
From: Chase, Joan
Sent: Monday, October 15, 2001 8:40 AM
To: ALL DPA Statewide Staff
Subject: Military Household Changes

BROADCAST TO ALL STAFF

From the Food Stamp Policy Unit and the Program & Policy Development Team

The deployment of military servicemen and women in response to the terrorists attacks has brought disruptions to many families. Active duty personnel, reservists and National guardsmen and women are being called to serve, and most will be required to leave home. We are providing a brief summary of policy to help you process changes reported by these households.

INCOME

Families are required to report when a member leaves the home, including when a serviceman or woman leaves to join his or her military unit.

- For Food Stamps, the individual is removed from the household if anticipated to be absent for more than one calendar month. Any part of the absent military person's earnings made available to the family will count as unearned income to the family. This may include paychecks deposited into joint bank accounts or money sent by the military person directly to the family.
- For Temporary Assistance, the individual is considered temporarily absent for an allowable purpose. The military person's earnings and other income continue to count.

RESOURCES

- For Food Stamps, any of the military person's resources to which the family has access will count as resources to the family.
- For Temporary Assistance, the military's person's resources continue to count.

HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES

In some cases, the military person may continue to pay the household's rent directly to the landlord.

- For Food Stamps, this payment is excluded as income, and the shelter expense is not allowed as a deduction.
- For Temporary Assistance, the shelter expenses are considered to be paid by a household member, and are included in the calculation of the family's shelter allowance.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF CHANGE

The household will be required to report the military person's departure within ten days, and the caseworker has ten days to act on the change.

- Changes that result in an increased benefit are effective the month following the receipt of the report of change. In most cases, this will require the caseworker to issue a supplemental benefit to the family.
- Changes that result in a decreased benefit to the household are effective the month following adverse action notice.

ADDITIONAL POLICY GUIDANCE

- For information on household composition and mandatory filing unit, refer to FS Manual Section 602-1A and

Temporary Assistance Manual Section 711-2.

- For information on allowable absences lasting more than a month, refer to Temporary Assistance Manual Section 711-7.
- For information on processing changes and determining the effective date of change, refer to FS Manual Section 604-3 and TA Manual Section 790-2.
- For information on vendor payments, refer to FS Manual Section 602-3D(3).

If you have Food Stamp Program policy questions, contact Joan Chase at Joan_Chase@health.state.ak.us. Direct Temporary Assistance policy questions to DPAPolicy@health.state.ak.us.

From: DPA Policy
Sent: Monday, October 01, 2001 4:45 PM
To: ALL DPA Statewide Staff
Cc: ALL DPA State Associates
Subject: PFD Hold Harmless Time Is Near

Broadcast to All Staff
From the Food Stamp Policy, DMA Policy, and the Policy & Program Development Teams

Subject: PFD Hold Harmless Time Is Near

The new PFD Hold Harmless Manual are in the mail. The PFD-1 forms and the PFD flyer will be mailed to all current public assistance cases this week. Supplies of these forms and flyers will be sent to all offices next week.

There are no new PFD Hold Harmless Program policies or EIS procedures this year. However, with implementation of prospective budgeting, fewer food stamp cases will be placed in PFD hold harmless status. Cases that receive PFD hold harmless benefits will be processed the same as in past years. Any PFD hold harmless benefits that are issued to replace food stamps will be paid by check, rather than being put on the household's Alaska Quest card.

The PFD Hold Harmless Manual has been revised to remove monthly reporting and retrospective budgeting information. In addition, we removed much of the Food Stamp Program policy related to PFD Hold Harmless. This food stamp policy is contained in the Alaska Food Stamp Manual at section 605-7.

Permanent Fund Dividends can be a significant asset to families. Case workers and case managers, whether service providers or DPA employees, should work with individuals to help them identify ways to use their PFDs to move their family toward employment and self-sufficiency, or an improved quality of life. This is an opportunity to help families establish specific goals, such as securing reliable transportation or paying off old debts. However, it's also important to keep in mind that some individuals may not get the PFD because of a garnishment. Our Temporary Assistance Leavers Study completed this year found 37% of Temporary Assistance recipients have their PFD garnished.

