CHAPTER 2-000 CLIENT PROCESSING

2-001 Application: Application is the first step in client processing.

Application forms must be readily accessible to any group, organization, or private citizen who requests them.

2-001.01 Right to File: The local office must protect an individual's rights during the application process. The local office must post signs in the certification office which explain the application processing standards and the right to file an application on the day of initial contact.

Every household must be given an opportunity to receive an application on the same day it expresses an interest in receiving food stamp benefits, and the worker must encourage the household to file the application the same day it is requested. If the local office receives a request for an application, the form must be mailed to the household on the date of the request.

Since local offices have been designated to serve specific geographical areas, households may contact an office other than the one designated for the area where they reside. When the household contacts another local office within the project area in person or by telephone, the local office must, in addition to meeting the requirements in paragraph one of this section, give the household the address and telephone number of the appropriate local office. The local office must also offer to forward the household's application to the appropriate local office the same day if the household has completed enough information on the application to file. The household must be informed that its application will not be considered filed and the processing standards will not begin until the application is received by the appropriate office. If the household has submitted its application to an office not serving the client's area, the local office must forward the application to the appropriate office on the same day.

2-001.02 Application Process: The application process must be completed no later than 30 days following the date the application was filed, unless processing is delayed. The following steps are included in the application process:

1. The individual completes and files an application form;
2. The worker screens from ~~the filing page or~~ the application to determine eligibility for expedited service;
3. The worker schedules and conducts the interview;
4. The worker verifies the information as required; and
5. The worker enters information on the ~~food stamp~~ automated system. ~~using the appropriate screens. The system determines eligibility and if the household is eligible, computes the benefit level including a prorated amount for the initial and/or reinstatement month; and~~
6. ~~The local office gives e~~Eligible households are given an opportunity to participate within 30 days from the date the application was filed. This opportunity includes allowing sufficient mailing time for the household to receive its EBT card.

{Effective }

2-001.02A Filing an Application: Households may submit food stamp applications to the local office in person, by mail, by fax or other electronic transmission, or through an authorized representative. The household may file an incomplete application which minimally must include the applicant's name, address, and the signature of a responsible member of the household or the authorized representative.

2-003 Verification

2-003.01 Required Initial Verification: Information given on the application must be verified before eligibility can be determined.

Exception: Households eligible for expedited processing may have all verification postponed for the first issuance except identity of the person making the application and the household's authorized representative, if applicable.

1. Required verification:
   a. Identity of the person making application and the authorized representative, if applicable;
   b. Social Security numbers or proof of application for Social Security number;
   c. Residency;
   d. Alien status for household members applying for food stamp benefits;
   e. Eligible student status if claimed;
   f. Resources;
   g. Income; and
   h. Expenses allowed as a deduction:
      (1) Medical expenses and disability if claimed;
      (2) Dependent care costs;
      (3) Child support costs;
      (4) Shelter costs; and
      (5) Utility costs;
2. Eligibility factors verified if questionable:
   a. Citizenship;
   b. Work requirements; and
   c. Household composition.

{Effective 1/3/2005}

2-003.01A Questionable Information: Information on the application is questionable if it is inconsistent with:

1. Statements made by the applicant;
2. Other information on the current application or a previous application; or
3. Any information received by the local office.

2-004 Processing Applications Under Special Circumstances: Certain types of applications have special processing procedures. This section describes these applications and their processing standards. Special procedures are used for households which are:

1. Entitled to expedited service including migrant and seasonal farm workers;
2. Applying for ADC, AABD, Emergency Assistance, Employment First supportive services, or the State Disability Program;
3. Applying for or receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
4. Living in chemical dependency treatment centers or group living arrangements including shelters for battered women and children;
5. Furnishing board to individuals;
6. Using an authorized representative to apply;
7. Categorically eligible; and
8. Providing foster care.

2-004.01 Expedited Service: Expedited service standards require that processing be completed with timeframes that are shorter than the usual 30 days. If this is an initial application, the criteria apply to the month of application.

The household may be certified under expedited service procedures if they are determined to be entitled to expedited service and have either provided all the required verifications since the last certification or have been certified under the 30-day processing standards since the last expedited service certification. If otherwise eligible, a household cannot waive its right to expedited service.

If otherwise eligible, the following households are entitled to expedited service.

1. Households with less than $150 in monthly gross income provided their liquid resources do not exceed $100;
2. Households whose combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than the households monthly rent or mortgage and utilities; and
3. Migrant or seasonal farmworkers who are destitute provided their liquid resources do not exceed $100.

