

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM MANUAL</b>	
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## 420.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to describe the policy and procedures on household requirements to report changes. It covers what changes must be reported and when they are required to be reported.

## 420.2 Household Responsibility to Report Changes

### 420.21 Simplified Reporting Requirements

Effective October 1, 2008, all households are subject to simplified reporting requirements.

- A. Under simplified reporting (SR) requirements households must report changes only at recertification or when their gross income exceeds 130 percent of the federal poverty level. The 130 percent is determined based on the household size at the time of certification.
- B. Households must report this change no later than 10 days from the end of the calendar month in which the change occurred, provided the household has at least 10 days within which to report the change;
- C. If the household also receives benefits from another program that has more extensive reporting requirements, such as, but not limited to TCA, MA, TDAP, or PAA, it must follow the reporting requirements for that program.

**NOTE:** Even if the household receives assistance from a program with more extensive reporting requirements, there is no FSP QC error or overpayment if the household does not report the change for the other program.

Example: Ms. A receives FSP and TCA for herself and one child. She began a new job that pays \$1,000 monthly. She did not report this change as required for TCA and is overpaid for TCA. Since her income is below the 130 percent simplified reporting income level for her household size, there is no FSP overpayment.

- D. Able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) are required to report when their hours fall below 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month.
- E. Households with income that exceeds 130 percent of the federal poverty level (FSP gross income test):
  - Categorically eligible and elderly/disabled households that have income exceeding the FSP gross income limit (but not the net income limit) have no further reporting requirement until recertification or there is a reported change.

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#### 420.21 Simplified Reporting Requirements (continued)

Example: Mr. and Mrs. B receive Social Security retirement benefits in the amount of \$1,600. Both are over 60 years old. Their income is over the gross income limit for a two person household, but with their high medical expenses, they meet the net income test and are eligible for a FSP benefit (and a state supplement if their allotment is less than \$30). Mr. and Mrs. B do not have a reporting requirement until their next recertification. This household is given a 24 month certification period, and they must report any changes at the 12-month contact.

- F. It is important to provide customers with the reporting requirement information sheet at application and recertification. CARES notices will reflect the simplified reporting requirements.
- G. Case managers must review and take action on any reported change in a household situation that the local department becomes aware of, regardless of how the local department was made aware of the change, to determine if the reported change requires adjustment to household benefits.

**Example 1:** Mary Smith was employed part-time (\$10.10 per hour for 15 hours per week). When she was recertified for FSP in April for the certification period May through October, her household size was 3 people. In June, Ms. Smith's hours increased to 25 hours per week and she received a pay increase to \$10.75 per hour.

At the time of the recertification 130% of the poverty level for a household size of three was \$2,213 per month. Ms. Smith's gross monthly earnings are now:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \$10.75 \text{ per hour} \\
 \times \underline{25 \text{ hours per week}} \\
 \$ 268.75 \\
 \\
 \$269 \text{ (drop the cents)} \\
 \times \underline{4 \text{ weeks per month}} \\
 \$1,076 \text{ gross monthly earned income}
 \end{array}$$

Since Ms. Smith's income is less than the 130% of the federal poverty level identified at recertification, she is not required to report the change.

**Example 2:** Ms. Smith's daughter moved out of the house in July, but Ms. Smith was not required to report the change until recertification.

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#### 420.21 Simplified Reporting Requirements (continued)

In August, Ms. Smith's hours increase to 40 hours per week and she receives another pay increase to \$11.00 per hour. Ms. Smith called the case manager and reported the change in income. She then sent in her pay stub.

$$\begin{array}{r} \$11.00 \text{ per hour} \\ \times \text{ 40 hours per week} \\ \hline \$440 \text{ per week} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} \$440 \text{ per week} \\ \times \text{ 4 weeks per month} \\ \hline \$1,760 \text{ per month} \end{array}$$

Because Ms. Smith reported and verified the change, the case manager takes appropriate action in CARES to make the change in income effective at the end of the adverse action period.

**Example 3** Same scenario as above except, Ms. Smith has an argument with her daughter, who calls the case manager and reports she has moved out and is no longer part of the FSP household. The case manager is required to take appropriate action on the change even though Ms. Smith was not required to report it.

