



CDSS

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES



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October 23, 2009

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 09-62

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
 ALL FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS
 ALL California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
 ALL CONSORTIUM PROJECT MANAGERS
 ALL QUALITY CONTROL PROGRAM COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM (FSP) WAIVER OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW

REFERENCE: ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NO. 08-32; FOOD STAMP WAIVERS #2090051, #2070014, and #2090005

The purpose of this letter is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with implementation instructions on waiving the face-to-face interview requirement at initial application and recertification for all food stamp households at county option. In lieu of the face-to-face interview, telephone interviews must be conducted and there is no need to document whether a hardship exists. The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), approved our request allowing the waiving of face-to-face interviews for four years, effective June 1, 2009, and expiring May 31, 2013. If a county opts to take advantage of the waiver, it must be done on a county-wide basis.

Implementing this waiver will reduce the application process burden for the household, increase timeliness, increase program access, decrease the volume of activity in the local offices, and remove barriers that prevent households from completing an interview. The waiver will allow the household to complete the eligibility process without being required to arrange for transportation and child care, possibly numerous times.

Implementation of this waiver replaces waiver #2070014, effective August 1, 2008 (ACL NO. 08-32). That waiver eliminated the need to document hardship in order to waive face-to-face interviews for quarterly reporting (QR) households at recertification and for elderly or disabled households at initial certification and recertification. The new waiver

also replaces waiver #2090005, which was approved but not implemented, waiving face-to-face interviews for certain working families.

This ACL does not modify the information required to be collected during the initial certification process. CWDs will continue to verify and review the information and supporting documentation supplied by the household, and take the same actions during a telephone interview as during a face-to-face interview, per Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Section 63-300. Counties are reminded to document in the case record whether the household has been certified via a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview. Additionally, counties must continue to inform households of their rights and responsibilities and obtain the signed application and Rights and Responsibilities forms to complete the application process. Counties may mail the requested forms separately. In addition, counties are reminded that a Notice of Missed Interview must be sent when the household misses the scheduled appointment.

A face-to-face interview must still be conducted in the following circumstances: 1) when requested by the household or the household's authorized representative, 2) when the county determines it is necessary to verify conditions of eligibility, or 3) if the household has not complied with Statewide Fingerprinting Imaging System (SFIS) requirements at initial application. When a face-to-face interview is required by another program, such as CalWORKs, the FSP certification interview may be conducted in conjunction with the other program's interview.

QUALITY CONTROL (QC)

No special procedures are required for these cases subject to the provisions of this waiver. Cases should be reviewed using standard review procedures contained in the Food Stamp Program Quality Control Handbook (FNS Handbook 310).

FORMS

When certifying households both initially and/or at recertification, counties may use the following forms: the Application for Food Stamp Benefits (DFA 285 A1), Statement of Facts (DFA 285 2A), Your Rights and Responsibilities (DFA 285 A3 QR) along with the FS 23 QR (Food Stamp Benefits, How to Report Household Changes); or, counties may use the Coversheet to the Application for Cash Aid, Food Stamps, and/or Med-Cal/34-County Medical Services Program (SAWS 1) and Statement of Facts (SAWS 2).

As an alternative, counties opting to waive the face-to-face interview may recertify Non-Assistance Food Stamp (NAFS) QR households using the following forms: the NAFS Household Recertification Form (FS 27), Your Rights and Responsibilities

All-County Letter No. 09-62
Page Three

(DFA 285 A3 QR), along with the FS 23 QR in conjunction with the fourth QR 7 in the QR cycle.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Tracy Ahlenstorf at (916) 657-3283 or via e-mail at tracy.ahlenstorf@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

CHARR LEE METSKER
Deputy Director
Welfare to Work Division