



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
*Executive Office of Health and Human Services*  
**Department of Transitional Assistance**  
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**Field Operations Memo 2008-14**  
**March 19, 2008**

**To:** Transitional Assistance Office Staff

**From:**  John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

**Re:** **Extending Food Stamp Certification Periods**

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**Overview**

In an effort to improve customer service and achieve access to service and to assist workers in the management of growing caseloads, the Department has developed a plan to increase the certification periods of certain food stamp households. Effective immediately, all new food stamp applications for households with all members elderly or disabled will be assigned a 24-month certification period. Other households, as described in this memo, will be assigned 12-month certification periods.

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**24-Month  
Certification  
Periods for  
Elderly/Disabled  
Households**

At application or the next recertification, a 24-month certification period must be assigned for all households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled (unless the household meets an exception described on page 2 of this memo). In accordance with 106 CMR 364.700, the Department must have at least one contact with each certified household every 12 months. Procedures for the yearly contact for these cases will be forthcoming.

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**12-Month  
Certification  
Periods for Other  
Households**

At application or the next recertification, a 12-month certification period must be assigned for all other households except those identified as exceptions. This includes households that previously have been assigned shorter certification periods due to special situations such as:

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**12-Month  
Certification  
Periods for Other  
Households  
(cont.)**

- *Self-employed households*, which have special rules regarding anticipated earnings and the use of quarterly tax reporting forms or annual income tax returns.
- *Food Stamp Work Program (FS/WP) or Food Stamp Employment and Training (FS/ET) required households*, for which participation must be monitored.
- *Households with unstable circumstances that may become ineligible in the near future*, e.g., awaiting receipt of unemployment compensation. Unstable households include households that currently report zero income, those that anticipate a return to employment or those that anticipate receipt of unearned income such as unemployment or workman's compensation that would place them over the gross income limit.

**Note:** When a Bay State CAP case reverts to a regular NPA food stamp case, a certification period of three months is established to allow the AU Manager time to review and recertify the household. Once this review is complete the appropriate certification period must be assigned based on the circumstances of the household and using the guidelines provided in this memo.

**Additional guidance on the required monitoring and tracking of these households will be issued in a future Field Operations Memo.**

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**Exceptions to the  
24-and 12-Month  
Certification Rule**

The types of FS households listed below are exceptions to the 24-month and 12-month certification periods change:

- Expedited benefits (1-2 months)
- Dever cases (1, 3, or 6, months – system-generated)
- Bay State Combined Application Project (CAP) (3 years)
- Transitional Benefit Alternative (TBA) (5 months)
- Universal Semi-annual Reporting (USR) (6 months)
- Noncitizen households awaiting verification of 40 quarters from SSA (6 months)

**Questions**

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.

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