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 | INFORMATIONAL LETTER |  
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TRANSMITTAL: 92 INF-9

TO: Commissioners of  
 Social Services

DIVISION: Income  
 Maintenance

DATE: February 6, 1992

SUBJECT: Verifying Eligibility: Special Determinations for  
 Public Assistance Cases

SUGGESTED  
 DISTRIBUTION: Public Assistance Staff  
 Food Stamps Staff  
 Medical Assistance Staff  
 Staff Development Coordinators

CONTACT PERSON: Mark Schaffer at 1-800-342-3715, extension 4-9346

ATTACHMENTS: None

FILING REFERENCES

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.

The purpose of this informational letter is to inform local districts how to handle special determinations, that is, those situations where written documentation is unavailable for verification of public assistance case circumstances.

Due to extraordinary circumstances, there can be limited occasions when clients and agencies do not have access to third party sources of documentation. These circumstances include, but are not limited to, situations such as:

- Families that were forced to leave their homes suddenly and are not able to return to retrieve belongings, such as a fire or flood or a domestic violence situation;
- Refugees who do not have expected documentation due to the extraordinary circumstances when leaving their country of origin; or
- Immigrants from countries from which documentation is not obtainable or long delays can be expected in obtaining documentation.

The above examples illustrate that in some cases it may not be possible to document eligibility using normal verification standards. In any of these situations, it may become necessary to make a public assistance special determination.

When extraordinary circumstances exist, a special determination may be used to determine eligibility. Written declarations which corroborate an applicant's situation may be used when appropriate third party verification is unavailable, and reasonable conclusions can be drawn based upon available evidence and an examination of the entire case history. In addition alternative sources that are not normally relied on can be used when other sources are not available. For example, immigration records may be used to verify relationship, dates of birth, etc. For each special determination made, the examiner must describe in the case record the steps taken to obtain primary and secondary evidence and then fully record the basis for making a special determination.

Please note that while there is no special determination for food stamps, alternative sources and/or written declarations which corroborate an applicant's situation should also be accepted to determine eligibility when usual documentation cannot be obtained.

The next Public Assistance Source Book update will contain references to special determinations.

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Oscar R. Best, Jr.  
Deputy Commissioner  
Division of Income Maintenance