



Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
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FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

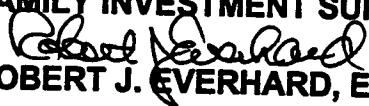
Control Number:

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

FROM: 
ROBERT J. EVERHARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RE: ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS – A NEW WAY OF
TRACKING AND A NEW WAIVER COUNTY

PROGRAM AFFECTED: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY, RESEARCH AND SYSTEMS

SUMMARY

Each year Maryland requests an exemption from the special work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) in jurisdictions that have a high unemployment rate or insufficient jobs. This transmittal includes information about an additional jurisdiction, Wicomico County, that the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) exempted from the ABAWD provisions.

This transmittal also includes policy for a caseload 36-month "clock" for ABAWDS that is simpler and less error prone. This method is based on new information from FNS.

OLD POLICY – 36-MONTH TRACKING

Most able-bodied adults without dependents are eligible for only 3 months in a 36-month period unless they meet special work requirements. When ABAWD policy was first implemented, Maryland chose to use a fixed 36-month period for each individual. The "clock" started November 1, 1996 for individuals in ongoing cases and upon eligibility for food stamps for individuals approved after November 1, 1996.

NEW POLICY – 36-MONTH TRACKING

To make tracking easier, we are switching to a 36-month period for the entire caseload. This means that for all ABAWDS the 36-month count began November 1, 1996 and ends October 31, 1999. The next 36-month period begins November 1, 1999 for the entire caseload and ends October 31, 2003.

Example: Mr. A applied for benefits March 3, 1999 and received his 1st free 3 months March, April and May. Although he does not meet the ABAWD work requirement to regain or maintain his food stamp eligibility, he can reapply on November 1, 1999 and, if eligible, receive another 1st free 3 months.

Example: Ms. B was receiving benefits November 1, 1996, when the ABAWD policy was implemented. She received her 1st free 3 months in November, December of 1996 and January 1997. She regained eligibility for a 2nd free 3 months and received benefits in September and October 1999. On November 1, 1999, the next 36-month period begins. If eligible, she receives her 1st free 3 months for this new 36-month period beginning November 1, 1999.

ONGOING AND NEW POLICY – EXEMPT JURISDICTIONS

Effective March 1, 1999, FNS exempted the following jurisdictions from the ABAWD work requirements:

- Garrett County
- Worcester County
- Dorchester County
- Allegany County
- Cecil County
- Kent County
- Somerset County
- Anne Arundel County (Annapolis City for insufficient jobs plus the balance of Anne Arundel County through the 15% exemption)
- Baltimore City
- Wicomico County was added to the list effective March 1, 1999.

See Action Transmittal FIA/OPA 97-81 for treatment of cases in exempt jurisdictions.

This information is included on page 19 of Section 130 – Work Requirements in the Interim Food Stamp Manual.

ACTION REQUIRED

CARES cannot automatically determine individuals affected by the ABAWD work requirement. The case manager must make this determination.

One person households in non-compliance with the ABAWD requirement:

- On the **STAT** screen enter the reason code **526 (DID NOT MEET ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENTS)** in the AU Status field. Press enter.
- Fast path to the **DONE** screen.
- Confirm FS denial or closing on the **ELIG** screen. Press enter.
- Confirm **FSFI** screen with \$0 benefit.

Two or more persons in Food Stamp household:

- If the HOH is the non-compliant individual, on the **STAT** screen, change the financial responsibility of the HOH in non-compliance to **NM** and enter reason code **526 (DID NOT MEET ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENTS)**. Press PF4.
- If the non-compliant individual has earned income, fast path to the individual's **ERN2** screen.
- Enter a 'Y' in the delete field and press PF24.
- If the non-compliant individual has unearned income, fast path to the **UINC** screen and place a 'Y' in the Delete field. Press PF24.
- On the **UINC** screen for a remaining eligible person, enter the total amount of income (less the 20% earned income deduction, if appropriate) that was deleted from the non-compliant individual's screens as 'OF' (**FOOD STAMP COUNTABLE ONLY**) with a Frequency of 'AC' (**ACTUAL**).
- Fast path to the **DONE** screen.
- Confirm the individual denial or closing. The non-compliant individual's Financial Responsibility code has changed to **NM** Press enter.
- The **FSFI** screen will reflect all countable income and the new allotment amount. Confirm the benefit and press enter.

Reminder: Always clearly document case actions in the narrative by pressing PF21 from the ADDR screen.

Workers should review clearances thoroughly. When the **526** reason code is displayed the customer must meet ABAWD work requirements to be eligible for Food Stamps.

ACTION DUE

The addition of Wicomico County as an exempt jurisdiction is effective March 1, 1999.
The change in tracking the 36-month count is effective July 1, 1999.

INQUIRIES

Please direct policy questions to Kay Finegan at (410) 767-7939 and systems questions to David Holland at (410) 767-8494.

cc: FIA Management Staff
Constituent Services
CIS Testing Facility
OIM Help Desk