- H. Changes are considered reported by the household on the date that the local department receives the report via mail, via telephone conversation, personal visit by the household, or electronic device (myDHR, fax, or e-mail).
- I. No household-caused over issuance/overpayment is created for customers not reporting changes when they are not required to report under simplified reporting requirements. **The only customer caused simplified reporting over issuance that can occur is if the customer fails to report when income exceeds 130%.**

**Note: Local department failure to act on reported information could result in an agency error.** To avoid being charged with an agency error, it is important to narrate thoroughly when you correctly postpone action until recertification on a reported but unclear/unverified change in earned income.

- J. Do not impose any additional reporting requirements on households.

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#### **420.22 Customer Notification of Simplified Reporting (SR) Requirements**

At the application or redetermination interview, the case manager determines whether the customer is eligible for FSP and, if eligible, explains the SR requirements to the household.

#### **420.23 Certification periods for Simplified Reporting Households**

- A. Assign at least a 12 month certification period to all households in which all adults are elderly or disabled and that have no earned income. The local department should assign a certification period of 24 months for these households, but must ensure that there is a contact every 12 months. No interview is necessary at the 12 month contact. See section 107 of this manual on ESAP and MSNAP certification periods.
- B. Migrant and seasonal farm worker households must be assigned a certification period of at least 4 months.
- C. Assign a 6 month certification period for all other households except ABAWDS unless you know the household will be ineligible in the near future.

#### **420.3 Change Report Form**

The local department:

- A. Provides households a *DHS/FIA 491, Change Reporting Form* to report the required changes, and pays postage for the household to mail the report.
- B. Acts on changes reported by the household over the telephone, through myDHR, by fax or email, in person, or by other electronic means, in the same manner as those reported on the change report form.
- C. Provides a change report form to newly certified households at the time of certification and at recertification if the household needs a new form.
- D. Sends the household a new change report form, whenever a change is reported.

#### **420.4 Local Department Action on Changes**

The local department will:

- A. Take prompt action on all changes to determine if the change affects the household's eligibility or allotment.

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## 420.4 Local Department Action on Changes (continued)

**Exception:** Do not act on changes in medical expenses that you learn of from a source other than the household and which, in order to take action, require the case manager to contact the household for verification.

- B. Document the reported changes in the case file, provide another change report form to the household and notify the household of the receipt of the change report form, even if there is no change in the allotment.
- C. Notify the household of the adjustment, if a reported change affects the household's eligibility or allotment.
- D. Advise the household of any additional verification requirements.
- E. Document the date of a reported change. The date of the change is the date the change report form is received or the date the local department is advised of the change over the telephone, by a personal visit, or electronic means.
- F. If the change takes place in the future, such as a participant reporting that he or she got a new job and will get the first paycheck on a date two weeks in the future, make the change effective the date of the first pay and set an alert to check for the paystub.
- G. Restore lost benefits to a household if the local department fails to increase benefits within the time limits described in section 420.7 of this manual.

## 420.5 Increase in Benefits

### 420.51 Normal Changes

- A. For changes that result in an increase in a household's benefits, other than changes described in section 420.52 below, the local department will make the change effective no later than the first allotment issued 10 days after the date the change was reported to the local department.

**Example:** A \$30 decrease in income reported on May 15<sup>th</sup> would increase a household's June allotment. The same decrease reported on May 28<sup>th</sup> would increase the household's allotment no later than July 1.

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#### **420.51 Normal Changes (continued)**

- B. The local department may make a normal processing change effective earlier than the first allotment issued 10 days following the date the change is reported/verified.

**NOTE:** In the second part of the example in A. above, the case manager could increase benefits for June. Local departments that choose this option must apply it to all households and not on case-by-case basis.

#### **420.52 Expedited Changes**

- A. The local department will make a change that results in an increase in benefits effective no later than the first allotment issued ten days after the date the change was reported under the following conditions:
  1. The addition of a new household member; or
  2. A decrease of \$50 or more in the household's gross monthly income.
- B. Make an expedited change effective no later than the month following the month in which the change is reported.
- C. Issue a supplementary benefit to households when they report an expedited change too late to adjust the following month's allotment.

