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Employees' Manual
Title 7
Chapter G

FOOD ASSISTANCE CASE MAINTENANCE



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Overview

This chapter is divided into four sections:

- ◆ [Household reporting policies](#)
- ◆ [General policies for acting on changes](#)
- ◆ [Policies for responding to specific types of changes](#)
- ◆ [Recertification:](#)
 - What a household must do to keep getting Food Assistance, and
 - What the worker must do to determine the household's eligibility.

Reporting Requirements

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.12, 441 IAC 65.5(234)

Policy:

There are two changes a household must report while certified. These changes must be reported by the 10th day of the month after the month in which they occur. A household must report when:

- ◆ Its total gross income goes over the gross income limit for the household's size, or
- ◆ An able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD) stops working 80 hours.

A household must report when its total monthly gross income exceeds the maximum gross income limit for its household size. The household must report this by the 10th day of the next month.

No other changes are required to be reported. However, households are allowed to report other changes. Sources other than the household may report any type of change.

Some households will remain eligible after exceeding their gross income limit. They must report each month that they are over their gross income limit, even though they are still eligible for benefits. EXCEPTION: A household does not have to keep reporting this if:

- ◆ All adults are elderly or disabled and they have no earned income; or
- ◆ It is categorically eligible.

Procedure:

Give the household a copy of *Reporting Food Assistance Changes* (form 470-2960 or 470-2960(S)) at each certification. The form tells the household what to report and when to report.

Go over the form with the household's representative when conducting an interview. Make sure that the household understands:

- ◆ How to determine when it goes over its gross income limit,
- ◆ Which household members are ABAWDs working 80 hours monthly, and
- ◆ When the report is due.

Comment:

The household's gross income limit remains in effect until it is certified for a new benefit period. The reporting limit given at certification does not change during a certification period even if the household size changes.

See [Interview](#) for how to explain the reporting requirement to the household.

Household Fails to Report a Change

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.12(a) and (d)

Policy:

If a household fails to report that it went over its gross income limit:

- ◆ Calculate a claim, starting with the second month after the month in which the household first exceeded the limit. See [7-H, Claims](#).
- ◆ If the household intentionally did not report exceeding the limit, see [7-H, Claims](#), and 7-J, [INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION](#).

Comment:

If you learn about a change that the household was not required to report:

- ◆ Do not establish a claim,
- ◆ Do not issue lost benefits.

Acting on Changes

Legal reference: 441 IAC 65.5(7), 7 CFR 273.2(f), and 273.12(c)

Policy:

Act on a change if it is likely to last longer than the month in which it is reported. Act on a change even if the household is not required to report it.

Procedure:

Act when a change is reported by:

- ◆ The household,
- ◆ A source other than the household, or
- ◆ An automated report.

Verifying Changes

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.12(c)(3), 441 IAC 65.22(1) and 65.41(234)

Policy:

Clarify information if it is questionable or unclear and it may affect a household's Food Assistance benefits or eligibility. Do this no matter what the source of the information. For returned mail, see [Household's Mail Returned With No Forwarding Address](#) and [Household's Mail Returned With a Forwarding Address](#).

Procedure:

Send a letter to the household at the last address the household provided. In the letter:

- ◆ Clearly tell the household what it must do to clarify its circumstances.
- ◆ Do not require a household to answer in person in the office.
- ◆ Give the household 10 days to answer. Make the due date:
 - The 10th day after you mail or give the letter, or
 - The next workday for which you have mail service if the 10th day is a weekend or holiday.
- ◆ Tell the household what will happen to its case if it fails to answer, as directed by the appropriate policy. Some policies tell you to cancel, and some do not.

Cancel the case if the household returns some information, but not enough for you to tell how the change will affect the household. Use the notice reason to cancel for failure to provide verification or information.

Comment:

You may call the household to clarify its circumstances. If the household gives you a reasonable answer, document the call and take any needed action.

Third-Party Fails to Provide Verification

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.2(d)(1)

Policy:

Do not cancel a household when a third-party fails to give you verification.

Procedure:

Use the best information you have when a third-party fails to give you verification. Do this only if you asked the third-party for the verification. Do not use this policy if the household failed to get verification.

Comment:

A third-party is anyone but an eligible or ineligible household member. For an explanation of who is an ineligible household member, see [7-1, Ineligible Household Members](#).

When a Change Will Increase Benefits

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.12(c)(1) and 273.2(f)(8)(ii), 441 IAC 65.41(234)

Policy:

A change must be verified before you take action that will increase benefits, except for a change in shelter or dependent care costs.

Procedure:

Ask for verification when you get the report of the change. See [Verifying Changes](#) for instructions.

If you ask the household to give verification, take action as follows:

- ◆ If you get the verification by its due date, increase benefits for the month after the month in which the change was reported.
- ◆ If you get the verification after its due date:
 - Increase benefits for the month after the month in which you get verification.
 - Do not issue lost benefits for the months between the report of the change and when you got verification.
- ◆ If the household does not provide verification:
 - Do not cancel the case.
 - Ignore the change and do not use it to calculate benefits.

See [Third-Party Fails to Provide Verification](#) if:

- ◆ You ask a third party to give you verification, and
- ◆ The third party does not provide it.

Comment:

Act on a change in shelter or dependent care costs for the next month, since you do not need verification unless an amount is questionable. See 14-B(5), [FOOD ASSISTANCE CASE ACTIONS](#), for system entries.