2-004.01A Special Procedures for Expedited Service: The worker must follow special procedures in determining eligibility for households which may be entitled to expedited service.

2-004.01A1 Expedited Application: ~~At initial application when the local office receives the application filing page and the household is determined to be entitled to expedited service, the household must be advised that if they leave the completed application and provide proof of the identity of the head of the household they must receive the expedited issuance within seven calendar days from the application filing date.~~

~~A completed application for expedited service processing means that the application contains enough information to determine the eligibility and benefit level for the expedited allotment. If the applicant does not list or address allowable expenses, this does not render the application incomplete. The benefit level can be determined without these deductions. If an authorized representative files an application on behalf of the household, the proof of identity of the authorized representative must also be provided before the expedited issuance.~~

~~If an interview cannot be conducted in the expedited timeframe, the first allotment may need to be issued before the interview is held.~~When an application is received by a local office, it is screened for entitlement to expedited service upon receipt. If the household appears at the local office and submits an application, the application should be screened prior to the household leaving the local office. If the household leaves before screening can be completed or submits an application through the mail, fax or other electronic transmission, it is screened upon receipt.

1. If the application is complete enough to determine entitlement to expedited service, the expedited time frame starts with the receipt date of the application. The local office schedules an interview to meet the expedited time frame. If an interview is scheduled and the household does not appear for the interview, the local office sends the household a Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI). If the interview is not rescheduled by the household in time to meet the expedited time frame, the household loses its entitlement to expedited service and the application is approved or denied within the normal 30 days from the receipt date of the application.
2. If the application is not complete enough to determine entitlement to expedited service, it cannot be known if the household is entitled to expedited service. The expedited time frame does not yet apply. The local office schedules an interview as soon as possible. If the household attends the interview and is found to be entitled to expedited service, the time frame for expedited service starts with the date of the interview. If an interview is scheduled and the household does not appear for the interview, the local office sends the household a NOMI. The household loses its entitlement to expedited service and the application is approved or denied within the normal 30 days from the receipt date of the application.

2-004.01A2 Verification: Once a collateral contact is named, the worker must act promptly to help the household obtain verification.

2-004.01A2a Identity: Before initial certification, the worker must verify the identity of the person making the application in all cases. If an authorized representative makes application, the worker must verify the identify of the head of the household and the authorized representative.

If identity cannot be verified within the expedited timeframe, the household is not entitled to expedited processing.

2-004.01A2b Residency: All reasonable efforts must be made to verify the household's residency within the expedited processing time frames.

2-004.01A2c Resources: The worker must verify the resource level during the application process if it can be done within the expedited time frames. If the household has more than $100 in liquid resources, the household is not entitled to expedited processing.

If the household is determined to have excess resources, the household is not entitled to receive food stamp benefits.

2-004.01A2d Income: The worker must verify that the household's total monthly income is $149.99 or less if it can be done within expedited time frames.

If the household is determined to have excess income, the household is not entitled to receive food stamp benefits.

2-004.01A2e Deductions

2-004.01A2e(1) Medical: If the worker is unable to verify the household member's eligibility for the medical deduction and expenses, the following procedures apply:

1. If the worker is unable to verify disability within expedited guidelines, the worker must allow the medical deduction for the first issuance. To allow the medical deduction for the second issuance, verification is required;

Parents of a newborn child may apply for an SSN for the child at the hospital when this service is available. A household must provide proof of application for an SSN for a newborn child at its next recertification or within six months following the month the baby is born, whichever is later.

{Effective 9/4/2002}

2-004.01A2g Work Registration: Household members who must be work-registered meet this requirement when they are included on the signed application.

{Effective 6/25/95}

2-004.01A2h Other Verification: Verifications that cannot be obtained in time to meet expedited processing standards must be postponed. All required verifications must be provided before the second issuance of the certification period.

{Effective 6/25/95}

2-004.01B Processing Standards for Expedited Service

2-004.01B1 Issuance of Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Card: The EBT card must be available for the household or its authorized representative no later than the seventh calendar day after the application filing date.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.01B2 Combined Allotment: The prorated first month's expedited benefit and the full second month's aggregate benefits must be issued to households entitled to expedited service which apply for food stamp benefits on or after the 16th of the month, and, at a minimum, provide verification of the identity of the person making application and the authorized representative if applicable. The household must be eligible for the application month and the second month of the certification period. The second month's benefit is an aggregate benefit. All of the following conditions must be met to be an aggregate benefit:

1. The application month must be expedited;
2. The eligibility for benefits must be determined during the application month;
3. The application date must be the 16th of the month or later; and
4. The household must be eligible for benefits for both the application month and the following month.