**Example:** A household reporting a \$100 decrease in income at any time during May is entitled to an increase in June's allotment. If the household reported the change after May 20<sup>th</sup> and it is too late to increase the allotment by June 1, the local department must issue a supplementary benefit for June.

The local department may issue a supplemental benefit for the month a change is reported. In the above example, the case manager would issue a supplement for the month of May. Local departments that choose this option must apply it to all households and not on a case-by-case basis.

#### **420.6 Verification - Increase in Benefits**

- A. Obtain required verification (as described in section 408.8, Verification at Interim Change) prior to taking action on a change that results in an increase in benefits.
- B. Allow the household 10 days from the date the change is reported to provide verification.
  1. If the household provides verification within the 10-day period, the time frame for taking action runs from the date the change is reported.

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## **420.6 Verification - Increase in Benefits (continued)**

**Example:** The household reports a decrease in income of \$25 on April 20 and provides verification on April 28. This household is entitled to increased benefits effective in May.

2. If the household fails to provide verification within 10 days from the date the change is reported the time frame for taking action runs from the date the household provides the verification.

**Example:** A household moves and reports an increase in rent. On April 20, the local department requested verification of rent because it was questionable. Verification was not provided until May 10. The local department will make the change no later than the June issuance.

- C. If the household does not provide verification, do not increase the household's allotment. Upon receipt of the required verification, increase the household's allotment in accordance with section 420.5.
- D. In cases where the local department determines that a household refuses to cooperate in providing the required verification, terminate the household's eligibility following the notice of adverse action. Do not confuse refusal to cooperate with failure to cooperate.

## **420.7 Decrease in Benefits**

- A. Issue a notice of adverse action to a household within 10 days of the date a change is reported when the household's benefit level decreases or it becomes ineligible as a result of a change that is not based on a change in earned income. See Chapter 408 of this FSP Manual for processing changes to earned income.
- B. Make the decrease in the benefit level effective no later than the allotment for the month following the month in which the notice of adverse action period expires, provided the household does not request a fair hearing and a continuation of benefits.
- C. Obtain required verification prior to recertification.
- D. When the notice of adverse action is not used because of one of the exemptions listed in Section 430.4, the local department must make the change no later than the month of following the change.

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## 420.8 Unclear Information

- A. During the certification period, the case manager may get information about changes in a household's circumstances but cannot readily determine the effect of the change on the household's FSP benefits. This could be information from a third party, from an automated match, or from the household itself.
- B. Acting on unclear information:
1. Generally, unclear information must **only** be followed up on:
    - a. If the information was something the household would be required to report under simplified reporting requirements if true, AND the information is less than 60 days old; OR
    - b. The information received significantly conflicts with information used to certify a household must also be acted on. Significantly conflicting information is any information that impacts a household's benefit.
  2. Exceptions: Deceased and prisoner data matches (Refer to 420.8D).
- C. Use the following procedure to get clarification of the household's situation if the unclear information falls under section 420.8(B) above:
1. Issue a written request for clarification (RFC), which:
    - a. Clearly tells the household of the verification it must provide or the actions it needs to take to clarify its circumstances;
    - b. Gives the recipient at least 10 days to respond and to provide the requested information; and
    - c. Clearly states the consequences if the household fails to respond to the RFC.
  2. The RFCs for information other than prison and death matches are the 1052 Request for Information or the CARES letter for requesting information.
  3. If the household does not respond to the RFC, or does respond but refuses to provide sufficient information to clarify its circumstances, the case manager will issue a notice of adverse action and close the case for failure to provide information.

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#### 420.8 Unclear Information (continued)

4. If the RFC is returned by the post office as undeliverable, narrate thoroughly and wait until the next recertification to take action. (If a recertification notice is returned by the post office, close the case based on failure to recertify.)
5. When the household responds to the RFC and provides sufficient information, the case manager must act on the new information.
6. The RFC must not be used to require customers to meet with or supply information to a fraud investigator.