1. On August 1, Ms. M reports that her son moved back into the household. Her son does not have income or any other factor that needs to be verified. Therefore, you do not need verification in order to add the son. Adding the son will increase the household's benefits.

Recalculate September benefits to include Ms. M's son.

2. The A household reports an increase in medical expenses on May 17. You request verification on May 17, giving a due date of May 27. You get the verification on June 2.

You increase the household's July benefits, since you did not get verification until June. The household lost the increase for June benefits. The household is not entitled to lost benefits for June.

Issuing Supplemental Allotments

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.12(c)(1)

Policy:

Recalculate the allotment to issue an additional amount by the 10th day of the next month when:

- ◆ The household is eligible for an increase for that month, and
- ◆ That month's benefits are already available in EPPIC™.

Procedure:

See [14-B\(5\)](#), Supplemental Issuances, for system entries.

On August 30, Ms. J reports that her son Bob has moved in with her. You determine that Bob does not have income and meets all other eligibility requirements.

You make system entries to add Bob to the household on August 30. Because it is after August system cutoff, September benefits have already been determined. The system will issue a supplemental allotment for September to add Bob to Ms. J's household.

When a Change Will Reduce or End Benefits

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.12(c)(2)(i) and 273.12(a)(3)

Policy:

When a change will reduce or end a household's benefits, issue a *Notice of Decision* within 10 days of the date the change is reported. If verification is requested prior to taking action, this does not extend the time frames for acting.

Procedure:

Act on the change if you have enough information to do so:

1. Make system entries to:
 - ◆ Recalculate benefits,
 - ◆ Produce a *Notice of Decision*, and
 - ◆ Give the household timely notice, unless timeliness is not required.

2. If verification is required, ask the household for verification of the change. Do this when you make your system entries. See [Verifying Changes](#) for how to request verification.
3. If verification is not returned, cancel the case for failure to provide verification or information.
4. If verification is returned but is different from what you used, make changes using the new information. For example, if the verified income is more than what you already entered into the system:
 - ◆ Make a new income estimate as directed in 7-F, [BUDGETING](#), and
 - ◆ Change benefits for the next month for which timely notice can be given.

If you need verification to determine eligibility, ask for verification before you make the change.

1. See [Verifying Changes](#) for how to request verification.
2. If the verification is returned, use the information to affect benefits for the next month. Give timely notice if required.
3. If the household does not return requested verification, cancel the case for failure to provide information. See [Continuing Benefits Under Appeal](#) if the household appeals the *Notice of Decision* and asks to keep getting benefits while waiting for the outcome.
4. If the verification is later returned after the case is canceled:
 - ◆ See [Reinstatement](#) if the reason for cancellation no longer exists before the effective date.
 - ◆ See [Reinstatement After the Effective Date of Cancellation \(Grace Period\)](#).

Comment:

For timely notice requirements, see [1-E, Dispensing With Timely Notice](#). See 14-B(5), [FOOD ASSISTANCE CASE ACTIONS](#), for system entry instructions.

Do not initiate a claim if benefits were issued and:

- ◆ Timely notice was required, and
- ◆ You acted timely.

1. Ms. A reports on April 3 that her son moved out. This will cause a decrease in benefits. Issue a *Notice of Decision* to remove Ms. A's son from the Food Assistance household effective for May.
2. Ms. B reports on April 24 that her son moved out. This will cause a decrease in benefits. Timely notice is required, so you issue a *Notice of Decision* to remove Ms. B's son from the Food Assistance household effective for June.
3. Ms. C reports in May that she just started a job, will work 40 hours weekly, and will be paid \$8.00 per hour. Her worker has enough information to take action to reduce Ms. C's benefits in June. The worker enters the estimated amount and requests verification.

The verification is returned in June and shows that Ms. C actually works 32 hours weekly at \$8 an hour. Her worker makes a new estimate and makes new system entries to affect the July allotment. There are no lost benefits for June because the policy was correctly applied.

Reinstatement

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.15(k), 441 IAC 7.7(6) and 65.44(1)

Policy:

Reinstate a case if the following two conditions are met before the effective date of cancellation:

- ◆ The reason for which the case was canceled no longer exists, **and**
- ◆ Eligibility and benefits can be determined.

Do not ask for a new application.

Procedure:

Send an adequate notice when you reinstate benefits to the same or to a higher level. See [1-E](#), Adequate Notice.

Reinstate even if you make system entries after the effective date of cancellation. See [14-B\(5\)](#), Reinstating Benefits.

Reinstatement After the Effective Date of Cancellation (Grace Period)

Legal reference: 441 IAC 65.44(2)

Policy:

A case that is closed for failing to provide information shall be reinstated if the missing information is returned by the 14th day after the effective date of cancellation. If the 14th day is a weekend or state holiday, the case shall be reinstated if the information is returned on the next working day.

A case must have at least one month remaining in the certification period in order to be reinstated.

This “grace period” policy also applies to households that were canceled because mail was returned without a forwarding address. If the household later provides a current address, resolving the unknown address is considered providing necessary information.

Procedure:

If the previously requested information is returned by the 14th day after the effective date of cancellation, the case is reinstated. The effective date of reinstated benefits is the date the **final** piece of information **is returned**.

If all of the information is not returned by the 14th day after the effective date of cancellation, no further action is required and another notice is not sent.

If several pieces of information were requested and some are returned, do not send a “Remain Cancelled” notice. However, it is good practice to let the household know you still don’t have everything you need to reinstate the case.

