

Expansion of Categorical Eligibility for Food Stamp Benefits

FS, SSFSP

State Letter 1190

Field Operations Memo 2000-16

Systems User's Guide Update 144

USDA has mandated that the Department expand food stamp categorical eligibility rules to recipients of certain Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits or services.

This food stamp policy change is transmitted by State Letter 1190. The new regulations grant categorical eligibility to any food stamp assistance unit (AU) in which at least one member:

- was included in a TAFDC AU which closed within the previous 12 months,
- is receiving or authorized to receive Emergency Assistance, or
- is receiving or authorized to receive Income Eligible Child Care through the Office of Child Care Services or a Child Care Resource and Referral Agency.

These regulations are effective April 24, 2000.

Field Operations Memo 2000-16:

- identifies the new categorically eligible groups,
- describes the verification procedures for each group,
- explains system coding requirements for categorically eligible AUs, and
- provides certification period guidelines.

The descriptions of Code Y for Block 59 of the PID have been revised to reflect the categorically eligible groups for food stamp benefits.



FYI

Reminder that a Supplemental Payment May be Necessary if a Food Stamp Change Results in an Increase During a Certification Period

This FYI reminds workers that PACES holds food stamp increases until the next monthly allotment if the change is keyed after the release date for the current monthly allotment.

A recent Quality Control error involved a food stamp change during a certification period. The worker acted correctly on the change, which resulted in an increase in the food stamp allotment for the *next* monthly allotment. However, the worker did not issue a supplemental payment to adjust the allotment for the *current* month.

In these situations, the release date, not the start date, is the critical date for food stamp purposes. The system will not automatically issue a supplement for the current monthly allotment. It is the responsibility of the worker to issue a supplemental payment for the difference between the old and new monthly allotments until the next full monthly allotment is issued.