


Rosemary Malone

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES INCOME MAINTENANCE ADMINISTRATION</b> 211 W. Saratoga Street Timore, Maryland 21201	<b>IMA ACTION TRANSMITTAL</b>
	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> Upon Receipt
<b>ISSUANCE DATE:</b> March 22, 1996	<b>CONTROL NUMBER:</b> IMA OPA #96-31

**TO:** DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR INCOME MAINTENANCE  
INCOME MAINTENANCE SUPERVISORS

**FROM:** KEVIN MAHON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IMA 

**RE:** FOOD STAMP CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY FOR RECIPIENTS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO ADULTS

**PROGRAMS AFFECTED:** FOOD STAMPS

**ORIGINATING OFFICE:** OFFICE OF POLICY ADMINISTRATION

**BACKGROUND**

Local departments were informed of food stamp eligibility for certain Public Assistance to Adults (PAA) recipients living in group living arrangements in Action Transmittal IMA OPA 95-60 dated June 23, 1995, which was subsequently superseded by IMA OPA 96-16. The Food and Consumer Service (FCS) recently provided the following clarification regarding categorical eligibility for these customers.

**NEW POLICY**

The Food and Consumer Service regards PAA as a state administered/state funded supplement to Supplemental Security Income (SSI), falling under the definition of SSI. Recipients of PAA are categorically eligible for food stamps. They are also entitled to an uncapped shelter deduction and medical expenses exceeding \$35.

**REMINDER:** When determining eligibility for categorically eligible households, all food stamp program requirements apply except those elements verified and considered in the eligibility determination for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Transitional Emergency Medical and Housing Assistance (TEMHA), General Public Assistance to Pregnant Women (GPA-PW), PAA or SSI programs. They are listed below:

- a) Resources
- b) Gross and net income limits
- c) Residency
- d) Sponsored alien information - use income calculated for the cash program
- e) Social security number

All eligible one or two person households are entitled to the minimum benefit of \$10.

Zero benefit households - The local department may not deny an application of a categorically eligible household with three or more members entitled to no benefits because net income exceeds the level at which benefits are issued. It is unlikely a household will fall in this category. If it does, the case record must be kept in a location where it can be readily located. If a change occurs which makes the household eligible for food stamp benefits, they must be issued with no proration unless the change occurs in the initial month of application.

#### **ACTION REQUIRED**

##### AIMS

Continue to do the Food stamp calculation off line and enter the allotment on the AIMS 3. Since the case is in special processing thorough documentation is important.

##### CARES

A request was made for a CARES programming change. Until reprogramming is completed it will be necessary to use a work around to get the correct benefits if household assets exceed the limits.

Since PAA households must meet need requirements for PAA eligibility, it is not likely they will have assets exceeding the limits. If they do, code as follows:

- On the ASTI screen, if the customer's liquid assets exceed the resource limit, code them as "CO" - countable for cash or MA countable only, in the asset type field.
- On the AST2 screen, code a vehicle which exceeds the limit as "MA" - medical transportation, in the vehicle use field.
- To ensure the correct uncapped shelter deduction, on the DEM2 screen, enter "SI" - SSI, in the approval source field.

Revised Food Stamp Manual pages are attached and the on-line manual has been updated.

#### **ACTION DUE**

The policy is effective upon receipt of the transmittal.

#### **INQUIRIES**

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

DHR Executive Staff  
IMA Management Staff



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Definition of Categorical Eligibility

Categorical eligibility means that households in which all members receive or are authorized to receive AFDC, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Transitional Emergency, Medical, and Housing Assistance (TEMHA), General Public Assistance to Pregnant Women (GPA-PW) or Public Assistance to Adults (PAA) are considered eligible for food stamps. This could include a mix of AFDC, SSI, PAA, TEMHA or GPA-PW members.

Eligible individuals include:

- individuals who receive AFDC, SSI, PAA, GPA-PW, or TEMHA
- individuals authorized to receive AFDC, SSI, PAA, GPA-PW, or TEMHA but who have not yet received benefits,
- AFDC, PAA, or SSI eligibles whose benefits are suspended or recouped, and
- AFDC eligible individuals who are not paid because the grant is less than \$10.

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Application Processing

- A. In order to determine if a household will be eligible for food stamp benefits due to its status as an AFDC, GPA-PW, SSI, PAA, or TEMHA household, the local department may temporarily postpone, within the 30-day processing standard, the food stamp eligibility determination if the household is not entitled to expedited service and appears to be categorically eligible. The local department shall postpone denying a potentially categorically eligible household until the 30th day in case the household is determined eligible to receive AFDC, GPA-PW, SSI, PAA, or TEMHA benefits. Once the PA application is approved, the household is considered categorically eligible provided no exceptions listed in B below are applicable.
- B. A household is not categorically eligible and is subject to all food stamp eligibility and benefit provisions if:
- (1) All members of the household are institutionalized in accordance with 15 IMA 100.2D;
  - (2) A member is disqualified for an intentional program violation (IPV) in accordance with 15 IMA 480.4; or



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- (3) The head of household is disqualified for failure to comply with the work requirements in accordance with 15 IMA 130.