If the previously requested information is provided, but the household also reports another change which requires verification, make every effort to help the client verify the information. A written request for information for the new change is not required, but the household should be informed that benefits cannot be reinstated until the change is verified.

If the new information is not verified by the end of the 14th day after the effective date of cancellation, send a “Remain Cancelled” notice. The original reason for cancellation has been cured, but the household cannot be reinstated due to a change in circumstances that has not been verified.

Comment:

When an additional change is reported and verified by the 14th day and the change will cause a decrease in benefits, do not reinstate to the previous level of benefits. Reinstate benefits using all of the new information, regardless of the effect on benefits.

If it is unlikely you will be able to verify additional information before the 14-day period expires, you should inform the client that it would be a good idea to get a new application submitted to preserve the earliest possible effective date, in case the information cannot be verified.

Once the information is returned, the effective date will be the date the information is provided or the new application date, whichever is earlier.

1. Household A fails to provide information that is due on January 12. Food Assistance benefits are canceled effective February 1. On February 6, the missing information is provided. No other changes are reported. Benefits are reinstated effective February 6.
2. Household B fails to provide information regarding Mrs. B's employment at Employer X that is due on March 16. Benefits are canceled effective April 1. On April 7, the household calls to report Mr. B's new job at Employer Y.

The worker informs the B household that benefits are currently closed because the information regarding Employer X was not provided, but that if verification from Employer X and verification from Employer Y are provided by April 14, benefits can be reinstated.

As a courtesy, the worker also tells the household that if they don't think they can get verification in by the 14th, they may want to file a new application to protect the application date.

On April 12, the household provides all necessary verification and also submits a new application. The worker reinstates the benefits using all information with an April 12 effective date, and denies the new application as unnecessary.

If the overall effect of the two changes is a decrease in benefits, benefits are **not** reinstated to the previous level. NOTE: This is only done when the household cures its original reason for cancellation by the effective date of cancellation.

3. On June 21, the worker receives returned mail with no forwarding address. Since timely notice is not required, the worker cancels benefits effective July 1. On July 5, the household contacts the worker to ask why the July benefits were not added to the EBT account.

The worker informs the household that the office received mail with no forwarding address, so the household's case was canceled because the household's location was unknown. The household reports that it has moved and provides a new address. No other changes are reported.

Since information regarding the new address has been provided, the worker reinstates the case with an effective date of July 5.

Continuing Benefits Under Appeal

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.15(k), and 441 IAC 7.7(6)

Policy:

If a household asks to keep getting benefits while awaiting the outcome of an appeal, benefits may be reinstated to the amount the household got before the adverse action under appeal.

Procedure:

Return the household's benefits to the level authorized before the action under appeal. Keep benefits at this level until the household:

- ◆ Gets a final decision.
- ◆ Has a new change. Act on the new change:
 - Keep the factor under appeal held constant.
 - Issue a new *Notice of Decision*.
- ◆ Applies to be recertified. Do not keep the factor under appeal held constant for the new certification period.

For system entries, see [14-B\(5\)](#), Continuing Benefits When a Timely Appeal Is Filed.

New Reason to Keep a Case Canceled or Benefits Reduced

Legal reference: 441 IAC 7.7(6) and 65.44(234)

Policy:

A household shall receive a second notice when there is a new reason to take a negative action on a canceled case. This also applies when benefits are reduced.

Do not use remain canceled when:

- ◆ The household does not have a new reason for cancellation.
- ◆ The household was previously closed for any reason and does not provide information. This could happen if the household disagrees with their reason for closure but does not provide additional information to redetermine eligibility.

Procedure:

Send a notice for a new reason for which a case must remain canceled, if the original notice does not cover the new reason. See [14-B\(5\)](#), Issuing Another Notice Regarding New Information.

See [1-E](#), NOTICE OF DECISION, to see if timely notice applies. If the second negative action requires timely notice, it is too late to give timely notice, and the first reason for the negative action no longer applies:

- ◆ Reinstate the household to its previous level of benefits if the household cures the original reason for cancellation by the effective date of cancellation. See [Reinstatement](#).
- ◆ Then give timely notice to reduce or cancel the benefits for the next month.

Comment:

Do not establish a claim if:

- ◆ You reinstate to the previous benefit level, and
- ◆ You gave timely notice for the new reason, and
- ◆ The household reported the second change timely, and
- ◆ You acted timely.

Acting on Multiple Changes

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.12(c)

Policy:

You may act on more than one change together or separately as long as you meet the timeframe for acting on each change.

Procedure:

General guidelines for acting on more than one change reported in a month are:

- ◆ Act on the changes at the same time if reported at the same time.
- ◆ Act on each change separately if reported at different times.

See the applicable policy in this chapter for the timeframe for acting on each change. Do not wait to verify one change before acting on another if it would cause you to fail to act timely.

1. On January 18, a household reports that a new member with no income entered the household. On January 22, the household reports that another member started a new job. These are different changes.

The worker adds the new member for February. Later, the worker has the information to estimate income from the new job. The worker allows timely notice to decrease March benefits.
2. A household reports on January 18 that a new member with income enters the household. This is a single change, not two changes that have been reported. Adding the new member and the counting the new member's income must be acted on at the same time.

Changes in Household Circumstances

This section tells how to handle specific changes that may occur.

Household Moves or Has Changes in Shelter Costs

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.3, 273.12, and 273.13

Policy:

Households are not required to report:

- ◆ Moving within or out of Iowa,
- ◆ Changes in shelter expenses, even when they move.

