



B. J. Walker, Commissioner

Department of Human Resources • Division of Family and Children Services • Mary Dean Harvey, Division Director
2 Peachtree Street, NW • Suite 19-490 • Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142 Phone: 404 657-5202 • Fax: 404 657-5105

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OFFICE OF FAMILY INDEPENDENCE MANUAL TRANSMITTAL 2008-23
Volume 3 Food Stamp Program
Manual Transmittal 23

TO: County Directors of Family and Children Services
State Directors
OFI Regional Managers
OFI State Operations Staff
OFI FS Program Specialists

FROM: Mary Dean Harvey, Director
Division of Family and Children Services

RE: Updates to the Food Stamp Program Manual

PURPOSE

The purpose of this transmittal is to implement changes to the Simplified Reporting Requirements (SRR) based on the SRR waiver. Policy has been changed to extend the period of eligibility (POE) to six months for ABAWDS and homeless AUs. ABAWDS have been added to the SRR reporting requirement. The terminology that the agency will act on changes “known to the agency” has been removed. The agency will act on specific changes related to AU circumstances at application and review. This transmittal also updates policies and procedures for application processing, prospective budgeting and transitional food stamps. Guidelines for the standard of promptness (SOP) delay reasons and coding instructions are added. Categorical eligibility has been expanded to include households that receive TANF Community Outreach Services (TCOS). A determination of food stamp eligibility is required prior to TCOS services. **The updates and clarifications for this transmittal are effective March 1, 2008.**

DISCUSSION

This manual material includes clarifications on policy contained in the following sections:

Section 3010, Voter Registration – The voter registration section is updated to include the current voter registration procedures.

Section 3040, HIPPA – The requirement to provide the “Notice of Privacy Practices” is changed to state that the form is provided to applicants for each initial application for benefits. The addition of an AU member to an existing case is considered an application for benefits. The form is sent to AU members age 18 and older.

Section 3105, Application Processing – The section is updated to provide the guidelines on when the notice of missed interview (NOMI) is sent if an applicant misses an interview appointment. These updates are made to align program policy with QC 310 Handbook. The definition of hardship is broadened to encourage the use of telephone interviews. Hardship now includes the care of a child <12 and applications received from various outreach activities. The (SOP) delay reasons and coding instructions are added to provide guidelines on how to report SOP data in SUCCESS and to validate the system generated report. The periods of eligibility (POE) are changed to align with SRR changes.

Section 3110, Expedited Application Processing – Policy is clarified to state that new changes, which are received and verified when postponed verification is returned for expedited applications, should be treated as an interim change.

Section 3210, Categorically Eligible – This updated section expands categorical eligibility to include AUs who receive TANF Employment Services including: Employment Intervention Services, (EIS), Transitional Support Services (TSS), Community Outreach Services (TCOS), Special Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Services, Foster Care Services (IV-D), or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Section 3211, Expanded Categorical Eligibility – TANF Community Outreach Services (TCOS). This updated section adds the policy for TCOS services. This is a new TANF program that provides information and referral services to households whose gross income falls below 130% of the federal poverty level (FPL). For elderly/disabled households, services are provided when the income falls below 200% of the FPL. The TCOS Brochure is provided to households at initial application and review. Resources are excluded for all households who receive these services.

Section 3310, Lawbreakers – No changes in policy; re-written to align with federal regulations.

Section 3605, Prospective Budgeting – Updates policy to state that the last three months of Child Support Services (CSS) history is used to determine representative monthly income. Because the CSS auto update is discontinued in SUCCESS, the auto update is no longer used to determine the best estimate of CSS income. Policy is also changed to state that for stable/fluctuating income, the four (4) most current consecutive weeks of pay should be used to determine representative income. Current means the most recent information available to determine representative income.

Section 3613, Standard Deduction – Updates the standard deductions for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007-2008.

Section 3614, Excess Medical Deduction – Adds to Chart 3614.1, Allowable Medical Costs, *long term care and nursing home insurance premiums* as allowable medical expenses if the premiums are used to cover nursing home care or live-in attendant care expenses.

Section 3615, Childcare Deduction – Policy is changed to state that information received from CAPS is primary verification of the childcare expense billed to the AU. No additional verification is required.