For TEMHA and GPA-PW households, in addition to B(1) - (3) above, if:

- (4) The household refuses to cooperate in providing information to the local department that is necessary for making a determination of its eligibility or for completing a review of its eligibility;
- (5) The household is disqualified under striker provisions in accordance with 15 IMA 101; or
- (6) The household is ineligible because it knowingly transferred resources for the purpose of qualifying for the food stamp program in accordance with 15 IMA 200.7.

C. If any of the following factors are questionable, the local department shall verify that the household:

- (1) Contains only members that are AFDC, GPA-PW, SSI, PAA, or TEMHA recipients;
- (2) Meets the household definition at 15 IMA 100;
- (3) Includes all persons who purchase and prepare food together regardless of whether they are separate units for cash programs; and
- (4) Includes no person who has been disqualified as provided for in paragraph B above.

D. Factors relating to food stamp benefit level determinations that are not verified for AFDC, GPA-PW, PAA or TEMHA purposes shall be verified if required in 15 IMA 408.3.

E. No person shall be included as a member in any household which is otherwise categorically eligible if that person is:

- (1) An ineligible alien as defined in 15 IMA 120;
- (2) Ineligible under the student provision in 15 IMA 102;



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- (3) Institutionalized in a non-exempt facility as defined in 15 IMA 100.2D; or
- (4) Ineligible because of failure to comply with a work requirement in accordance with 15 IMA 130.
- (5) For TEMHA and GPA-PW household members, a person disqualified for failure to provide or apply for a social security number as required in 15 IMA 105.

F. Eligibility factors which are accepted for food stamp eligibility without the verification required in 15 IMA 408.3 because of AFDC, PAA, or SSI eligibility are:

- (1) Resources
- (2) Gross and net income limits
- (3) Sponsored alien information
- (4) Residency
- (5) Social security number information

For TEMHA and GPA-PW recipients, F (1) - (4) are accepted as verified.

G. A household that has filed a joint PA-FS application and is denied food stamps but is later determined eligible for AFDC, GPA-PW, PAA or TEMHA, and is otherwise categorically eligible shall be issued benefits using the original application and any other pertinent information occurring subsequent to the application. For this reason, local departments shall ensure that the denied application is easily retrievable. The local department may not re-interview the household but may make mail or phone contact with the household or authorized representative to determine any changes in circumstances. Any changes shall be initialed and the updated application resigned by the authorized representative or household member.

H. Any household determined AFDC, GPA-PW, PAA, or TEMHA eligible which is categorically eligible within the 30-day food stamp processing time shall be provided benefits back to the date of the food stamp application. Benefits shall be prorated in accordance with 15 IMA 412. A household that files a joint application that is found categorically eligible after being denied NPA food stamps shall have its benefits for the initial month prorated from the date from which the PA benefits are payable, or the date of the original application, whichever is later. Categorical eligibility shall be assumed at recertification in the absence of a timely PA redetermination.



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- I. The local department shall act on re-evaluating the original application either at the household's request or when it becomes otherwise aware of the household's PA or SSI eligibility. The household shall be informed on the notice of denial to notify the local department if its AFDC, TEMHA, GPA-PW, PAA, or SSI benefits are approved.
- J. It is anticipated that there will be few eligible pure SSI, PAA, TEMHA, GPA-PW, or AFDC cases which have gross or net income which exceeds the limits at 15 IMA 600, or who have resources which exceed the limits at 15 IMA 200.1. In AIMS they must be done in special processing. It is essential that the eligibility worker is aware that a pure SSI, PAA, TEMHA, GPA-PW, or AFDC household has eligibility for food stamps without regard to the gross and net income limits and resource limits. CARES recognizes that a pure categorically eligible household is eligible.
- K. Since net income eligibility limits do not apply, one and two person households that are categorically eligible are entitled to at least a \$10 per month allotment. A categorically eligible household with three or more members, eligible for zero benefits, cannot be denied but must be kept open. Since this cannot be done on CARES or AIMS, the following action must taken:
- (1) The case must be filed so that it is easily retrievable for review when any change occurs during an established certification period.
  - (2) Advise the household in writing of its status and to report changes in household composition, income and expenses and of what changes will allow the household to convert from a non-pay status to issuance.
  - (3) Activate the case without requiring an additional face-to-face interview, and issue an allotment within 10 days of the date the household reports the change.
  - (4) If the household becomes eligible during the certification period, it must be opened with no proration of benefits.
- L. The resources of any household member who receives AFDC, SSI, or PAA are excluded.