



Iowa Department of Human Services

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GENERAL LETTER NO. 7-C-108

ISSUED BY: Bureau of Financial, Health and Work Supports
Division of Adult, Children and Family Services

SUBJECT: Employees' Manual, Title 7, Chapter C, **NONFINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY**,
pages 6, 12, 17, and 18, revised.

Summary

Chapter 7-C is revised to:

- ◆ Update the maximum income amounts used in determining eligibility for:
 - Elderly people who are disabled (165% of the federal poverty level). These amounts are used in the determination of whether a person who is both elderly and disabled can be considered a separate Food Assistance household even when buying and fixing food with others.
 - The Promoting Awareness of the Benefits of a Healthy Marriage Program, which confers categorical eligibility for Food Assistance.
- ◆ Replace references to obsolete form 470-2998, *Referral for Front-End Investigation*, with form 470-5130, *DHS Investigative Referral to DIA*.
- ◆ Update all links due to the Department's new website.

Effective Date

October 1, 2014

Material Superseded

This material replaces the following pages from Employees' Manual, Title 7, Chapter C:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Date</u>
6, 12	November 1, 2013
17, 18	November 12, 2010

Additional Information

Refer questions about this general letter to your area income maintenance administrator.

Elderly Members Who Are Disabled

Legal reference: 7 CFR 273.1(a)(2)(ii)

Policy:

Under certain conditions, a person who is both elderly and disabled can buy and fix food with others and still be a separate household. However, an elderly and disabled person still cannot be a separate household from people that are listed under [Mandatory Household Members](#).

Procedure:

Allow the elderly and disabled person to be a separate household when:

- ◆ The person is unable to buy and fix food independently because of a permanent disability. The disability can be physical or mental, disease-related, or non-disease-related. Determine disability by observing the person or through a statement from a physician or a licensed or certified psychologist saying that the person is unable to buy and fix food without help.
- ◆ The countable gross income of nonmandatory members living with the elderly and disabled person is at or less than 165% of the federal poverty level for the corresponding household size. The following chart gives the amount of monthly countable gross income that is 165% of poverty for the corresponding household size.

165% of the Poverty Level			
Number of People	Maximum Gross Monthly Income	Number of People	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$1,605	5	\$3,838
2	\$2,163	6	\$4,396
3	\$2,722	7	\$4,955
4	\$3,280	8	\$5,513
For each additional member, add \$559			

Do not include the elderly and disabled person or that person's mandatory household members when determining the household size and income of the other people living in the household.

Households Eligible for the Promoting Healthy Marriage Program

Legal reference: 441 IAC 47.1(234), 47.2(234), and 65.39(234)

Policy:

The Promoting Awareness of the Benefits of a Healthy Marriage Program (PHMP) uses funds from the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant to provide information about the benefits of a healthy and stable marriage. Households are categorically eligible for Food Assistance for any month in which they are eligible for the PHMP.

There is no resource limit for the PHMP. Food Assistance households are eligible for the PHMP if they meet **all** of the following criteria:

- ◆ Total gross countable Food Assistance income is at or below 160% of the federal poverty guidelines.
- ◆ No household member is currently disqualified due to an intentional program violation (IPV).
- ◆ All Food Assistance eligibility criteria other than resource limits and gross and net income limits are met.
- ◆ Food Assistance benefit amount is greater than zero. NOTE: Eligible one-member and two-member households are eligible for the "minimum benefit."

Procedure:

There is not a separate application for the PHMP. Eligibility for the PHMP is automatically determined whenever a household applies for Food Assistance. When you process the Food Assistance application, the ABC system will determine eligibility for the PHMP by comparing income to the chart below:

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income for PHMP	Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income for PHMP
1	\$1,557	5	\$3,722
2	\$2,098	6	\$4,264
3	\$2,640	7	\$4,805
4	\$3,181	8	\$5,346
For each additional person, add \$543			

The notice of decision issued by the ABC system to approve Food Assistance will include language approving the PHMP if the household qualifies. When PHMP eligibility exists, the ABC system will assign the same certification period for the PHMP as for Food Assistance.

Cooperation With Front-End Investigations

Legal reference: 481 IAC 72.1(10A), 72.2(10A), 72.4(10A)

Policy:

The purpose of front-end investigation is to prevent households from fraudulently receiving Food Assistance by conducting investigations on applications and reapplications before an eligibility determination is made.

The following sections explain procedures for:

- ◆ [Referring a household to the DIA for investigation](#)
- ◆ [The front-end investigation process](#)
- ◆ [Acting on front-end investigation findings](#)
- ◆ [Handling applications from persons sanctioned for failure to cooperate with DIA](#)

Referring a Household for Investigation

Legal reference: 481 IAC 72.2(10A)

Policy:

Refer questionable cases to the Economic Fraud Control Unit of the Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) for further investigation.

Procedure:

Before making a referral to DIA, take a prudent-person approach to the information the client gives you. Allow the client the opportunity to explain the situation or resolve any questionable information.

Make referrals using form 470-5130, *DHS Investigative Referral to DIA*. One or more of the factors listed on the form must be present in a case in order to make a referral. See [6-Appendix](#) for more information about how to fill out the form.

Comment:

If a client does not cooperate with DIA and later reapplies, a new referral must be made.

Food Assistance Trafficking

Legal reference: 481 IAC 72.2(10A)

Policy:

If you receive a complaint about Food Assistance trafficking, see [7-A, Handling Complaints of Trafficking](#). See [7-A, Definitions](#), for the definition of trafficking.

Front-End Investigation Process

Legal reference: 481 IAC 72.2(10A), 72.3(10A)

Policy:

DIA staff investigate cases to:

- ◆ Determine if information supplied by the client is correct.
- ◆ Assist in reducing the program error rate.
- ◆ Identify overpayments for recovery.

Procedure:

DIA investigators use form 427-0326, *Investigator Introduction Letter*, to let clients know that their case has been referred to the Economic Fraud Control Unit for front-end investigation.

The DIA investigator determines if an interview is needed. If so, the DIA investigator mails form 427-0323, *Investigator Appointment Letter*, to the client to be interviewed. Before the interview, the DIA investigator informs the client of:

- ◆ The purpose of the investigation
- ◆ The type of information being reviewed
- ◆ The client's responsibility to cooperate
- ◆ The consequences of refusing to cooperate in an investigation