Section 3704, Transitional Food Stamps - Policy is clarified to state that transitional food stamp eligibility is based on TANF eligibility including periods with no cash payments.

Section 3705, Notification – Policy is clarified to state that timely notice is not required when an AU moves out of state.

Section 3710, Reviews – Broadens the definition of hardship to encourage the use of telephone interviews. Hardship now includes the care of a child <12 and applications received from various outreach activities. To assure consistency with application processing rules and to enhance customer service, an SOP of 5 days is added for acting on cases that are denied for failure to provide verification.

Section 3715, Interim Changes – SRR policy is broadened to include ABAWD AUs. Under SRR, ABAWDS are required to report when their employment hours fall below 20 hours per week and when gross income is over 130% of the FPL. A benefit of SRR policy is to reduce the number of AU changes during the 6-month certification period, which provides the agency with reduced QC errors, reduced staff workload and improved client access. The policy for completing changes to SRR AUs has also been changed. The agency will act on specific changes during the SRR POE. At application or review, the AU will be engaged in a discussion of all points of eligibility, and all changes or reports will be addressed. Policy for determining whether a change is reported untimely has been changed to align policy with the TANF program. Policy changed from “the day the AU first knew of the change” to the day in which the event occurs. The AU has 10 calendar days from the day the event occurs to report a change. Day one is the day following the date the event actually happens. Procedures have been added for processing changes in the head of AUs.

Section 3720, Reporting requirements – To reduce the number of errors, SRR policy is extended to include additional AUs. Under SRR, ABAWDS are required to report when their employment hours fall below 20 hours per week and when gross income is over 130% of the FPL.

Appendix B- Final Appeals – This section was updated to remove the Agency’s right to file an appeal to an initial or final hearing decision this action taken to conform to Federal Rules which do not allow state agencies to appeal OSAH decisions.

Appendix F- Adds the following forms to Appendix F: Forms 126 & 127 Self Employment Logs; Forms 173A, Appointment Letter; Form 173T-A- Appointment Letter for Telephone Interviews; Form 296- Expedited Food Stamps; Form 339- SRR Simplified Reporting Form; Form 821- SP Statement of Shelter Costs; Form 862 SP- Continuing your Foods Stamps; Form 862T SP- Continuing your Food Stamps Phone Interview; Form 875 SP- Verification of Educational Income and Expenses; and Form 880 –Verification Your Case manager May Ask When Applying for Food Stamps.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MANUAL MAINTENANCE

- Remove Section 3010, Voter Registration, and replace with the same.
- Remove Section 3040, HIPPA, and replace with the same.
- Remove Section 3105, Application Processing, and replace with the same.
- Remove Section 3210, Categorically Eligible, and replace with the same.
- Add Section 3211, TANF Community Outreach Services.
- Remove Section 3310, Lawbreakers, and replace with the same.
- Remove Section 3605, Prospective Budgeting, and replace with the same.
- Remove Section 3613, Standard Deduction, and replace with the same.
- Remove Section 3614, Excess Medical Deductions, and replace with the same.
- Remove Section 3615, Childcare Deduction, and replace with the same.
- Remove Section 3704, Transitional Food Stamps, and replace with the same.
- Remove Section 3705, Notification, and replace with the same.
- Remove Section 3710, Reviews, and replace with the same.
- Add Section 3716, Semiannual Report
- Remove Section 3720, Reporting Requirements, and replace with the same.
- Remove TOC and replace with the same.
- Add the following forms to Appendix F:

Form 126 & 127, Self Employment; Form 173-A, Appointment Letter; Form 173A-T, Appointment Letter for Telephone Interviews; Form 296, Expedited Food Stamps; Form 354, Income and Expenses; Form 821 SP, Statement of Shelter Costs; Form 862 SP, Continuing your Foods Stamps; Form 862T SP, Continuing your Food Stamps Phone Interview; Form 875 SP, Verification of Educational Income and Expenses; and Form 880, Applying for Food Stamps Required Verification.

Place Manual Transmittal 2008-23 Cover Letter following Manual Transmittal 2007-22 Cover Letter in Appendix C.

ON-LINE MANUAL (ODIS) UPDATE

The material in this manual transmittal will be updated in the ODIS system effective **March 1, 2008.**