

cc. Olt, RB, Rosics, MIRA
Proj Bd -



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FAX 00-44
Field Operations Memo 2000-18
May 30, 2000

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: Food Stamp Case (PA and NPA) Desk Review Project

Background

The food stamp error rate continues to rise. If the error rate does not improve quickly, the Department will face fiscal sanctions.

Food stamp error rate is a top priority with the Department. To reduce the error rate in the final quarters of Federal Fiscal Year 2000 and avoid possible sanction, desk reviews must be completed on all food stamp cases listed on the *Food Stamp Desk Review* report.

The Federal Fiscal Year ends on 9/30/2000. For the desk review project to have a substantial impact in reducing errors, as many cases as possible must be reviewed by July 15, 2000.

Note: The desk review project will continue for cases not reviewed by the July 15, 2000 deadline.

Purpose of Memo

This Field Operations Memo:

- ◆ Provides instructions and information on the scope of the food stamp desk review project;
- ◆ Identifies AU Manager, Supervisor and TAO Director/Designee responsibilities in completing food stamp desk reviews;
- ◆ Describes the *Food Stamp Desk Review* report; and
- ◆ Transmits the Food Stamp Desk Review Guide (FSDR, 5/2000) and Food Stamp Desk Review Summary Sheet (FSDR-2, 5/2000) forms (See Attachments A and B).

**Food Stamp Desk
Review Project**

Each AU Manager will receive a listing of their federal-only and combination (FS/SSFSP) food stamp cases on the *Food Stamp Desk Review* report. SSFSP-only cases will not be listed on this report.

All PA and NPA food stamp cases which appear on the report must be reviewed using the Food Stamp Desk Review Guide. The Desk Review Guide was developed for this project. The Desk Review Guide focuses on current error-prone areas as identified by Program Assessment. **A “no” answer in the far right column of the Desk Review Guide indicates that AU Manager and/or Supervisor action is required.**

The *Food Stamp Desk Review* report lists assistance units with the highest bonus values first.

***Note:* Please, whenever possible, review cases in the order listed on the report, as corrections to these cases could have a more substantial impact on the error rate since these errors could be the largest.**

It also lists the following information for each assistance unit: category, case social security number, case name, household size, benefit amount, earned income, unearned income, social security, shelter and utility amounts. There are fields for the AU Manager to code the action/result and date of the desk review. Action/Result codes are defined as follows:

C = Change
NC = No Change
CP = Case Closed Prior to Date of Desk Review

Food stamp cases handled by the Centralized TAFDC Office and the SSI Regional Offices will not be part of this review. A separate desk review process will be developed for these food stamp cases.

**AU Manager
Responsibilities**

The AU Manager must:

- ♦ Review each food stamp case listed on the *Food Stamp Desk Review* report using the Food Stamp Desk Review Guide;
 - Be sure to pay special attention to the hints on the Desk Review Guide.
 - Refer to the food stamp regulations to research and clarify any policy questions.
 - A “no” answer in the far right column of the Desk Review Guide indicates that AU Manager and/or Supervisor action is required.
- ♦ Contact the food stamp recipient if information is questionable or further verification is needed;
- ♦ Complete PACES Input Documents (PIDs) and Worksheets as necessary to adjust the food stamp case;
- ♦ Sign and date the Desk Review Guide;
- ♦ Give the Desk Review Guide and accompanying documents to the Supervisor for review;
- ♦ Annotate the *Food Stamp Desk Review* report with the action/result code and date of the desk review; and
- ♦ Submit a copy of the annotated *Food Stamp Desk Review* report to the Supervisor each week.

**Supervisor
Responsibilities**

The Supervisor must:

- ♦ Review Food Stamp Desk Review Guides with changes as well as all combination (FS/SSFSP) cases and accompanying documents to ensure correctness;
Note: Supervisors may, in appropriate instances, review additional cases which do not contain changes.
- ♦ A “no” answer in the far right column of the Desk Review Guide indicates that AU Manager and/or Supervisor action is required.
- ♦ Return the case to the AU Manager for corrections, if necessary;
- ♦ Sign and date each Desk Review Guide that was reviewed;
- ♦ File a copy of Desk Review Guide in the case record; and
- ♦ Summarize annotated report information each week for the TAO Director/Designee.

**TAO
Director/Designee
Responsibilities**

The TAO Director/Designee must:

- ♦ Complete the Summary Sheet (FSDR-2, 5/2000) form;
 - ♦ Monitor and track the progress of the Food Stamp Case Review project; and
 - ♦ Submit the completed Summary Sheet (FSDR-2, 5/2000) to the Regional Director by the close of business each Monday for the prior week.
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Transfer Cases

Before transferring a case, it is the responsibility of the current worker:

- ♦ to review a case listed on the *Food Stamp Desk Review* report, take any required action(s); and
- ♦ to follow the review procedures found in this memo.

