2.2 FOOD STAMP BENEFITS

Case maintenance and corrective procedures specific to the Food Stamp program are outlined in this Section.

NOTE: When the Worker receives information about the Food Stamp AG during the certification period which requires additional clarification or verification, the Worker may request, but not require, that the client come into the office for an interview.

When reported information results in a change in benefits, proper notification is sent to the AG. See Chapter 6. Along with this notification, the Worker requests additional verification needed, if any, and states that failure to provide verification will result in the increased benefits reverting to the original allotment.

When additional or clarifying information is needed, the Worker must first request the information by using the ES-6 or verification checklist. If the client does not provide the information within the time frame specified by the Worker, the appropriate action is taken after advance notice. Changes reverting to the original **benefit amount** because of the client's failure to verify are subject to advance notice. **See Section 6.3.**

When a reported change results in a change in the certification period and the reporting requirements listed below, the client must receive notice of these changes. This is also included on the change in benefit notice.

A. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In addition to the sources listed in Section 2.1, the following are specific to the Food Stamp Program.

- Report Form, DFA-FS-2

  The DFA-FS-2 is mailed with computer-generated notification letters and provides the client with a means to report changes.

  When the Worker receives an DFA-FS-2, he makes any appropriate changes in the data system. When the information is unclear or follow-up is needed, the Worker contacts the client before taking action. Another DFA-FS-2 must be sent to clients who submit a completed DFA-FS-2.

- Data System Reports and Alerts

  See Chapter 3 for IEVS information. All Food Stamp benefit reports are found in MOBIUS.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The reporting requirements for Food Stamp recipients depend on the AG composition and length of certification. These reporting requirements are only for Food Stamp benefits and do not affect the reporting requirements of any other program of assistance that the AG also receives.

Regardless of the AG's reporting requirements, all changes reported directly by an AG member, the AG's authorized representative and/or authorized EBT cardholder, or from a source that is listed as verified upon receipt below must be acted on, even if the AG is not required to report the information.

EXCEPTION: The AG is not required to report any **periodic cost-of-living increases (COLA's)** in federal benefits, such as the yearly increase in RSDI, SSI, **Black Lung or VA** benefits. This exception does not apply to an individual change affecting the level of a client's benefits, only to mass changes. **See item D,8 below.**

The following outlines the 2 different reporting groups, their requirements and reporting timeframes. These requirements only apply to recipients.

1. Reporting Groups

a. Simplified Reporting AG's

All AG's subject to the 130% FPL income reporting requirements are certified for 6 months and must report when the total gross earned and unearned income **of the AG and all other individuals who reside with the AG** exceeds **the AG's gross income limit. This must be reported no later than** the 10th calendar day of the month following the month in which the change occurs. In addition, an ABAWD in an ILC must report when his work hours are reduced to less than 20 hours per week, averaged monthly. See item D,7 below.

EXAMPLE: An AG consists of a mother and 2 children and is certified for 6 months. The AG is required to report when the household's income exceeds the gross income limit for a 3-person AG. In the 3rd month, the children's father moves into the household. At the end of each month, the AG must consider all income sources. The father's income, when combined with the AG's, exceeds the limit for the original 3-person AG. The AG must report this by the 10th day of the 4th

month. The mother calls to report that the household's combined income exceeds the limit. The Worker determines the cause of the income change and must add the children's father since he is required to be included in the AG. See Section 9.1.

Even when the new household member is not required to be included in the AG, the excessive income must still be reported. When there is no required change to the AG, a recording must be made in case comments to explore other possible changes at the next redetermination.

EXAMPLE; Using the same situation above, if the man who moved in was not related to any of the AG members, and purchased and prepared his meals separate, the AG is still required to report the income change since the combined income exceeds the AG's limit. Once the Worker determines the cause of the income change, since no change is made to the AG, a recording is made and the situation is explored at the next redetermination.

b. Change Reporting AG's

All Food Stamp AG's, in which all adults are at least age 60, **which is considered elderly for the Food Stamp Program,** and/or disabled with no earnings or only excluded earnings, are certified for 24 months. These AG's may include individuals under age 18 as long as all adults are elderly and/or disabled. See Section 12.15,B for disability determination. These AG's must report the following changes which include, but are not limited to:

- Changes in AG composition;
- Changes of address, including when the AG moves;
- Changes in the amount of rent or utilities when the AG moves;
- Changes in the amount of assets;
- Changes in a legal obligation to pay child support;
- Changes in the AG's income, including:

- The onset of any non-excluded earned or unearned income

- A change in unearned income of more than $50.

Change Reporting AG's must report all required changes within 10 days of **onset or** knowledge of **the change.**

2. Changes Acted On For All Reporting Groups

a. Information Verified Upon Receipt

Action must be taken for all AG's when information is received from a source that is considered verified upon receipt. Verified upon receipt means that the information is not questionable and the provider is the primary source of the information. The only sources considered verified upon receipt are:

- BENDEX and SDX from SSA
- SAVE from INS
- Unemployment Compensation from WV BEP
- Workers' Compensation from WV Workers' Compensation
- FSE&T's information that a client did not comply with work requirements
- IFM's determination of an IPV
- Notification of application for benefits in another state

b. Changes Which are Considered Reported

The following are considered reported changes for the Food Stamp Program and require follow up and/or action for all AG's.