You do not need timely notice to cancel a household's Food Assistance case when:

- ◆ The household reports it moved to another state, or
- ◆ Another state reports that the household applied there for benefits.

Procedure:

Update the system when a household reports:

- ◆ Moving within Iowa.
- ◆ A change in shelter and utility costs.

To update shelter deductions in the system, see [14-B\(5\)](#), [Deductions](#). Do not remove shelter deductions from the system if the household does not report a change in shelter costs when it reports it moved.

See [14-B\(5\)](#), [Canceling Ongoing Benefits: Due to Move](#), for system entries when a household moves.

Clarify the situation when you think a household may have moved. See [Verifying Changes](#) to clarify the situation when the following happens:

- ◆ The post office returns mail with or without a forwarding address.
- ◆ The household uses its EBT card only out of state.
- ◆ Reports or other information indicate the household may have moved.

Household's Mail Returned With No Forwarding Address

Legal reference: 7CFR 273.13

Policy:

When the post office returns a household's mail without providing a forwarding address, the Department cannot verify that the household still lives in Iowa.

Procedure:

Send a notice of adverse action to cancel the case using notice reason code 300, "...the Department cannot verify you are living in Iowa..."

There is no need to send a request for contact before canceling the case when mail is returned without a forwarding address. Send the notice to the household's most recent address, even though it may also be returned. Timely notice is not required, but adequate notice must be given.

If the household contacts you:

- ◆ Before the effective date of cancellation, see [Reinstatement](#).
- ◆ After the effective date of cancellation, but within the 14-day grace period, see [Reinstatement After the Effective Date of Cancellation \(Grace Period\)](#).
- ◆ After the effective date of cancellation and the grace period:
 - The household has the right to appeal. See [1-E, THE RIGHT TO APPEAL](#).
 - Tell the household it has the right to reapply.

Household's Mail Returned With a Forwarding Address

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.13, and 273.12(c)

Policy:

When the post office provides a forwarding address, consider this a report that the household has moved.

Procedure:

If the forwarding address is:

- ◆ Within Iowa, update the system with the new address. If the case belongs in a different office due to the move, transfer the case. No further action is necessary.
- ◆ Out of state, cancel the case. Use notice reason code 201, "... you do not live in Iowa." Send the notice to the forwarding address. Reinstate the case if, before the effective date of cancellation or within the 14-day grace period, the household tells you it is temporarily out of state, but intends to return to Iowa. "Temporary" is not defined.

Comment:

If the returned mail is a request for information, send it to the household's forwarding address. Do not extend the timeframe for acting on the change. See [When a Change Will Increase Benefits](#), or [When a Change Will Reduce or End Benefits](#) for what action to take regarding the returned request for information.

A request for information regarding an employed absent parent who has returned to the home is returned with a forwarding address.

The worker changes the household's address in the system and forwards the request for information to the household. Since the worker cannot determine eligibility without the information, the worker cancels the case using notice reason code 206. Timely notice applies.

Adding a Member

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.12(c)(1)(ii)

Policy:

Do not ask for an application to add a new member to a household.

Procedure:

Add the new member effective the first day of the month after the month in which the household reported the new member unless:

- ◆ Timely notice is required. For example, timely notice is required if the new member's income will **decrease or end** benefits. For timely notice requirements, see [1-E, Dispensing With Timely Notice](#). See [When a Change Will Increase Benefits](#).
- ◆ Verification was not returned timely. See [When a Change Will Increase Benefits](#) or [When a Change Will Reduce or End Benefits](#).
- ◆ The person is still active on another case. EXCEPTION: include individuals while active on another case as allowed under [7-C, Duplicate Assistance](#).

See [Verifying Changes](#) if you need verification to add a new member. For system entries, see [14-B\(5\), Adding a Person to an Active Food Assistance Case](#).

A Member Becomes Ineligible

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.11(c)(3)

Policy:

Remove a member from a household's case when you determine the person is ineligible for Food Assistance.

Procedure:

Check to see how the loss of the ineligible member affects the household:

- ◆ See [7-I, Ineligible Household Members](#), for how to treat income, expenses, and resources.
- ◆ See [7-C, Categorical Eligibility](#), for how the loss affects the household.

For system entries, see [14-B\(5\), Disqualification for Intentional Program Violation and Disqualification Other Than IPV](#). Also see [14-B-Appendix, NOTICE CODES](#).

A Member Regains Eligibility

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.7(e) and 273.12

Policy:

Add a member back to the household when a reason for ineligibility ends.

Procedure:

Add the member for:

- ◆ The first month after the reason for ineligibility ends, or
- ◆ The second month after it ends, if timely notice is required.

See [14-B\(5\)](#) for system entries to add the person:

- ◆ [Removing or Shortening Disqualification](#), and
- ◆ [Adding a Person to an Active Food Assistance Case](#).

FIP Is Terminated

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.12(f)(3)

Policy:

Clarify a household's circumstances when you:

- ◆ Cancel FIP, and
- ◆ Need information to determine Food Assistance eligibility and benefits.

Procedure:

See [Verifying Changes](#) to request verification. Mail the request on the same date as the FIP notice of adverse action is mailed.

Wait for the FIP notice of adverse action period to expire before you cancel Food Assistance. If the household appeals its FIP notice of adverse action and:

- ◆ Asks to keep getting Food Assistance until the outcome of its appeal, keep benefits at the same amount as before FIP ended.
- ◆ Does not ask to keep getting Food Assistance until the outcome of its appeal, cancel or reduce the Food Assistance benefits. Give timely notice if needed.

