



Department of Human Resources  
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## FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

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

**FROM: *Charles E. Henry for*  
KEVIN MAHON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIA**

**RE: CERTIFICATION PERIODS**

**PROGRAM AFFECTED: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM**

**ORIGINATING OFFICE: OPA/ DIVISION OF PROGRAM POLICY AND  
REGULATION**

### BACKGROUND

A provision of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, permits states more flexibility in assigning certification periods.

### OLD POLICY

Certification periods are assigned depending on the circumstances of the household, but cannot exceed 12 months.

### NEW POLICY

Certification periods are limited to 12 months, except that certification periods may be up to 24 months for households if all adult household members are elderly or disabled. At least one contact must be made with the household every 12 months.

An elderly or disabled household member is one who:

- ▶ Is age 60
- ▶ Receives SSI

- ▶ Receives state disability or blindness payments provided that the eligibility to receive the benefits is based upon criteria used under the Social Security Act (Public Assistance to Adults)
- ▶ Receives disability retirement benefits
- ▶ Receives disability payments from the Veteran's Administration (VA) equal to the full 100%
- ▶ Is a veteran or veteran's spouse considered by the VA to be in need of regular attendance or is housebound or a child of a veteran considered to be permanently disabled
- ▶ Is a surviving spouse or child of a veteran entitled to compensation for a service connected death or pension benefits from a non-service connected death and has a permanent disability
- ▶ Receives an annuity payment under the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 and is determined eligible to receive Medicare
- ▶ Is a recipient of interim assistance benefits pending receipt of SSI
- ▶ Is a recipient of disability related federal medical assistance

### **ACTION REQUIRED**

#### **AIMS**

The maximum allowable certification period in the AIMS system is 12 months. If a 24 month certification is appropriate, document the begin and end date of the certification period. A manual tracking system must be implemented to avoid unnecessary redeterminations resulting from the 12 month limitation.

At the end of 12 months of a 24-month certification period the customer must be contacted. The contact can be either by telephone or by receipt of a change report form.

#### **CARES**

##### **Applications:**

When a 24 month certification period is desired for new applications, complete the processing and finalization of the assistance unit as usual (a 12 month certification will result). Immediately after finalizing the AU, initiate a redetermination on the AU using Option N on the AMEN. Complete the redetermination using Option R, validating required fields as necessary. On the MISC screen enter a "Y" in the Calc Elig and Redetermination Complete fields to extend the certification for an additional 12 months. The total certification period for the AU will now be 24 months.

**Recertifications:**

To assign a 24 month certification period at recertification, complete the redetermination using Option R, validating required fields as necessary. On the MISC screen enter a "Y" in the Calc Elig and Redetermination Complete fields to complete the redetermination. In order to extend the certification period for an additional 12 months, initiate a redetermination on the AU using Option N on the AMEN. Update the necessary fields and enter a "Y" in the Calc Elig and Redetermination Complete fields. The total certification period for the AU will now be 24 months.

When a 24 month certification period is established, initiate a 745 alert for the 12th month as reminder to contact the customer.

**ACTION DUE**

The policy is effective with applications and recertifications dated on or after November 1, 1996. Please place the attached pages in the Food Stamp Manual. The On-line Manual will be updated by November 15, 1996.

**INQUIRIES**

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

cc: FIA Management Staff  
Constituent Services



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410.1 CERTIFICATION PERIODS

The local department shall establish definite periods of time within which households shall be eligible to receive benefits. At the expiration of each certification period, entitlement to food stamp benefits ends. Further eligibility shall be established only upon a recertification based upon a newly completed application, an interview, and such verification as required in section 408. Under no circumstances shall benefits be continued beyond the end of a certification period without a new determination of eligibility.

- A. Certification periods shall conform to calendar months. At initial application, the first month in the certification period shall generally be the month of application, even if the household's eligibility is not determined until a subsequent month. For example, if a household files an application in January and the application is not processed until February, a 6 month recertification period would include January through June. Upon recertification, the certification period will begin with the month following the last month of the previous certification period.
- B. Households in which all members are contained in a single PA grant shall have their food stamp recertifications scheduled, to the extent possible, at the same time they are redetermined for PA.
- C. Except as specified in the following paragraph, the local department shall assign these households food stamp certification periods which expire the same month as the household's PA/GA redetermination is due provided the food stamp certification periods do not exceed one year. If a PA/GA household has not had its PA/GA redetermination by the end of the 11th month following its initial certification or last redetermination, the local department shall send the household a notice of expiration of its food stamp certification period and recertify the household in accordance with the provisions of 440.3.
- D. Certification periods are limited to 12 months, except that certification periods may be up to 24 months if all adult household members are elderly or disabled as defined in section 212.2 of the Food Stamp Manual. At least one contact must be made with the household every 12 months.



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CERTIFICATION NOTICES TO HOUSEHOLDS

Initial Applications

The eligibility worker shall provide applicants with one of the following written notices as soon as a determination is made, but no later than 30 days after the date of the initial application:

A. Notice of eligibility

- (1) If an application is approved, the eligibility worker shall provide the household with written notice of the amount of the