

# Quality Corner

A continuing problem in the Food Stamp Program is proper composition of the FS AU. Though this used to center on undocumented non-citizens, it now involves newborns. In general, AU Managers seem to focus on cash requirements rather than on Food Stamp Program requirements. While each is important, for food stamp benefits, timing is vital.

## Notice of Birth (NOB) Notification

In the first case, a child was born on February 5, 2001. In the case record was the NOB from the hospital certifying the birth and indicating that an SSN application had been made. The AU Manager sent a request to the mother to come in to discuss exemptions from the Family Cap restrictions and included a verification checklist with appropriate items checked. The mother was slow returning the verifications so the baby was not included until March 13, 2001 – after the March 8, 2001 cutoff. (A layette was approved on March 9, 2001.) Because of the delays, a supplement was required, but not given.

## What Can an AU Manager Do?

When a NOB is received, indicating an SSN application has been made, contact the mother to make sure the child is with her. Be sure to establish food stamp benefits for the child before the cutoff date. Food Stamp Program regulations require providing benefits no later than the month following the month that DTA is notified of the new AU member. In both this case and the next, the AU Manager seemed more concerned with TAFDC than with food stamp benefits.

## PRISM Alert Notification

A child was born on February 13, 2001 and a PRISM alert was generated two weeks later, on February 27, 2001 under TAFDC. The AU Manager addressed the alert nearly two weeks later, on March 12, 2001, indicating no change, but sent out a letter requesting verification. When QC reviewed the case in April, the baby had still not been added to the AU.

## What Can an AU Manager Do?

As with the NOB, a PRISM alert constitutes notification to the agency. When confident that the new baby is living with the AU, the AU Manager should put the child into the FS AU for March while waiting for

verifications.

## Recipient Notification

At an eligibility review on March 30, 2001, the recipient reported having had a baby on March 19, 2001 and provided a social security card and birth abstract at the appointment. The baby was added to the FS AU on April 19, 2001, effective May 7, 2001. No supplement was issued for April.

## What Can an AU Manager Do?

Food Stamp Program regulations require that new members receive food stamp benefits in the month following the month the agency learns of the addition. In this instance, after being notified on March 30, 2001, it was probably too soon to have added the baby for April (by April 3, 2001), but the AU Manager should have issued a supplement in April, thus still meeting the requirement.

It is important to know when to issue a supplement. Since the requirement is to provide benefits the month after notification, the AU Manager must provide a supplement if the regular issuance will not be adjusted before the cutoff date. This is true when adding any new member to the FS AU, not just a new baby. When notified by an outside agency, confirming that the baby lives with the FS AU should be sufficient to begin the process.