D. **Deceased and prisoner data match:** Use the following procedure to get clarification of the household's situation:

Step 1: The case manager must first attempt to verify the data match independently through online sources,

- a. Should the case manager successfully verify the information, no other follow-up action is required.
- OR
- b. If the data match cannot be independently verified by the case manager, the case manager must then proceed with Steps 2 and 3 below.

Step 2: Issue the DHS/FIA 1052-A Notice of Data Match to the household, which:

- a. Clearly tells the household of the verification it must provide or the actions it needs to take to clarify its circumstances;
- b. Gives the recipient at least 10 days to respond and to provide the requested information; and
- c. Clearly states the consequences if the household fails to respond.

Step 3: If the household fails to respond, or does respond but refuses to provide sufficient information to clarify its circumstances, the case manager must move forward with starting the procedure to remove the individual in question from the household and adjusting the case.

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### **420.9 Failure to Report a Change**

If the local department discovers that a household failed to report a change *that it was required to report* and received benefits to which it was not entitled the local department will:

- A. Establish a claim against the household as described in section 490, Claims Against Households.
- B. Send a notice of adverse action to a participating household upon discovery that the household failed to report a change and received benefits to which it was not entitled.
- C. Not disqualify individuals for failing to report a change unless the individual is disqualified as described in section 480 of this manual, Intentional Program Violations.

**NOTE: A household is not held liable for a claim because of a change in its circumstances that it is not required to report in accordance with section 420.2.**

### **420.10 Mass Changes**

- A. The State and Federal governments initiate certain changes, which may affect the entire caseload or significant portions of it.
- B. These changes include the following:
  1. Adjustments to the:
    - (a) Net income eligibility standards;
    - (b) Shelter deduction;
    - (c) Dependent care deduction; or
    - (d) Standard deductions.
  2. Changes to the periodic cost of living adjustments.
  3. Adjustments to the State's utility standard.
  4. Cost of living adjustments to Social Security, SSI and other federal benefits.
  5. Adjustments to TCA, RCA, TDAP or PAA payments.
  6. Any other changes in the eligibility criteria based on legislative or regulatory actions.

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#### **420.101 Federal Adjustments to Eligibility Standards, Allotments and Deductions; State Adjustments to Utility Standards**

- A. These types of adjustments go into effect for all households at a specific point in time.
- B. Although a notice of adverse action is not required, the local department may send an individual notice to those households affected by the change. CARES sends out notices of mass changes.

#### **420.101 Federal Adjustments to Eligibility Standards, Allotments and Deductions; State Adjustments to Utility Standards (continued)**

- C. The Food and Nutrition Service or the Department's Office of Communications may distribute press releases to the media or complete mass mailings to inform the public of such changes.

#### **420.102 Mass Changes in Public Assistance**

- A. When the Department makes an overall adjustment to cash assistance payments, handle corresponding adjustments to the household's FSP benefits as a mass change.
- B. The CARES system generates and sends notices to households at the time of the mass change.
- C. A notice of adverse action is not required when a mass change in cash assistance payments reduces or terminates a household's FSP benefits.

#### **420.103 Mass Changes in Federal Benefits**

- A. Whenever a cost-of-living or other mass change in federal benefits occurs, CARES adjusts the FSP allotment for most households accordingly.
- B. For those cases that are not included in the mass change, the local department is responsible for adjusting the household's allotment no later than the second allotment issued after the month in which the change is effective.
- C. The household is not responsible for reporting these changes.

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#### **420.104 Administrative Hearings and Continuation of Benefits**

- A. The household is entitled to request a hearing when it does not agree with the mass change.
- B. A household that requests a hearing due to a mass change is entitled to continued benefits at its previous level only if the household meets the following criteria:
  - 1. The household does not specifically waive its right to a continuation of benefits;
  - 2. The household requests a fair hearing within 10 days from the date the notice is mailed; and

#### **420.104 Administrative Hearings and Continuation of Benefits (continued)**

- 3. The household's hearing is based on improper calculation of the FSP eligibility or benefit level, or the misinterpretation of federal law or regulation.

