

In general, Universal Semiannual Reporting (USR) has been a major benefit to the error rate. It allows us to see recipients less often without suffering error problems. For it to help, however, the most recent certification must be done correctly. This month we have two AUs where it was not, and errors resulted.

Food Stamp Attributed Amount

A recipient had been sanctioned for failure to meet the work requirement, and the \$86 Food Stamp attributed amount had been included in her FS calculation. She went to work full-time and reported her wages in a timely manner. The wages were entered onto BEACON, and the AU became subject to USR. Her wages and the \$86 sanction amount were both included in the FS calculation.

The recipient, however, had cured her sanction by working over 20 hours a week for two weeks at the time the AU Manager entered the wages. Since the income was sufficient to close the AU, the AU should have been subject to Transitional Benefits Alternative (TBA) for five months.

What Can An AU Manager Do?

To do this correctly in BEACON is a two-day process. On day one, the AU Manager should remove the sanction and do a recalculation. On day two, the wages should be entered, and the FS-attributed amount should be removed -- in this case, \$86 with another recalculation. If the result of the two-day process makes the AU ineligible for TAFDC, the case will correctly go on TBA.

USR Anticipating Wages

At the time of the application, the recipient provided four wage stubs, dated July 30, August 13, August 20, and August 27. For the missing week, August 6, the recipient did not receive any pay. The AU Manager used the most recent four weeks, including a zero week, in the calculation. The QC reviewer asked the employer for verification and discovered that the recipient had been on vacation the week of the zero pay and had received vacation pay the previous week. By calculating in a zero week, the AU had a large overpayment.

What Can An AU Manager Do?

Under the terms of USR, to avoid an error, the most recent certification must be done correctly. In this case, the income must be anticipated correctly. If the recipient says she didn't work for a week, the AU Manager should question the recipient to determine if this is an ongoing situation or an infrequent incident (such as a vacation) and if the recipient is paid for this time. If, for example, the recipient had to be out of work for medical treatments or for school one week a month and received no pay for this time and it was anticipated that this schedule would continue for the duration of the certification period, then the zero week should be considered in the wage calculation. Remember: you can always increase the issuance if the income decreases and is reported. Please see *A User's Guide: Transitional Assistance Programs and BEACON*, Chapter IV, Section C, page 18 for more information on counting irregular income.

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