An absent parent returns to the FIP household. The household asks to have its FIP case closed without giving a reason. The worker must follow up to determine how the new household member affects the Food Assistance case.

Penalty for Means-Tested Program Sanction

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.11(j), 441 IAC 65.50(234)

Policy:

A 10% Food Assistance penalty applies to sanctions in all means-tested programs.

Procedure:

Do not routinely apply the penalty if you learn that a program other than FIP reduced its cash benefits. Ask the SPIRS Help Desk before you apply the penalty.

Comment:

Other than FIP, no means-tested programs that reduce cash benefits as a sanction have been identified. SSI reduces cash benefits to collect on an overpayment. This is a collection action, not a penalty. See [7-E](#), [Recoupment](#).

Mr. Q's SSI payment is being reduced to collect on an SSI overpayment. The Social Security Administration representative tells you that Mr. Q purposefully did not report earnings. The Social Security Administration did not sanction Mr. Q, but recouped the overpayment over a series of months.

The 10% reduction is not applied to Mr. Q's Food Assistance because his SSI payments are being reduced as a recoupment.

Penalty for a FIP Sanction

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.11(j) and 441 IAC 65.50(234)

Policy:

Reduce a household's Food Assistance by 10% when its FIP grant is reduced due to a FIP sanction. Apply the 10% reduction of Food Assistance for the same months FIP applies the sanction.

Procedure:

Impose the penalty when a household's FIP is reduced as a sanction due to failure to:

- ◆ Apply for other benefits for which the FIP recipient may qualify, or
- ◆ Cooperate with the Child Support Recovery Unit.

Apply the Food Assistance penalty and the FIP sanction at the same time. Leave the penalty as long as the FIP sanction is in place.

Do not apply the penalty when FIP is reduced for any reason not listed above. It is not a sanction when:

- ◆ A household is placed in the FIP limited benefit plan, or
- ◆ FIP is being recouped. See [7-E](#), [Recoupment](#).

To implement the 10% penalty, see [14-B\(5\)](#), [Penalty for Not Following Another Program's Rules](#). Do not apply the 10% Food Assistance penalty retroactively.

Comment:

A FIP grant can increase even if a FIP sanction is in place. The 10% penalty still applies if the grant increases during the FIP sanction period.

Establish a claim for any month in which the penalty should have been in place, if it is later discovered that the Food Assistance penalty was not applied.

Mrs. C fails to cooperate with child support recovery in July. The worker sanctions Mrs. C by reducing her August FIP grant. The worker forgets to start the 10% Food Assistance penalty when reducing Mrs. C's August FIP grant.

In October, Mrs. C verifies that she has cooperated with child support recovery. The worker ends the FIP sanction for October. At that time, the worker discovers that the 10% Food Assistance penalty was never applied. The worker must establish a Food Assistance claim for August, September, and October.

Penalty When Sanctioned Household Applies for FIP or FA

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.11(j) and 441 IAC 65.50(234)

Policy:

When a FIP sanction is in place and a household:

- ◆ Applies for Food Assistance and FIP on the same application, start the 10% penalty when you approve the application.
- ◆ Applies for FIP on an ongoing Food Assistance case, start the 10% penalty to Food Assistance for the month after FIP is approved. Timely notice is required.
- ◆ Applies for Food Assistance on an ongoing FIP case, start the 10% Food Assistance penalty when you approve Food Assistance benefits.

1. Mr. M fails to cooperate with child support recovery in February and his FIP grant is reduced for March. The 10% reduction is applied to his Food Assistance for March. Mr. M's household is canceled from FIP and Food Assistance effective April 1 for failing to provide information.

On April 3, Mr. M reapplies for FIP and Food Assistance. Mr. M is eligible for emergency service and is approved for Food Assistance on April 5.

On April 11, Mr. M's FIP application is approved. Mr. M's April grant is reduced because he still has not cooperated with child support recovery. Mr. M's household was not a FIP household when his Food Assistance was approved. Therefore, the 10% reduction is not applied for April.

2. Ms. R's household is approved for FIP and Food Assistance on May 7. Ms. R's FIP grant is still under sanction for failing to cooperate with child support recovery. Because the FIP sanction is in place when FIP and Food Assistance are approved at the same time, Ms. R's Food Assistance is reduced by 10% for May.

Ending the 10% Penalty

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.11(j) and 441 IAC 65.50(234)

Policy:

Do not apply the 10% Food Assistance penalty to months in which FIP is suspended or canceled.

Procedure:

Stop the 10% penalty when FIP is canceled or ends the sanction. To stop the penalty, see [14-B\(5\)](#), Removing a 10% Reduction.

Do not end a penalty when FIP ends a sanction by issuing extra benefits for a past or current month.

If FIP applied a sanction in error, recalculate Food Assistance without the penalty for those months. Issue lost benefits or a supplemental allotment. For system entries, see [14-B\(5\)](#), Removing a 10% Reduction, and Recomputing Benefits for Past Months.

Mrs. N fails to cooperate with CSRU in May. Her FIP grant reduction and 10% reduction in Food Assistance start in June. Mrs. N cooperates with CSRU. The FIP sanction ends for August and FIP issues an additional payment for August.

The 10% reduction in Food Assistance ends effective September 1. Food Assistance for August is not recalculated, because the 10% reduction for August was correctly applied when the reduction was made.

Acting on IEVS and Other Automated Reports

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.2(f), 272.8, 273.2(f)(9)(iii), and 273.12; 441 IAC 65.51(234)

Policy:

Act on reports from the Income and Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) or other automated sources.