2-004.01B3 Interviews: An expedited household must have a face-to-face interview before certification to complete the application process unless the household qualifies ~~to have~~ for a waiver of the face-to-face interview. ~~waived. If an expedited household has submitted a complete application with identity of the person making application and:~~

~~1. An interview cannot be scheduled within the expedited timeframe; the household must receive its first issuance of food stamp benefits without an interview; or~~
~~2. Misses a scheduled interview within the expedited timeframe; the household must receive its first issuance of food stamp benefits without an interview.~~
~~An interview must be held and verifications completed before the second issuance of food stamp benefits.~~

If the face-to-face interview is waived, a telephone interview must be completed.

{Effective }

~~2-004.01B3a Incomplete Application Received: If the local office staff receive an incomplete application, an interview must be scheduled to meet the time frames of expedited service processing. If the applicant has been informed of the scheduled interview and fails to keep the appointment, the right to expedited service is forfeited. No benefits are issued until the application is completed and eligibility for food stamp benefits is determined. If the household has submitted an incomplete application and a telephone interview is conducted, the procedures for processing the application from a telephone interview must be followed.~~

{Effective 6/25/95}

~~2-004.01B3b Complete Application Received: If local office staff receive a completed application and the household has provided proof of identity of the head of household and authorized representative, if applicable, the following procedures are used:~~

~~1. If the interview cannot be scheduled or conducted by either the local office or by the household in order to meet expedited timeframes, the household's first issuance must be provided without an interview. An interview must be scheduled and conducted within the first 30 days following the application filing date. If the household fails to appear for the interview, the case must be closed for the month following the last month of issuance.~~

~~2. If the interview is scheduled within the expedited processing timeframes and the household fails to appear for the scheduled interview, the household's first issuance must be provided without an interview. The case must be closed for the month following the last month of issuance.~~

{Effective 6/9/2003}

~~2-004.01B3c Processing the Application from Telephone Interview: If the household has submitted an incomplete application and a telephone interview is conducted, the local office staff must complete the application during the interview and mail the completed application to the household for the applicant's signature on the same day. (The signature confirms that local office staff correctly recorded the information given over the telephone.)~~

~~The processing standards for expedited service apply, except that these standards are calculated from the date the application is filed. If the local office conducts a telephone interview and must mail the application to the household for its signature, the local office must not count the mailing time as part of the seven-day expedited processing standards. Mailing time includes only the days the application is in the:~~

~~1. Mail to and from the household; and~~

~~2. Household's possession pending signature and mailing.~~

~~If this is an initial application and the household is determined eligible, benefits would be prorated from the date the filing page was received.~~

{Effective 10/28/96}

2-006.02B Worker Action: The worker must deny the application or end the participation of a household that refuses to cooperate in any subsequent review of its eligibility, including:

1. Reporting changes;
2. Recertifications; and
3. Program Evaluation Reviews.

The household may reapply once it has been denied or terminated for refusal to cooperate, but it must not be determined eligible until it cooperates.

2-007 Recertification: A household may file an application for recertification before the end of the current certification period. If an application is filed timely, the worker must ensure that an eligible household receives uninterrupted benefits.

Any application filed before the certification period expires is considered a recertification. Benefits are not prorated.

An application filed after the certification period has expired but within 30 days following the expiration date is also considered a recertification. Since the filing date is later than the last day of the previous certification period, benefits are prorated from the date the application is filed.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-007.01 Timely Filing: Change Reporting (CR) households which are certified for less than three months are provided a notice of expiration at the time of initial certification. Households which are certified in the second month of the certification period have 15 days from the date a notice of expiration is received to file a timely application for recertification. Other households must return an application for recertification by the 15th day of the month the certification period expires.

{Effective 1/3/2005}

2-007.02 Scheduling the Interviews: A face-to-face interview must be conducted with a member of the household or its authorized representative at least once every 12 months for households certified for less than 12 months. The following situations are exceptions to having a face-to-face interview once a year:

1. Household is certified for longer than 12 months; or
2. Household is granted a waiver of the face-to-face interview.

The interview must be scheduled so that the household has at least ten days after the interview in which to provide verification before the certification period expires. If a household misses its scheduled interview, a notice of missed interview must be sent to the household. If a household misses its scheduled interview and requests a second interview, the worker must schedule a second interview.

{Effective 1/3/2005}