#### **420.11 Cash Assistance Households (TCA, RCA, TDAP, PAA)**

- A. Cash assistance households with associated FSP cases have the same reporting requirements as any other FSP household.
- B. Consider a reported change for cash assistance as a reported change for FSP purposes.
- C. The local department cannot terminate a household's FSP case solely because it has terminated the household's public assistance (PA) benefit. The case manager must make a separate determination that the household does not satisfy the FSP requirements. **The following procedures apply when public assistance is terminated and the household is not entitled to transitional benefits. If the household is eligible for transitional benefits please read the section on transitional FSP benefits in section 420.12.**
  - 1. If a change in household circumstances requires a reduction or termination in the public assistance payment and the case manager has enough information to determine how the change affects the household's FSP benefits, the case manager must take the following actions:
    - (a) If the change requires a reduction or termination of FSP benefits, issue a single notice of adverse action for PA and FSP actions.

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### **420.11 Cash Assistance Households (TCA, RCA, TDAP, and PAA) (continued)**

- (b) If the household requests a fair hearing within 10 days, continue benefits in the amount authorized immediately prior to sending the notice unless
  - (c) The household has indicated it does not wish to receive benefits pending appeal.
2. If the household's FSP benefits will increase because of the reduction or termination of public assistance benefits:
    - (a) The case manager must issue the public assistance notice of adverse action, but must not take any action to increase the FSP benefits until the household decides whether to appeal the PA adverse action.
    - (b) If the household appeals the PA adverse action and the PA is continued, the household's FSP benefits must continue at the previous level.
    - (c) If the household does not appeal, the case manager must make the change according to regular change reporting procedures.
  3. When a change results in a termination of a household's PA benefit within the certification period, and the case manager does not have enough information to determine how the change affects the FSP benefits:
    - (a) The case manager must issue a request for clarification at the same time that it sends the PA notice of adverse action (See section 420.8).
    - (b) Before taking further action, the case manager will wait until after the PA notice of adverse action period expires or until the household requests an administrative hearing, whichever occurs first.
    - (c) If the household requests a hearing and elects to have PA continued pending appeal, the case manager must continue the household's FSP benefits at the same level.
    - (d) If the household does not request a hearing and continuation of its FSP benefits, the case manager must follow the procedures for unclear information and send notice of adverse action.
  4. If the situation does not require PA notice of adverse action, the case manager will issue a request for clarification and follow the procedures for unclear information.

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**Reminder:** When a household's TCA benefits are reduced, suspended or terminated due to a failure of the household to comply with TCA program requirement, do not increase the FSP allotment. Count the reduced or terminated TCA benefit amount as "phantom" income.

## 420.12 Transitional Food Supplement Program (FSP) Benefits

- A. Transitional benefits are FSP benefits that are issued to a TCA/FSP household when the TCA case closes.
- B. The amount of the benefit is frozen at the same level for five months unless the household requests recertification or there is a need to prevent duplicate participation.
- C. Households Eligible for Transitional Benefits.
  - 1. With a few exceptions, TCA households that have received a regular TCA issuance in the month prior to the month the TCA benefit ended will receive transitional FSP benefits for five months after the TCA case closes.
  - 2. Mixed Households, which include both TCA members and non-TCA members, can also receive transitional benefits when the TCA case closes.

**Example:** Ms. B lives with her 20-year old daughter (Ms. C) and her two grandchildren. Ms. C receives TCA for herself and the two children. Ms. B receives SSI. They are all included in the same FSP case. When Ms. C's TCA case closes, the household will get transitional benefits.

**Example:** Ms. K's FS household includes her 20-year old daughter and child and her 19-year old daughter and child. Each of the daughters receives TCA. The 20-year old daughter reports new employment and requests to have her TCA case closed. This household will not get transitional benefits since there is still an open TCA case associated with the FSP household.

**Example:** Ms. G receives TCA and FSP benefits for herself and one child. Her only income is TCA. In September she reported to her case manager that she had gotten married and her husband was employed. She wants her TCA case closed. Her case is closed effective October 1. She will get transitional benefits from October through February. The benefit is based on a 2-person household with no income.