If you have any questions, please email a member of the Policy & Program Development Team at dpapolicy@health.state.ak.us <<mailto:dpapolicy@health.state.ak.us>> (for Temporary Assistance, APA, GRA and SSI policy), Joan Chase at Joan_Chase@health.state.ak.us <mailto:Joan_Chase@health.state.ak.us> (for Food Stamp policy questions), or the Division of Medical Assistance policy unit at DMAPOLicy@health.state.ak.us <<mailto:DMAPOLicy@health.state.ak.us>> (for Medicaid and CAMA questions).

From: Chase, Joan
Sent: Tuesday, September 04, 2001 11:31 AM
To: ALL DPA Statewide Staff
Subject: FS Manual Change #6

Broadcast to all Staff
From Joan Chase, FS Policy Specialist

Food Stamp Manual Change #6 is being mailed to you today. Because of the delay in getting it sent out to you, I am sending you a copy of the Manual Change #6 Cover Memo. This memo provides a brief summary of the Food Stamp Program "ProBudgeting 2001" policy changes.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: August 27, 2001
TO: All Food Stamp Manual Holders
FROM: Jim Dalman
Food Stamp Program Officer
SUBJECT: Food Stamp Manual Change #6
"ProBudgeting 2001"

After almost 18 years of monthly reports and retrospective budgeting, Alaska is finally going "ProBudgeting"!

This manual change includes changes and enhancements to the Food Stamp Program change reporting and prospective budgeting policies. Much of the change is simply deleting references to monthly reporting, MRFs, and retrospective budgeting. Changes have also been made to further our effort to align policies and actual language with that in the Temporary Assistance Manual.

In addition to the ProBudgeting 2001 changes, this manual change includes new policy on actual utility costs and updates of the annual October standards for gross and net income limits, maximum allotments, and the excess shelter deduction. We have also completed our periodic survey on utility costs statewide and have revised the Standard Utility Deduction (SUD) and non-heating utility standards.

Thanks to the many field staff who provided time to review and edit the ProBudgeting documents and draft policies and notices. Your input is appreciated and directly results in an improved Food Stamp Manual.

Please contact Jim Dalman or Joan Chase at 465-3360 if you have any questions concerning the policies contained in this Alaska Food Stamp Program Manual. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

NEW POLICY

"ProBudgeting 2001"
New, Improved, and Revised Prospective Budgeting and Change Reporting Policies

Documentation - MS 600-1H

A new "Documentation" section is added to better describe the case worker's requirement for documenting information in the case file.

Definition "Supplemental Benefits" - MS 600-2

This definition is revised to better describe when a supplemental benefit is issued.

Actual Utility Costs - 602-4E(2)(c)

Effective October 1, 2001, the use of the Standard Utility Deduction (SUD) and non-heating utility standards is mandatory. We will no longer allow households who are entitled to the standards to opt for actual costs when their costs exceed the standard. We expect this change to eliminate the need to anticipate actual utility costs for most food stamp cases.

Actual utility costs will continue to be allowed for those rare cases where a household is responsible for the utilities of an unoccupied home or when the household is responsible for the utilities of two residences.

Anticipating Income - MS 603-1

This section is rewritten to provide you with guidance on how best to anticipate the amount of income a household will receive in a future month. We worked side-by-side with the Temporary Assistance policy folks, and as a result, now have identical policies for both programs. We've included instructions on how to convert income to monthly amounts, how to average income, and explained what to do when income cannot be anticipated.

Certification Periods - MS 604-1

With the implementation of ProBudgeting, the monthly contact with each household via the monthly report form will end. The standard length of the food stamp certification period will now be six months, although shorter or longer certification periods are allowed. We revised this section to provide you with flexibility to assign appropriate certification periods based on a household's individual circumstances. In some cases, certification periods of less than six months can be given to those households with unstable circumstances, such as homelessness or sporadic income.

Face-to-face interviews are now required only at initial application and every 12 months thereafter. You may require a face-to-face interview more often, depending on the household's circumstances.