If the case has already been transferred inform the Director/Designee who will:

- ♦ forward a copy of the *Food Stamp Desk Review* report to the new TAO indicating that the case is part of the *Food Stamp Desk Review* project.
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**The Food Stamp
Desk Review
Report**

The Food Stamp Desk Review report identifies the federal-only and combination (FS/SSFSP) food stamp cases for each AU Manager. SSFSP-only cases do not appear on the report.

This report will be produced and shipped from Schrafft's.

Questions

Policy-related questions should be referred by your Hotline Designee to the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478. Systems-related questions should be referred to Systems Customer Support Services at (617) 348-5290.



Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
FOOD STAMP DESK REVIEW GUIDE

Case Name _____

Case SSN _____

TAO _____ CAN _____ Date _____

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION	
<p>1. Are any individuals included in the federal food stamp household noncitizens? <i>If yes, answer questions 1a, 1b, 1c.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <i>If no, go to question 2.</i></p>	
<p>1a) Is there documentation about the status for each noncitizen that allows the individual to be included in the federal food stamp household? <i>Hint: Check the citizenship status of each individual in the food stamp case to assure citizenship requirements are met.</i> <i>Manual Citation: 362.220 (A) Federal Noncitizen Status</i> <i>362.220 (B) SSFSP Noncitizen Status</i> <i>362.220(C) Noncitizen Verifications</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>1b) If properly documented, does the individual meet the other requirements, such as 40 work quarters? <i>Hint: For those noncitizens who are eligible based upon other criteria, review those criteria to assure the individual meets the 40-quarter requirement.</i> <i>Manual Citation: 362.220(A)</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>1c) Is the individual/case properly coded on PRISM/PACES? <i>Hint: Check that the coding on PRISM and PACES reflects the individual and case situation.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>2. Is there an SSFSP-eligible member(s) in the food stamp household? <i>If yes, answer questions 2a and 2b.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <i>If no, go to question 3.</i></p>	
<p>2a) Does the citizenship documentation support exclusion of the individual from the federal food stamp case? <i>Hint: Check the citizenship requirement of every member of the household to see if each one now meets the citizenship requirement and should be included in the federal food stamp case.</i> <i>Manual Citation: 362.220 (A) Federal Noncitizen Status</i> <i>362.220 (B) SSFSP Noncitizen Status</i> <i>362.220(C) Noncitizen Verifications</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>2b) Is the individual/case properly coded on PRISM/PACES? <i>Hint: Check that the coding on PRISM and PACES reflects the individual and case situation.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>3. Does anything in the case record and/or computer screens indicate that there are other people living with the food stamp household? <i>If yes, answer questions 3a and 3b.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <i>If no, go to question 4.</i></p>	

<p>3a) Do these people purchase and prepare separately from the food stamp household? <i>Hint #1: Are any of these people required to be in the food stamp household?</i> <i>Hint #2: See Food Stamp Household Composition Deskguide.</i> <i>Manual Citation: 361.200</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p>
<p>3b) Are all individuals required to be in the food stamp household included in it? <i>Hint #1: Spouses must always be in the same food stamp household.</i> <i>Hint #2: Children under the age of 18 must always be in the same food stamp household if they live with someone exercising parental control.</i> <i>Hint #3: Parents and natural, adopted, or stepchildren under the age of 22 must always be in the same food stamp household.</i> <i>Hint #4: See Food Stamp Household Composition Deskguide.</i> <i>Manual Citation: 361.200 (A)(1); 361.200 (A)(2); 361.200 (A)(3)</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p>
<p>4. If there is an associated TAFDC case, are there any family cap children ? <i>If yes, answer question 4a.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <i>If no, go to Unearned Income section, question 5.</i></p>	
<p>4a) Is the family cap child(ren) included in the food stamp case? <i>Hint #1: Children under the age of 22, regardless of their source of income, must be in the same food stamp household with their parents.</i> <i>Hint #2: All the income of the child(ren) must be included in the food stamp calculation.</i> <i>Manual Citation: 361.200 (A)(3)</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p>
<p>UNEARNED INCOME</p>	
<p>5. Is there any indication of child support in the case record or on the ViewDirect screen? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <i>If yes, answer question 5a.</i> <i>If no, go to question 6.</i></p>	
<p>5a) Has the <u>full amount</u> of the child support been included as unearned income in the food stamp calculation and included on PACES in the benefit calculation? <i>Hint #1: Has the \$50 passthrough DEFRA amount been included as unearned income for food stamp benefits?</i> <i>Hint #2: If the child support is for a family cap child, count the total child support for food stamp purposes. (Do not exclude the \$90 disregard from TAFDC.)</i> <i>Hint #3: Is the amount being deducted consistent with the case record and the latest child support information on ViewDirect?</i> <i>Manual Citation: 363.220(B)(3)</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p>
<p>6. Does the family receive TAFDC/EAEDC? <i>If yes, answer question 6a.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <i>If no, go to question 7.</i></p>	
<p>6a) Is the TAFDC/EAEDC benefit included as unearned income in the food stamp calculation and included on PACES in the benefit calculation? <i>Hint #1: The full amount of the TAFDC/EAEDC grant must be included as unearned income in determining food stamp benefits.</i> <i>Hint #2: If the full amount is not included, verify that the correct individuals are contained in the food stamp case.</i> <i>Manual Citation: 363.220(B)(1)</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p>