Procedure:

Check the case to see if the information was acted on. If not, see Chapters [14-E](#) and [14-G](#). These systems manual chapters:

- ◆ Provide instructions for handling specific reports, and
- ◆ Tell you if the information is considered verified upon receipt.

If you need verification before you act on a report, see [Verifying Changes](#). Use the following guide with Chapters [14-E](#) and [14-B](#).

If the information was:	Then:
Previously acted on...	Note this on the "stamp" area of the report to document that you followed up on the report. File the report in the case record. Exception: Do not file the <i>Earnings and Pension Report</i> , S470X425-A, or the <i>Internal Revenue Service Report</i> , S470X615-A.
Not previously acted on...	Take action within 30 days of receiving the report (or later if a third party delays providing verification). Note on the "stamp" area of the report that there was no effect, or the action you took. File the report in the case record. Exception: Do not file the <i>Earnings and Pension Report</i> , S470X425-A, or the <i>Internal Revenue Service Report</i> , S470X615-A.

Comment:

Establish a claim when:

- ◆ The household failed to report as required.
- ◆ You failed to act timely.

See [7-H](#), [CLAIMS](#).

Acting on the Prisoner Match Report

Legal reference: Public Law 105-33; 7 CFR 273.1(b)(7)

Policy:

The ABC system runs a monthly match with the Social Security Administration to identify clients who are incarcerated. The match includes persons who are active or pending for Food Assistance.

These matches must be followed up on to ensure that persons who are in jail or prison are not receiving Food Assistance to which they are not entitled.

See [7-C](#), [Residents of Institutions](#).

Procedure:

The *Prisoner Match Report*, S470X438-A, is available on the Mainframe Report Viewer by the 10th of the month. When a Food Assistance participant's name appears on the report, contact the household to verify the information on the report. Do not take any case action based solely on data taken from this match.

See [14-G](#), *Prisoner Match Report, S478X438-A*, for details regarding this report.

Failure to Cooperate With DIA or Quality Control

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.2(d)(1) and (2), 441 IAC 65.22(3), 481 IAC 72.1(10A)

Policy:

Cancel the household's case if you are notified that the household failed to cooperate with:

- ◆ The Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA), or
- ◆ The Quality Control Unit (QC).

See [7-C](#), *Cooperation*. See [Reinstatement](#) if the household cooperates before the effective date of cancellation.

Recertification

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.2(f)(8), 273.14(b); 441 IAC 65.2(1)"e," 65.22(1) and 65.22(2)

Policy:

Households must recertify to get benefits for a new certification period. To recertify, a household must meet all of these requirements:

- ◆ Apply on form 470-2881, *Review/Recertification Eligibility Document* (RRED),
- ◆ Interview once every 12 months,
- ◆ Provide verification when required.

Procedure:

Treat the RRED as an application to recertify if it contains at least a name, address, and signature.

When completing a RRED, households need to answer only the Food Assistance questions and provide proof where stated. All Food Assistance questions must be answered before you can recertify the household. Help the household if it asks for help.

A household can complete missing answers on the RRED at the time of interview. If there is no face-to face interview:

◆ When recertifying with a telephone interview:

- Fill in answers during the interview,
- Make a copy of the RRED for the case file, and
- Send the original to the household with a written request for information. Tell the household to review and initial changes, and to return the form within 10 days.

◆ When recertifying without an interview:

- Mark the incomplete sections in red,
- Make a copy of the RRED for the case file, and
- Send the original to the household with a written request for information. Tell the household to complete missing items as marked, and return the form within 10 days.

Comment:

For how a RRED is issued:

- ◆ By the system, see [14-B\(5\)](#), [Recertification](#).
- ◆ By hand, see [6-Appendix](#), [Review/Recertification Eligibility Document, Form 470-2881, 470-2881\(S\), 470-2881\(M\), or 470-2881\(MS\)](#).

Timely or Untimely Filing a RRED

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.14(c), (d), and (e)

Policy:

A RRED is considered timely filed when it is received in the local office by the 15th day of the last month of the certification period. RREDs filed later than the 15th day of the month are untimely.

An SSI household may file a RRED at the Social Security Administration office.

Procedure:

Most RREDs will be due on the 5th calendar day of the month. The RRED is still timely if filed by the 15th of the month.

Households that file a timely RRED and meet all recertification requirements are entitled to recertify by the end of the current certification period and receive uninterrupted benefits. A household loses its right to uninterrupted benefits if it causes a delay in processing by missing a scheduled interview or failing to provide requested information by the due date.

Comment:

Households that file an untimely RRED are entitled to recertify as quickly as possible, but are not entitled to receive uninterrupted benefits. However, a household still can get uninterrupted benefits if it completes all recertification requirements by the end of its certification period.

Whether a RRED is timely or untimely filed does not affect proration of benefits. Proration comes into effect only when the household causes a delay in processing or files its RRED after the end of the certification period. See [Delays in Processing a RRED](#) for examples of when benefits are prorated.

Interview

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.14(b)(3)

Policy:

Households must be interviewed at least once every 12 months.

Procedure:

You may schedule an interview:

- ◆ Before the household files its RRED, if you schedule it for a date that is after the RRED is due, or
- ◆ After the household files its RRED.

If the RRED is filed timely, you must schedule an interview for a date that allows 10 days before the end of the certification period for the household to turn in missing verification.

If the RRED is filed untimely, schedule the interview for the earliest possible date.