- Communication from an AG member, such as an office visit, telephone call or written statement to report a change for any program of assistance in RAPIDS; or

- Communication from **the AG's** documented authorized representative and/or authorized EBT cardholder on behalf of the AG. See Sections 1.4,E and 1.4,T. This does not include SSI/RSDI payees, unless they are also the authorized representative or EBT cardholder**; or**

- **Changes reported during** an application for burial assistance and **an** application or redetermination for **any** program of assistance which **is** entered in RAPIDS; or

- Information received on behalf of a client that results in changes being made in RAPIDS for **another** program of assistance.

  NOTE: This does not include information reported solely to verify eligibility for a TANF supportive service. See Section 24.14.

- Information received from any source which the client was required to report **for his Food Stamp benefits**. See item 1 above.

EXAMPLE: A call is received from the hospital informing the agency of the birth of a baby for Medicaid purposes. If the baby is added to the Medicaid AG, it is also added to the FS AG.

EXAMPLE: A report is received from QA that the income of a Simplified Reporting AG exceeds **the gross limit.** The information is acted on because the client is required to report it.

EXAMPLE: Mail is returned with a **Postal Service** sticker which indicates that the client moved out of West Virginia. For Change Reporting AG's, the case is closed after proper notice. For Simplified Reporting AG's, if the Medicaid **benefit** is updated, the FS benefit is **also** updated.

3. Timely Reporting And Follow-Up

To determine if a claim must be established or a lost benefit restored, a decision must be made as to whether or not a change was reported in a timely manner.

NOTE: When a client fails to report household expenses which would normally result in a deduction, the AG loses their entitlement to that deduction. They have a right to the expense once it is reported and verified, if necessary. Retroactive benefits are not issued.

NOTE: Change Reporting AG's are required to report shelter/utility expenses when they move, even if the AG has not previously reported any expenses.

Reported changes are not effective the month they are reported. See item C below to determine when a reported change is effective.

When the client does not report in a timely manner and the change could have been made earlier, a claim may be established. See Chapter 20.

Benefits are not restored when the change which would have increased benefits is not reported within the AG's appropriate time limit. See item 1 above.

4. Contact Reviews and Redeterminations for 24-Month AG's

a. 12-Month Contact Review Of Eligibility

All FS AG's **certified for** 24 months must have a review completed in the 12th month of eligibility. This review differs from a full-scale redetermination as follows:

- The 12-month contact review may be completed by mail or by inROADS; and

- No interview is conducted unless the client requests one; and

- Form DFA-FS-12 or inROADS is used.

RAPIDS automatically mails a DFA-FS-12 to the 24-month AG's in the 11th month. It must be returned by the 1st business day of the 12th month. The Worker must check the form after it is returned to determine if any changes are **required.** Changes reported on the DFA-FS-12 are treated as changes reported during the certification period, not as changes reported during the completion of a redetermination, **and** all adverse actions require advance notice.

The form is considered complete when an AG member initials item number 8 on the form. If item 8 is initialed, the form must be logged in RAPIDS as complete. Verification is not requested on the DFA-FS-12, nor is it required for the form to be considered complete. If a change is reported that requires verification, it must be requested using form ES-6. Failure to provide requested verification results in AG closure or loss of a deduction after advance notice.

Failure to return a completed DFA-FS-12, or complete the review through inROADS, results in case closure, after advance notice.

When the DFA-FS-12 is returned late, but is returned by the last day of the 12th month, no new application is required. Benefits are

not prorated when the form is returned by the last day of the 12th month. The AG must be scheduled for its next redetermination at the same time it would have been due had the form been returned on time.

When the DFA-FS-12 is returned by the last day of the 13th month, no OFS-2 is required for reapplication. Instead, the DFA-FS-12 is used as the application form. Benefits for the 13th month must be prorated from the date the DFA-FS-12 is received. The AG must be scheduled for its next redetermination at the same time it would have been due had the form been returned on time.

When the DFA-FS-12 is returned after the last day of the 13th month, full application procedures must be followed, including completion of the OFS-2 and establishment of a new redetermination cycle.

When the 12-month contact review is completed through inROADS, no additional form is required. The client completes the signature requirement electronically. This function in inROADS is only available to the client during the 12th month.

If the client wishes to complete the contact during the 13th month, he must complete form DFA-FS-12.

b. 24-Month Redetermination

All FS AG's **certified for** 24 months must have a redetermination completed by the end of the 24th month of eligibility. Under no circumstances are benefits continued beyond the last month of certification period, unless a redetermination is completed and the AG is determined eligible. The 24-month redetermination differs from the 12-month contact review as follows:

- The 24-month redetermination may be completed by mail or by inROADS.