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## 420.12 Transitional Food Supplement Benefits (continued)

D. A household **will not** get transitional benefits if:

1. The household did not receive a TCA benefit for at least one regular issuance in the month prior to the month the TCA benefit ended.
2. The household moves out of State.
3. The household loses TCA eligibility because of:
  - (a) Failure to comply with work registration requirements,
  - (b) Failure to comply with child support requirements, or
  - (c) Intentional program violations (IPV).

**Example:** Mr. G receives TCA for himself, his wife and two children. Mr. G did not comply with TCA work requirements, so his TCA case was closed. This household cannot get transitional benefits. **Reminder:** If this household is still eligible for FSP the case manager will include phantom TCA income in the calculation of the FSP benefit.

4. The entire household is ineligible for FS because of:
  - (a) IPV,
  - (b) Failure to comply with work registration requirements,
  - (c) Failure to cooperate with Quality Control,
  - (d) Ineligible immigrant status
  - (e) Status as a fleeing felon, or
  - (f) Transfer of assets, if not categorically eligible.

**Reminder:** An FSP disqualification is usually an individual sanction. Most TCA sanctions result in full family ineligibility. When there are remaining eligible members of the FSP or TCA case, the household is potentially eligible for transitional benefits.

**Example:** Ms. J and her two children receive TCA and FSP benefits. The local department determined that last year she had committed a FSP IPV, before she applied for TCA. She signed a waiver of the disqualification hearing. Ms. J was disqualified from the FSP for one year beginning in October. In January she reported a new job. Her TCA case is closed effective February. She will get 5 months of transitional FSP benefits for the two eligible household members.

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## 420.12 Transitional Food Supplement Benefits (continued)

### E. The Amount of the Transitional Benefit.

1. The transitional benefit amount is based on the amount of FSP benefit the household received in the month before the TCA case closes, adjusted for the loss of the TCA benefit.
2. The amount stays the same for five months, regardless of changes in the family's circumstances, unless the household returns to TCA or requests recertification.
3. CARES will count the income, deductions and household size in the month before the TCA case closes and subtract out the TCA grant received in that month.

**Example:** Mr. A and his two children receive a TCA grant in the amount of \$172. He also receives \$300 in social security benefits for the two children. On January 27, Mr. A reported that he got a job and requested closure of his TCA case. The TCA benefits will end effective March 1. Transitional FSP benefits are calculated using only the social security income of \$300. His new earnings will not count for the five-month transitional benefit period.

**Example:** Ms. B lives with her 20-year old daughter (Ms. C) and her two grandchildren. Ms. C receives TCA for herself and the two children in the amount of \$472. Ms. B receives SSI in the amount of \$545. They are all included in the same FSP case. Ms. C got a job in August and reported the information to her case manager on September 5, after receiving her first pay. Her earnings are over the income level for TCA and her TCA case closes effective October 1st. The FSP household is entitled to five months of transitional benefits. The FSP benefit is based on the September FSP benefits adjusted for the loss of the TCA benefit. Ms. B's SSI is the only countable income.

### F. Adjusting the Length of the Certification Period.

1. CARES will extend the household's certification period beyond the current period to meet the 5-month transitional period.

**Example:** Ms. E receives FSP benefits and TCA based on no income. She was certified for FSP from January 1 through June 30. On May 10, she reported a job that makes her TCA over scale. She is entitled to transitional benefits beginning June 1 through October 31.

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## 420.12 Transitional Food Supplement Benefits (continued)

2. CARES will shorten the certification period to correspond to the end of the transitional benefit period.
3. The transitional benefit period will never extend past five months.

**Example:** Mr. M receives FSP benefits for himself and his daughter, Ms. M, and her two sons. The household was certified from November through October. Ms. M receives TCA. In December she requests that the agency close her case because of receipt of social security survivor's benefits. The case manager closes Ms. M's TCA effective January. The transitional benefit period is January through May. The household will have to complete a redetermination to get benefits after May.