Scheduling Interviews

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.14(b)(3)

Procedure:

Upon receipt of a RRED, attempt to contact the household by telephone if the recertification requires an interview. If contact is made with the household, conduct the interview at that time if the household agrees to.

If contact is not made with the household:

- ◆ Leave the standard voicemail message, as explained below, at the telephone number provided.
- ◆ Provide at least 24 hours advance notice of the scheduled interview. Do not schedule an interview for the same day as the initial interview attempt.
- ◆ Document the specific date and time of the scheduled interview.
- ◆ The timeframe for interviews cannot exceed a two-hour window of time. For example: 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.
- ◆ If you are unable to leave a voicemail message, an appointment letter must be mailed within one business day.

In order to schedule an interview by voicemail, one of the following standard voicemail messages must be left for the client. There are different scripts for RREDs processed by a single worker and those processed by a team:

- ◆ **Specific Worker:** "This is (*worker's name*) with the Department of Human Services calling for (*client's name*). I received your recertification form for Food Assistance and need to do a phone interview. Please call me at (*worker phone number*) as soon as possible.

"If I don't hear from you by (*day, date and time*), I will call you on (*day, date*) between (*window of time*). If I can't reach you, your benefits will end. If this time does not work for you, please call me immediately so we can reschedule. Thank you."
- ◆ **Team:** "This is (*worker's name*) with the Department of Human Services calling for (*client's name*). We received your recertification form for Food Assistance and need to do a phone interview. Please call (*worker phone number*) as soon as possible.

“When you call, be sure to ask for a RRED worker. Any RRED worker will be able to help you. If we don’t hear from you by (*day, date and time*), we will call you on (*day, date*), between (*window of time*). If we can’t reach you, your benefits will end. If this time does not work for you, please call me immediately so we can reschedule. Thank you.”

Remember: When you call back for the scheduled interview, you must attempt the call twice (five minutes apart) and document those attempts before considering the household to have failed to attend a scheduled interview.

Conducting the Interview

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.14(b)(3)

Conduct the interview according to the household’s situation:

- ◆ You do not need to discuss every answer on the RRED when:
 - Proof is provided, and
 - Circumstances are fairly stable or simple.
- ◆ You need to review the RRED more carefully when:
 - The household needs help, or
 - Circumstances are error-prone.

Explaining Simplified Reporting

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.12(a)(5), 441 IAC 65.5(234)

Policy:

At each interview, explain to the household how and when to report exceeding its gross income limit.

Procedure:

Explain reporting requirements to the household every time you interview, at least once every 12 months. Explaining this carefully will help avoid household-caused errors. See [7-B, Household Reporting Requirements](#), for details about information to provide when explaining reporting requirements.

Failure to Attend the Interview

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.2(e) and 273.14(b)(3)

Policy:

If a household fails to attend a scheduled interview, notify the household that it missed the interview and is responsible for rescheduling.

Procedure:

Send a *Notice of Decision* on the day the household misses its interview. This notice tells the household the timeframe within which it must reschedule.

- ◆ If the RRED was filed by the last day of the certification period, use notice reason 523.
- ◆ If the RRED was filed after the last day of the certification period, use notice reason 522.

NOTE: When using notice reason 522, you must track this time frame. Make system entries to deny the application on the 30th day after the RRED was filed unless the household reschedules and appears for an interview. If the 30th day falls on a weekend or holiday, make system entries the next working day.

Comment:

Do not send a notice of missed interview if you set up an interview but the household has not filed a RRED. No action should be taken if the household has not applied.

Requesting Verification

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.14(b)(4), 441 IAC 65.22(1) and (2)

Policy:

If a household did not provide all information or verification needed to determine eligibility and benefits:

- ◆ Tell the household in writing what it must provide, and
- ◆ Give the household 10 days to provide the information.
 - The 10-day period starts the day after you give or mail the request.
 - If the 10th day is a nonworking day or a legal holiday, make the due date the next working day for which you have regular mail service.

Procedure:

If a household fails to provide requested verification needed to determine eligibility by the due date, deny the application using notice reason code 206.

If a household turns in all verification after its application is denied but before the end of the certification period, reopen the case and provide a full month of benefits for the first month of the new certification period.

If the verification is received after the end of the certification period, reopen the case and prorate benefits.

See specific policies for your case situation in [RRED Filed Before the End of the Certification Period](#) or [RRED Filed After the End of the Certification Period](#).

Do not deny an application for failure to verify an expense. Do not allow a deduction if required verification of an expense is not provided.

Comment:

You cannot deny a household for failure to provide verification if:

- ◆ An interview is required, but it has not been held, or
- ◆ You did not ask for verification in writing, or
- ◆ You did not give the household 10 days to provide verification, or
- ◆ You asked a third-party for the verification, but the third party failed to provide it.

1. Mr. A files a RRED on May 5 to recertify benefits for June. An interview is scheduled for May 10. Mr. A fails to attend and the worker sends a Food Assistance missed appointment notice.

Mr. A reschedules his interview for May 15 and attends. At his interview, Mr. A is given 10 days to provide income verification (by May 25). Mr. A does not provide his income verification by May 25. Since he has now attended the interview, his RRED is reopened and his worker must deny his application for failure to provide requested information.

Mr. A returns the missing information by the end of his certification period, May 31. Mr. A's worker reopens the case and provides a full month of benefits for June.

2. Mr. B files a RRED on June 5 to recertify benefits for July. An interview is scheduled for June 12. Mr. B fails to attend and the worker sends a Food Assistance missed appointment notice.