- An interview is required regardless of the method in which the redetermination is completed. A telephone interview is conducted unless the client requests a face-to-face interview. When the redetermination is submitted, the Worker completes the interview based on the client's choice of interview methods. When a face-to-face interview is selected, the Worker must schedule the appointment. When

a telephone interview is selected, the Worker must attempt to contact the client as soon as possible. When the client chooses to complete a telephone interview, but no telephone number is available, a face-to-face interview must be scheduled. When the client chooses to complete a telephone interview, but the client cannot be reached in a reasonable amount of time, a telephone interview appointment must be scheduled.

- Form DFA-FS-24 or inROADS is used. When the redetermination is not submitted, but the client contacts the Department for the redetermination, the DFA-FS-24, inROADS redetermination or the OFS-2 and DFA-RR-1 may be used in the 24th month. The OFS-2 and DFA-RR-1 or inROADS application must be used if the client does not complete the redetermination in the 24th month and wishes to reapply after the 24th month. The client is only required to complete one redetermination form.

RAPIDS automatically mails the DFA-FS-24 in the 23rd month. It must be returned by the 1st business day of the 24th month. The redetermination must be processed within the same timeframes used for a 6-month redetermination. Changes reported on the DFA-FS-24 are treated as changes reported during the completion of a redetermination.

The form is considered complete when signed by the client or his representative. The redetermination is not complete until an interview is conducted. If the completed form is received before the end of the last month of the certification period, and requested verification is received by the given due date, the client must receive uninterrupted benefits.

Failure to complete a redetermination and interview results in case closure. Notice of closure is required, but advance notice is not required.

C. AGENCY TIME LIMITS

The first month that a reported change is effective is the month following the month the change is reported. The only exception to this is when the Department had the information prior to the month it is reported and failed to act on the information in a timely manner.

1. Increase In Benefits

a. Addition of an AG Member or a Decrease in Income of $50 or More

The change must be effective no later than the month following the month in which the change is reported. When the change is reported after the data system deadline, supplemental benefits must be issued and received by the 10th of the following month or by the AG's usual issuance cycle in that month, whichever is later.

immediately by calling the EBT Helpline or the DHHR Customer Service Center. Only EBT Helpline Customer Service Representatives and DHHR Customer Service Center staff can deactivate a card.

When the client calls the EBT Helpline first to stop cardholder access, he must still notify the DHHR Customer Service Center or the local office Worker of the cardholder change.

3. Change In Categorical Eligibility

When the client becomes eligible for WV WORKS or SSI, Categorical Eligibility may apply. See Chapter 1.

When case circumstances change so that the AG becomes eligible for additional disregards or deductions, the Worker must make data system changes and determine if supplemental benefits are required. See Chapter 10.

4. Change In AG

See item C,1,a above for changes in the AG which increase benefits. See item C,2 for changes in the AG which decrease benefits.

5. Change In Income

See item C,1,a and b above for changes in income which increase benefits. See item C,2 for income changes which decrease benefits.

NOTE: When a reported change in income results in a $0 benefit amount, the AG is closed after proper notice. This applies whether or not the AG is categorically eligible.

6. Change In Work Requirement Status

When a change is reported that results in a change in an individual's Food Stamp work requirements, the Worker must ensure on an ongoing basis that the status of each recipient, mandatory or exempt, is correct in RAPIDS. See Chapter 13.

7. Change In Work Hours (ILC Only)

Regardless of the AG's reporting requirement, an ABAWD must report when his work hours are reduced to less than 20 hours per week, averaged monthly. Upon receipt of such a report, the Worker must immediately determine if the client remains eligible. See Section 9.1.A.

8. Cost-Of-Living Increases In Federal Benefits

Recipients of federal benefits such as RSDI, SSI, Black Lung or VA Benefits may receive periodic cost-of-living increases (COLA's). RSDI/SSI increases are handled in accordance with instructions in Appendix B of this Chapter. All other federal benefit cost-of-living increases are treated as any other change, except that the client is not required to report the change **nor is repayment required when the client fails to do so.**

9. Change Of Address

A change of address is made in the data system as soon as the client reports it. Any other changes which the client reports, in addition to the address change, are also acted on at the same time, when notice requirements permit.

A change of address after deadline does not affect receipt of Food Stamp benefits in an EBT account. When the client requests a replacement EBT card and his address has changed, the address change must be made in RAPIDS before the new card is issued to insure the card is sent to the correct address.

NOTE: For EBT, changes in the payee, address and authorized cardholder can be made immediately since files are sent to the vendor overnight and changes are not restricted to RAPIDS deadlines.

10. Continuation Of Benefits

When a WV WORKS or Medicaid AG, also certified for Food Stamps, is closed, and there is enough information to continue Food Stamps, the Food Stamps must continue with no interruption in benefits. When notification of the closure is sent, it must also state that the AG continues to be eligible for Food Stamps. See Chapter 6. It is expected most AG's will continue to be eligible.

A new OFS-2 is not required. See Chapter 1 for establishing the redetermination date.