### G. Reporting Requirements during the Transitional Benefit Period.

1. During the transitional benefit period the household is not required to report any changes for the FSP.
2. The household's benefit remains frozen during the transitional benefit period unless the household returns to TCA or requests recertification.
3. If the household is recertified transitional benefits stop and all regular FSP rules apply.

**Example 1:** Ms. P receives FSP and TCA for herself and child. She has no income other than TCA. She was certified for FSP from January 1 through June 30. On May 10, she reported a job that makes her TCA over scale. Her TCA case closes effective June 1. She is entitled to transitional benefits beginning June 1 through October 31. In August she reports that she moved to a household with higher shelter costs and that her 10-year old nephew had moved into her home. She requests recertification. The case manager will recertify the household and will use the updated information.

**Example 2:** Ms. R receives FSP and TCA for her two children and herself. She has no income other than TCA and her certification period is from May through April. In November she gets a job at Nordstrom's for the seasonal rush which makes her income overscale for TCA. She is entitled to transitional FSP benefits from November through March. On February 1 she is laid off due to the end of the seasonal rush and comes in to request a return to TCA. The case manager opens the TCA case effective February 1, breaks the transitional benefit freeze, recertifies FSP and adjusts the FSP certification period to match the TCA certification from February through January.

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## 420.12 Transitional Food Supplement Benefits (continued)

### H. Duplicate participation.

1. FSP policy does not allow duplicate participation. If a member of a TFS case leaves a TFS household and either applies as a new household or is reported as a new member of another household, the case manager removes the individual from the household receiving TFS and add the individual to the other household. To do this the case manager will have to break the TFS freeze.
2. Do not change the FSP household composition during the transitional benefit period unless the household member reapplies as a new household, is reported as member of another FSP household or requests recertification.

### I. Breaking the TFS Freeze.

1. When a TCA AU is approved and the household has an active TFS AU:
  - Case managers must end the TFS period and determine continued eligibility for FSP within 30 days
  - Error message **2674 – “TCA Reopened – FSP Redet must be initiated”**, will display when the case manager tries to access option “R” with an AU or IRN number of an active TFS recipient who is also an active TCA recipient and the redet has not been initiated.
2. An interim change will not be allowed on a TFS AU when there is an active TCA AU without initiating a redetermination.
  - Error message, **2675 – Press Enter to Commit; TCA Reopened – Recert. must be completed on FSP**, will display on the DONE screen to remind the case manager that a recertification must be completed on the TFS when the case manager tries to access option “R” with the active TCA AU number on the same day the TCA is activated for an active TFS recipient and the FSP recert has not been completed.
3. When the case manager fails to re-certify the TFS AU on the same day the TCA AU is approved:
  - A warning/informational message will be displayed to the case manager to recertify the TFS AU.
  - Error message, **2676 – “TCA Reopened - Recert must be completed on FSP”** displays on the AMEN screen after the case manager finalizes a TCA AU for a household that has a related active TFS AU.

### 420.12 Transitional Food Supplement Benefits (continued)

- The TFS freeze is broken in nightly batch, and the Food Supplement benefits (FSP) are recertified for twelve months from the ongoing month,
  - Alert **309** – “**TFS BROKEN AND RECERTIFIED BY SYSTEM. PLEASE REVIEW.**” is sent to the case manager.
4. When the case manager initiates the redetermination on a TFS AU and enters a “Y” in the Redet complete field on the MISC screen, the TFS freeze is broken and the household is recertified for six months from the ongoing month.
- Note:** When the freeze is broken, reason code **299**, “TFS Freeze Broken” displays in both instances.
5. Error message, **2677** – “**FS Redet not completed – If complete, enter Y on MISC screen** displays when the case manager fails to complete the FSP recertification on the same day the TCA approval was completed, the FS redetermination was initiated by accessing Option “R”, and ELIG is called without the case manager entering a “Y” in the REDT COMPLETE field on the MISC screen.
6. When the TFS freeze is broken by the nightly batch process, a monthly report is generated to show these cases. The report format is below:

SGXYM2PR MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES AS OF DATE: MM/DD/CCYY  
 CLIENTS' AUTOMATED RESOURCE AND ELIGIBILITY SYSTEM RUN DATE: MM/DD/CCYY  
 TFS ASSISTANCE CASES RECERTIFIED BY SYSTEM PAGE: 9999