Mr. B reschedules his interview for June 18. At his interview, Mr. B is given 10 days to provide required verification (by June 28). Mr. B does not provide the verification by June 28. On June 29, the worker sends a notice to deny the application for failure to provide requested information.

Mr. B provides the missing verification on July 10. Mr. B's worker reopens the case and prorates benefits from July 10.

Determining Eligibility and Benefits

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.10(a)(2), 441 IAC 65.23(234)

Policy:

When processing an application for recertification:

- ◆ See [Timely Processing a RRED](#) and [Delays in Processing a RRED](#) for processing time frames and effective dates.
- ◆ Base eligibility and benefits for the new certification period on the household's anticipated circumstances.

Procedure:

Do the following to anticipate the household's circumstances:

1. Determine household composition based on what is anticipated for the first day of the new certification period.
2. Calculate a new income estimate. Follow the policies in [7-F](#).
3. Determine the household's allowable deductions. For determining deductions, see 7-E, [INCOME](#).
4. Determine the household's resources. For determining resources, see 7-D, [RESOURCES](#).

Timely Processing a RRED

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.10(g)(2), 273.14(c), 273.14 (d)

Policy:

Households that have met all recertification requirements are to be notified of their eligibility or ineligibility by the end of the current certification period. Eligible households must be provided an opportunity to participate by their normal issuance cycle in the first month of the new certification period.

Comment:

When processing a RRED after the end of the certification period, see [Delays in Processing a RRED](#).

Delays in Processing a RRED

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.14(e)

When processing a RRED after the end of the certification period, refer to whichever of the following sections is appropriate:

- ◆ [RRED Filed Before the End of the Certification Period](#)
- ◆ [RRED Filed After the End of the Certification Period](#)

RRED Filed Before the End of the Certification Period

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.14(e)(1) and (2)

If the RRED is not processed by the end of the certification period because of an agency delay, continue to process the case and provide a full month of benefits for the first month of the new certification period.

If the RRED is not processed by the end of the certification period because the household caused a delay after filing the RRED, continue to process the case and prorate from the date the household takes the last required action. The household may cause a delay by missing its scheduled interview or failing to provide requested information by its due date.

If the RRED is denied because the household fails to take a required action, the household has 30 days after the end of the certification period to complete the process and have its RRED treated as an application for recertification.

If the household takes required actions after the end of the certification period but within 30 days after the end of the certification period, reopen the case and prorate benefits from the date the household takes the last required action.

1. Ms. T files a RRED on April 5 to recertify benefits for May. Requested verification, due by April 18, is not provided. The application for recertification is denied. Ms. T returns all needed information on May 10. The recertification is approved and benefits are prorated from May 10.

2. Mr. C files a RRED on June 2 to recertify benefits for July. The household misses its scheduled interview and a Food Assistance missed appointment and denial notice (notice reason 523) is sent on June 12.

Mr. C reschedules an interview for June 25. During the interview, the worker determines additional information is needed. A 10 day written request is issued and the information is due by July 5.

If the household returns the information early and it is received by June 30 (the last day of the certification period), benefits will not be prorated. The effective date will be July 1.

If the household returns the requested information after June 30 (the last day of the certification period), benefits will be prorated from the date the information is received because the household caused a delay by missing its scheduled interview. NOTE: If the information is returned later than July 30, the household will have to reapply.

3. Ms. J files a RRED on May 28 to recertify benefits for June. Requested verification, due by June 8, is provided on June 8. The RRED was filed untimely but the household did not cause a delay after filing the RRED. The recertification is approved and the household is entitled to a full month of benefits for June.

4. Ms. G files a RRED on April 20 to recertify benefits for May. Requested verification, due by April 30, is provided on May 6. The recertification is approved. Because the household caused a delay in processing, benefits are prorated from May 6.

RRED Filed After the End of the Certification Period

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.14(e)(3), 273.14(f)

If a household files a RRED within 30 days after the end of the certification period, the RRED shall be considered an application for recertification. However, as with an initial application, prorate benefits based on the filing date.

Follow the processing standards below that are used for initial applications. If the household:

- ◆ Meets the criteria at [7-B, Determining Eligibility for Emergency Service](#), provide emergency services.
- ◆ Fails to appear for an interview, send a notice of missed interview. Be sure to use notice reason 522 (not 523). Because this is treated like an initial application, you must wait to deny on the 30th day.
- ◆ Is denied for failure to provide requested information but later returns it within 30 days of filing the RRED, reopen back to the RRED filing date.
- ◆ Is denied for failure to provide requested information but later returns it more than 30 days after filing the RRED but within 60 days, reopen and process. See [7-B, Delays in Processing](#), to determine the effective date.

Case Documentation

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.2(f)(6)

Policy:

The case record must be documented to support each determination of eligibility, ineligibility, or benefit level. The case must be documented in sufficient detail to permit a case reader, Quality Control reviewer, or another worker to determine the reasonableness and accuracy of each determination.

Procedure:

Good documentation is the key to accurate cases. When you are projecting a household's future circumstances, it is critical to record how and why you came to your decisions on the household's eligibility and benefit level.

If your projections do not prove to be true, the case will be correct if you, the household, and other sources all took correct actions at the time of the application or recertification and those actions are documented to show that the projection was reasonable. A quality control reviewer needs to know:

- ◆ The period of time you used as representation of future income;
- ◆ Why you did or didn't use income amounts in calculating the projection;
- ◆ The actual calculation performed to project income.