<p>7. Does the latest application/reevaluation/monthly report list any form of unearned income for any of the household members? Examples of unearned income include Social Security Benefits, veterans' benefits, unemployment compensation, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p><i>If yes, answer question 7a.</i> <i>If no, go to question 8.</i></p>	
<p>7a) Has the proper amount of unearned income been included in the food stamp calculation and included on PACES in the benefit calculation? <i>Hint #1: In shared rent situations do not count the other families' portion of the rent as income.</i> <i>Hint #2: Before discounting any form of unearned income, verify that it should not be counted.</i> <i>Manual Citation: 363.220(B); 363.230</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p>
<p>8. Is there a noncitizen who has been excluded from the federal food stamp household? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p><i>If yes, answer question 8a and 8b.</i> <i>If no, go to Shelter section, question 9.</i></p>	
<p>8a) Was the noncitizen's unearned income properly prorated? <i>Hint: The unearned income of the noncitizen properly excluded from the food stamp household must be prorated among those who are eligible for food stamp benefits.</i> <i>Manual Citation: 365.520 (B)(2)</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p>
<p>8b) Were the noncitizen's shelter expenses and other deductions properly prorated? <i>Manual Citation: 365.520 (B)(2) and (3)</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p>
SHELTER	
<p>9. Based upon the most current documentation in the case record (landlord verification or application/reevaluation/monthly report) is the amount of rent on the form properly recorded on PACES? <i>If yes, go to question 10.</i> <i>If no, correct problem and go to question 10.</i> <i>Hint: Cases that move within certifications will generally have a change in rent which must be verified.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p>
<p>10. Based upon the most current documentation in the case record (landlord verification or application/reevaluation/monthly report) is the correct SUA provided and properly recorded on PACES? <i>If yes, go to question 11.</i> <i>If no, correct problem and go to question 11.</i> <i>Hint #1: Cases that move within certifications will generally have a change in utilities which must be verified.</i> <i>Hint #2: Be sure to properly divide the SUA if multiple households are sharing utility expenses.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p>
<p>11. Is there an elderly (age 60 or over) or disabled individual in the food stamp household? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p><i>If yes, answer question 11a.</i> <i>If no, go to question 12.</i></p>	

<p>11a) Has the case been properly coded on PACES to assure that the shelter cap is lifted? <i>Hint: Receipt of SSA or SSI elderly or disabled benefits by any member of the food stamp household indicates the need to lift the shelter cap.</i> <i>Manual Citation: 364.400(E)</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>12. Does the food stamp household share rental expenses with one or more additional households? <i>If yes, answer question 12a.</i> <i>If no, go to question 13.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>12a) Have the shelter expenses been properly divided among the household and properly coded on PACES? <i>Manual Citation: 364.400(F)(2)</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>13. Is there a noncitizen who is not included in the food stamp household present in the household? <i>If yes, answer question 13a.</i> <i>If no, go to Earnings section, question 14.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>13a) Have the shelter and other deductions been properly prorated and coded on PACES? <i>Manual Citation: 365.520(B)(3)</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
EARNINGS	
<p>14. Are there earnings present on the last application/reevaluation/monthly report? <i>If yes, answer question 14a.</i> <i>If no, go to question 15.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>14a) Was the income properly counted and entered on PACES? <i>Hint #1: The wages used should be from consecutive weeks and properly converted to a monthly amount.</i> <i>Hint #2: Wages for an unusual week should not have been used in the calculation. This includes wages with an unusual amount of overtime or a week in which no wages were received due to illness/vacation/temporary plant closure.</i> <i>Manual Citation: 364.320;364.340</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>15. Is there indication in the case record that a member of the household is about to start or terminate employment? <i>If yes, answer question 15a.</i> <i>If no, go to question 16.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>15a) Has there been any follow-up with the recipient on the current status of the employment?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>16. Is there earned income present and a noncitizen who has been excluded from the federal food stamp case? <i>If yes, answer question 16a.</i> <i>If no, end.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<p>16a) Has the earned income been properly prorated? <i>Hint: All the income of the person properly excluded from the food stamp household must be prorated among those who are eligible for food stamp benefits.</i> <i>Manual Citation: 365.520(B)(2)</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no

TAO Worker Signature

Date

TAO Supervisor Signature

Date



Food Stamp Desk Review Summary Sheet

TAO _____

Week Ending _____

Total # of Cases - C _____

Total # of Cases - NC _____

Total # of Cases - CP _____

Total # of Cases Reviewed This Week _____

Director/Designee _____

Date Submitted _____