

From the Hotline

Q. I am sanctioning a recipient for failing to comply with a TAFDC requirement. As a result of the sanction the case is going to close. How much income do I enter to ensure the food stamp benefits do not increase as a result of the sanction?

A. For each sanctioned recipient without earned income, you must enter \$86.00 as Type "FS" income on line 20 FIW2 Section of the PACES Worksheet.

For each sanctioned recipient with earned income, you must enter \$86.00 plus any earnings up to \$90.00 as Type "FS" income on line 20 FIW2 Section of the PACES Worksheet.

If two or more persons are subject to a sanction in the same case, enter the appropriate amounts of Type "FS" income for each sanctioned individual when the case closes. See Field Operations Memo 96-32.

Q. I sanctioned a teen parent for failure to go to school and am now ready to close the case for AR 79. Do I enter Type "FS" income for both the teen parent and her child?

A. No, enter \$86.00 for the sanctioned teen parent only. The Type "FS" income follows the sanctioned household member(s) so that the food stamp allotment does not increase as a result of the cash program penalty. The entry of this income is not intended to decrease the food stamp benefits.

Q. I sanctioned a recipient for failing to comply with a cash program requirement. How long must the FS income remain on file?

A. The countable sanction amount must remain on file until the sanction has been cured, the disqualification penalty removed, the reason for the sanction no longer exists or the sanction cannot be cured. *For example,*

- The sanction is cured if a TAFDC recipient, sanctioned for refusing a 20-hour-per-week TEMP placement (AR 27), subsequently begins working 20 hours per week.
- The reason for a Learnfare (AR 95) sanction would no longer exist if the child who is not meeting the Learnfare requirements turns 14.

- If a TAFDC recipient sanctioned for not complying with Child Support (AR 66), begins working and the case closes due to excess earnings, the sanction cannot be cured.

The Type "FS" income previously entered as the countable sanction amount must be zeroed out when the sanction is cured, the disqualification penalty is removed, the reason for the sanction no longer exists or the sanction cannot be cured. Field Operations Memo 97-40 describes the Failure to Comply with Cash Sanction Reports. Be sure to respond to the Cash Benefit Sanction Alert in PRISM.

Q. A food stamp case Devered to category 9 as a result of a cash case sanction. I entered the "FS" income amount as a result of a Cash Benefit Sanction alert on PRISM. How long must the "FS" income remain on file?

A. The Type "FS" income amount must remain on file until the sanction has been cured, the disqualification penalty removed, the reason for the sanction no longer exists or the sanction cannot be cured. *For example,*

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- The sanction is cured if the TAFDC recipient sanctioned for refusing a 20-hour-per-week TEMP placement (AR 27) complies with the Food Stamp E&T or Work Program requirements.
- The reason for a Learnfare (AR 95) sanction would no longer exist if the child who is not meeting the Learnfare requirements turns age 14.
- If a TAFDC recipient is sanctioned for failure to comply with the Work Program (AR 73) and the former recipient begins receiving child support, which makes the case ineligible for TAFDC, the sanction cannot be cured.

The Type "FS" income previously entered as the countable sanction amount must be zeroed out when the sanction is cured, the disqualification penalty is removed, the reason for the sanction no longer exists or the sanction cannot be cured.



- Q. I have a combination food stamp case (FS/SSFSP) due to noncitizen status. All assistance unit members are receiving TAFDC. For shelter proration purposes, is TAFDC considered income?
- A. Shelter costs must be prorated if shelter costs are paid by or billed to the SSFSP member *and* the SSFSP member has income. **Either earned or unearned income, including a cash assistance grant, is considered income to the SSFSP member.** See Field Operations Memo 98-8.
- Q. A food stamp recipient sent in her wage stubs. Her earnings are as follows: *WEEK 1: \$175, WEEK 2: \$35, WEEK 3: \$160, WEEK 4: \$185, WEEK 5: \$170, WEEK 6: \$190.* How do I calculate the income?
- A. Do not use WEEK 2 in averaging the recipient's income if WEEK 2 represents a clear departure from the norm (i.e., week with reduced earnings due to illness or a week with excess earnings due to overtime). Be sure to note the reason for the change in earnings in the case record. To determine the countable amount you must:
- Add the five weeks of pay ($\$175 + \$160 + \$185 + \$170 + \$190 = \880);
- Divide the total by 5 ($\$880/5 = \176);
- Multiply the quotient by 4.333 ($\$176 \times 4.333 = \762.61);
- Enter \$762.61 on Line 20 of the FIW2 section of the PACES Worksheet;
- Enter an X in the 4 1/3 block.
- Q. I have a 25-year-old woman who resides with her parents. She purchases and prepares her food separately from her parents. She pays 1/3 of the utilities including heat, electricity and phone. What SUA amount do I use to calculate her food stamp benefits?
- A. She is entitled to a prorated heating SUA since she pays toward the heat, electricity and phone. To determine the prorated amount, the number of assistance units must be determined. In this example, there are two assistance units: the 25-year-old is one assistance unit; her parents (spouse rule requires the parents be in the same assistance unit) are the other assistance unit. She would be entitled to 1/2 the heating SUA or \$165.00. The standard utility allowances and their prorated amounts are listed in 106 CMR 364.945.