DO: 999 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

CASE MANAGER NAME	CASE MANAGER ID	FS AU ID	HOH LAST NAME	DATE TFS HOH FIRST NAME	NEW BROKEN	RECERT DATE
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	999999999	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXX	MM/DD/CCYY	MM/DD/CCYY
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	999999999	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXX	MM/DD/CCYY	MM/DD/CCYY
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	999999999	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXX	MM/DD/CCYY	MM/DD/CCYY
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	999999999	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXX	MM/DD/CCYY	MM/DD/CCYY

#### J. Recalculation of TFS Benefits

1. When an active TFS member leaves the TFS household, the income, resources and deductible expenses for that individual must be removed and the TFS benefit recalculated.
2. When the TFS head of household is removed, a message appears on the FS AU STAT screen, informing the case manager that the head of household needs to be reassigned and shelter costs adjusted.
  - Error message **2678** – “**HOH Changed, Review relationship code for all clients & SHEL for new HOH**”, will display on the STAT screen to remind

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the case manager that the head of household must be reassigned and to adjust the shelter costs when the original head of household is removed.

## 420.12 Transitional Food Supplement Benefits (continued)

- Reason code **298**, “Transitional benefits changed because a household member moved out of the household” displays in both instances.
3. CARES will recalculate the TFS benefit when:
- Reason code **554** is entered on the STAT screen for the FS AU for the member no longer in the TFS household, or
  - **“NO”** is entered in the Living Arrangement field on the DEMI screen of the member no longer in the TFS household.
4. When a person is removed from the TFS household, the eligibility will not budget that person’s income, resources, and expenses for the ongoing month. Any other changes to the members present in the TFS household will be ignored.

### K. Notices

When a customer becomes eligible for TFS, Notice 11, Change in Benefits, will provide the following information to the customer:

“You will get this fixed amount for five months after your TCA case closes unless you start receiving TCA again or someone in your household applies in another Food Supplement Program case. We based this benefit amount on the Food Supplement Program benefits you got the month before your TCA closed. We did not count the closed TCA grant when we calculated your Food Supplement Program benefits. You do not have to report any changes until the end of this 5-month period. We will not act on any reported changes. If you start to receive TCA again during this period, we will redetermine your Food Supplement Program case. If you want to get Food Supplement Program benefits after this 5-month period, you will have to complete a redetermination. You can ask for a redetermination at any time during the 5-month period. If your income goes down or you have an increase in expenses or household size you should apply for a redetermination.”

### L. Household has an outstanding claim.

Should a household have an outstanding claim, benefits are to be recouped in accordance with FSP Policy Manual Section 490.

## FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM REPORTING GUIDE

**When you receive FSP benefits:**

- You are required to report only when your family’s entire gross monthly income is more than the amount listed in the chart for your household size.
- You are not required to report any other changes for your Food Supplement case. (But, if you think a change will increase benefits for your family, you should report it.)
- You should also report an address change so you receive your notices.

**If you receive Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), Medical Assistance (MA), Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP) or Public Assistance to Adults (PAA) you must report all changes within 10 days.**

**When you report a change for any program, your case manager will make the change for all programs.**

- ✓ If your household income goes up, you must see if the total gross monthly income is more than the amount allowed for your household size.
- ✓ Gross income means the amount of earned or unearned income before any deductions, such as taxes or insurance premiums, are taken out.
- ✓ You must report this change no later than 10 days from the end of the month in which your income goes up. Add up the gross income that your household got for the month. Be sure to include both earned and unearned income.
- ✓ Call your case manager if your total income is more than the amounts listed below for your household size.

Household Size	Monthly Income Limit	Biweekly Income Limit	Weekly Income Limit
1	\$1307	638	326
2	1760	880	440
3	2213	1106	553
4	2665	1332	666
5	3118	1559	779
6	3571	1785	892
7	4024	2012	1006
8	4477	2238	1119
For more people add \$453			

**Reminder: You must report all changes to your case manager at your scheduled redetermination.**