Regular phone contacts are a good way to keep in contact with households during the certification period in-between recertification applications and interviews.

Recertification - MS 604-2

We removed the references to the monthly report form and monthly reporting households from this section.

Required Reports of Change - MS 604-3A

The list of changes a household is required to report has changed.

- The new earned income "status reporting" changes are incorporated in the list of changes a household is required to report. The household is required to report changes in earned income only if they start or end a job, if their rate of pay changes, and if their job changes from part-time to full-time or full-time to part-time. Households no longer need to tell us if their work hours change. However, we are obligated to act on any change report, even if the household was not required to report it.
- Shelter costs changes only need to be reported when the household moves. Changes to shelter costs of the current home must be acted upon if reported, but will not result in an incorrect benefit if not reported.

Effective Date of Change - MS 604-3D

The section on the effective date of change is revised to better explain the policy.

Verification Requirements - MS 604-3F

Verification requirements for changes reported during the certification period did not change. However, the section was revised to better explain what verification is needed for each required report of change.

Temporary Ineligibility/Case Suspension - MS 604-3H

The policy on case suspension is changed. With ProBudgeting, the suspension will now be done prospectively when a household is expected to be ineligible for food stamps for only one month. EIS programming is completed to allow for a "prospective suspension".

Adding and Removing Household Members - MS 604-3I and MS 604-3J

The policy on adding and removing household members is revised and greatly simplified under ProBudgeting. Most of the change is simply the removal of the monthly reporting and retrospective budgeting language.

ATAP Income Changes - MS 604-3K

The "ATAP Income Changes" section is changed to "TANF Income Changes" since the "shared income" policies apply to both Temporary Assistance and Native Family Assistance income. With the end of retrospective budgeting, the confusing policy of adding or removing TANF recipients to and from the food stamp household has been eliminated. Case workers must still prorate the TANF grant income if one or more of the TANF recipients is a disqualified (DI) food stamp household member.

Notice Requirements - MS 604-4

Adequate and adverse action notice requirements remain the same. We removed the monthly reporting language.

Self-Employment - MS 605-2D

In most areas of self-employment policy, Food Stamp Program and Temporary Assistance Program is identical. So, changes were made to adopt identical language in both program manuals. We enhanced the sections on how to anticipate self-employment income. Three policies remain different: fishing/farming offset, rental income and family members as employees.

Permanent Fund Dividend Special Processing - MS 605-7

The food stamp policy on counting PFD income and resources has not changed. Households will be required to report getting their PFD, but since receipt of the PFD cannot be reasonably anticipated, the PFD income will not adversely affect their food stamp eligibility.

PFD Hold Harmless will continue to be issued under two circumstances:

1. Households who keep the PFD money and exceed the resource limit will have their food stamp case suspended and be issued PFD Hold Harmless benefits.
2. Applicant households who report receiving their PFDs before their eligibility is determined will have the PFD counted as income in the month received. If ineligible due to the PFD income, food stamps will be denied and a PFD Hold Harmless case will be opened.

UPDATES

165% Poverty Level Chart - MS 602-1A(1)(d)

This chart is updated and is effective October 1, 2001.

Excess Shelter Cost Deduction - MS 602-4E, MS 603-2B(8), Addendum 4, Addendum 7

The maximum excess shelter cost deduction is increased to \$566. Households who are certified or recertified on or after March 1, 2001, are entitled to this increased deduction effective October 1, 2001. Households certified prior to March 1 are allowed \$521.

Gross and Net Income Limits - MS 603-2A, MS 603-2C, Addendum 4, Addendum 7

The gross and net income limits are updated and are effective October 1, 2001.

Maximum Food Stamp Allotments - Addendum 3, Addendum 4, Addendum 7

The maximum food stamp allotments are updated and are effective October 1, 2001.

Standard Utility Deduction and Non-Heating Utility Standards - Addendum 4

The Standard Utility Deduction and non-heating utility standards are updated effective October 1, 2001.

City Lists Updated - Addendum 1 and Addendum 8

We updated the lists of cities and communities to match the list of cities known by EIS.