid because the TCA grant is less than \$10.
- Eligibility factors that are accepted for FSP eligibility without the verification required in Section 408.3 because of categorical eligibility are:
 - Resources
 - Gross and net income limits
 - Sponsored immigrant information
 - Residency
 - Social security number information
- One and two person households that are categorically eligible are entitled to at least a \$16 per month allotment, even if the household's income is over scale.

Households larger than 2 persons are benefit ineligible if the income is over scale. CARES will deny or close categorically eligible cases that are benefit ineligible.

➤ FY 2011 200% of Monthly Federal Poverty Guidelines:

1	\$1806
2	2430
3	3052
4	3676
5	4300
6	4922
7	5546
8	6170

PAYMENT ACCURACY

Although this change simplifies policy and expands eligibility, it does not prevent Quality Control simplified reporting errors. Reporting errors can happen when a customer with income below 130 percent of the poverty level does not report when income goes over the 130 percent income limit. This policy did not change. It is important to review the change reporting requirement with customers at the time of application and redetermination. A copy of the change reporting guide is attached.

CARES PROCEDURES:

- Effective October 1, 2010, CARES is programmed to automatically determine the categorical eligibility of the household and the correct FSP benefit amount based on the household composition, household size, and income. Therefore, there is nothing new for case managers to enter during the interview and eligibility process.

Example: A single adult applies for benefits September 18. The customer has \$5,000 in a savings account. The case is approved October 5. CARES denies the case for September and approves the benefit for October.

- The **Cat Elig** field displays on the **FSFI** screen. This field displays a **C**, an **F**, or an **N**.
 1. **C** indicates the FSP household is categorically eligible due to the traditional reason of being the recipient of cash benefits.
 2. **F** indicates the FSP household is categorically eligible due to its meeting the definition of a “TANF Family” and the 200% gross income test.
 3. **N** indicates the FSP household is not considered to be categorically eligible under any category.

ACTION DUE

This policy is effective for all applications filed on or after October 1, 2010.

INQUIRIES

Please direct policy questions to Rick McClendon at 410-767-7307 and systems questions to Joyce Westbrook at 410-238-1299.

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

FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM REPORTING GUIDE

✓ **When you receive Food Supplement Program benefits:**

- You are required to report only when your family's entire gross monthly income is more than the amount listed in the chart for your household size.
- You are not required to report any other changes for your Food Supplement case. (But, if you think a change will increase benefits for your family, you should report it.)
- You should also report an address change so you receive your notices.

✓ **If you receive Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), Medical Assistance (MA), Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP) or Public Assistance to Adults (PAA) you must report all changes within 10 days.**

When you report a change for any program, your case manager will make the change for all programs.

- ✓ If your household income goes up, you must see if the total gross monthly income is more than the amount allowed for your household size.
- ✓ Gross income means the amount of earned or unearned income before any deductions, such as taxes or insurance premiums, are taken out.
- ✓ You must report this change no later than 10 days from the end of the month in which your income goes up. Add up the gross income that your household got for the month. Be sure to include both earned and unearned income.
- ✓ Call your case manager if your total income is more than the amounts listed below for your household size.

Household Size	Monthly Income Limit	Biweekly Income Limit	Weekly Income Limit
1	\$1174	\$587	\$293
2	1579	789	394
3	1984	992	496
4	2389	1194	597
5	2794	1397	698
6	3200	1600	800
7	3605	1802	901
8	4010	2005	1002
For more people add \$406		203	101

Reminder: You must report all changes to your case manager at your scheduled redetermination.