

Processing Changes for SNAP

Processing the information reported by individuals in a timely and accurate manner is a critical piece in reducing the Quality Control error rate. To be timely, a decision must be made and an action taken within 10 days of receipt of the reported change.

The individual may report one piece of information. That piece of information may impact several areas regarding an eligibility and/or benefit amount. For example, "I moved." The new address is needed to determine residency. However, there are several other areas that are impacted by this statement. We have attempted to list some of these areas below:

Factors to consider with a reported change of address:

- *Residency.* Reasons for the move. Does the household live in the area or does the case need to be transferred to another branch or closed, if moved out of state?
- *Rent or shelter costs.* What is the new rent amount?
If the new shelter costs are higher than the household income, how will they pay the expenses?
- *Utilities.* How is the home heated? Is the dwelling billed separately for heating? Who is responsible for the heating costs? Is the responsible party the filing group or another person? Are they entitled to the FUA?
 - If not entitled to the FUA, do they have nonheating utility costs that are allowable; i.e., telephone basic rates? This could make them eligible for the LUA.
- *Household composition.* Who is living in the home? If there are others in the home, how are they related to each household member? If related, are they required to be a member of the filing group? Remember, if parents and children under age 22 are sharing the same home, they must be in the same filing group. If there are others in the home, do they purchase and prepare meals separately? If a separate filing group, do they contribute to the shelter or utility costs?
- *Effective date.* The effective date for the change depends on the result of the action. Will the result be to increase benefits, or to reduce or close benefits?
 - Increase. If the change causes an increase in benefits, make the change effective the first of the month following the date the change happened. Do not adjust the benefits retroactively or give a supplement. Action of changes is always future effective. No notice is needed when the change will increase next month's benefits.
 - Reduce or close. Send the timely continuing benefit notice at least 10 days before the first of the next month when the change will reduce benefits.

Factors to consider when a person moves into or out of the household:

- *Moved in.* Is the person required to be included in the filing group due to relationship? Do they purchase and prepare meals separately? Will they be paying a portion of the rent and utility costs? If must be in the same filing group, does the person have countable income or resources? If not categorically eligible, will the person's income or resources put the case over the countable income/resource limits?
 - An application is not needed to add a new person to a SNAP filing group, so it is imperative that all pertinent information is collected before benefits are issued (date of birth, SSN, OFSET determination, income verification, etc.).
 - If adding a person with their income results in fewer benefits, remember to send a 10-day timely continuing benefit decision notice before the effective date.
- *Moved out.* Remember to remove the person's needs from FCAS along with their income. If this person was paying a part of the rent and utility costs, remember to reevaluate the household costs coded on FCAS.
- *Effective date.* The effective date for the change depends on the result of the action. Will the result be to increase benefits, or to reduce or close benefits?
 - Increase. A person should be added to the case or removed from the case the first of the next month when it will increase benefits.
 - Reduce or close. If the change will decrease benefits, the person should be added or removed from the case no later than the first of the month following the date the timely continuing benefit notice period ended.

Factors to consider when a person reports a change in employment:

- *Job ended.* What was the last day of work? When will the final paycheck be received? Why did the job end? If a job quit, and the person is now OFSET mandatory, was there good cause for the job quit? If no, they may be subject to an OFSET disqualification.
- *New job.* When did the job start? Where is the individual working? What type of work? When will the first paycheck be received? When are the pay periods? How often paid? What are the pay dates? What is the rate of pay? Will they get paid a shift differential? What is the expected number of work hours each week? If employed as a waitress or bartender, what do they expect for tips?
- *Increase or decrease in work hours.* When does this change in work hours begin? When will they receive the first paycheck that is impacted by this change in work hours? What is the reason for a decrease in work hours? If the individual asked for fewer work hours and was working the equivalent of 30 hours a week at federal minimum wage, and is now OFSET mandatory,

was there good cause? There may be a need to apply an OFSET disqualification.

- *Change in rate of pay.* When does this change in rate of pay begin? When will they receive the first paycheck that is impacted by this change in rate of pay.
- *Is the change in income verified upon receipt or required to be reported based on the reporting requirements?* The income may or may not need to be verified or acted upon. Refer to the reporting requirements for the individual and determine whether verification is necessary or simply narration.
- *Effective date for change reporting or semi-annual reporting or transitional benefit cases:* The effective date for the change depends on the result of the action. Will the result be to increase, reduce or close benefits?
 - Increase. If the employment related change will increase benefits, act on the change effective the first of the next month.
 - Reduce or close. If the change will reduce benefits, send the timely continuing benefit notice and code the new income amount on FCAS no later than the first of the month following the date the timely continuing benefit notice period ends.
- *Effective date for monthly reporting cases:* Continue to process the monthly report as normal. No additional notices are required.

Factors to consider when a person reports a change in a cost:

SNAP individuals are not required to report a change in the amount of deductions, if there is not another change (such as a move). However, if a individual does report a change (e.g., increase in medical deductions or decrease in rent amount), the change must be acted on as quickly as possible. An increase in the deduction may result in more SNAP benefits. A decrease in a deduction may result in fewer SNAP benefits.