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 | ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE |
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TRANSMITTAL: 99 ADM-6

TO: Commissioners of
 Social Services

DIVISION: Temporary
 Assistance

DATE: September 03, 1999

SUBJECT: Review of Food Stamp Expedited Processing Procedures and
 Statewide Use of the "Expedited Food Stamp Screening Sheet"
 (DSS-3938)

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION:	Food Stamp Staff Temporary Assistance Staff Staff Development Coordinators CAP Coordinators
CONTACT PERSON:	Regional Representatives: Region I (518-473-0332); Region II (518-474-9344); Region III (518-474-9307); Region IV (518-474-9300); Region V (518-473-1469); Region VI (212-383-1658)
ATTACHMENTS:	Attachment I - DSS-3938: "Expedited Food Stamp Screening Sheet" (Rev. 2/97) - not available on-line

FILING REFERENCES

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
97 INF-15	94 INF-48	387.1	7 CFR	FSSB	98 ADM-8
94 INF-48	89 INF-67	387.5(e)	273.2(i)	Section	
89 INF-67		387.8(a)	7 CFR	IV-I-all	
88 INF-81		387.14(a)(2)	273.10(g)(1)	IV-K-	
		(3)	7 CFR	5.1 all	
		387.17(a)(3)	274.2(b)	V-E-1.1	
				V-E-4-all	
				V-I-all	
				VII-B-2.1	
				XIV-B-all	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this administrative directive (ADM) is to (1) review expedited food stamp processing requirements and (2) mandate use of the DSS-3938: "Expedited Food Stamp Screening Sheet" (Rev. 2/97) (Attachment I).

II. BACKGROUND

This ADM is to remind districts of expedited processing procedures for food stamp applications and to ensure that all food stamp applicants are being screened for eligibility for expedited processing of their food stamp application.

III. REQUIRED ACTION

A. Screening for Expedited Processing

Districts must screen ALL food stamp applicants (PA and NPA) for eligibility for expedited processing. Districts must use the DSS-3938 form entitled: "Expedited Food Stamp Screening Sheet" to screen all food stamp applicants for expedited processing. The completed DSS-3938 form must be maintained in every food stamp applicant's case record.

The DSS-3938 form is designed to assist districts in making accurate and consistent assessments of food stamp applicants' potential eligibility for expedited processing. Use of the DSS-3938 form and the subsequent maintenance of the completed form in each case record, will also ensure that all PA and NPA applicant households have been assessed for expedited processing eligibility in accordance with Food Stamp Program requirements.

Completion of the DSS-3938 form is self-explanatory. The form's design guides the worker through each part until it is determined that the household is either "Eligible" or "Ineligible" for expedited processing.

In cases involving migrant/seasonal farmworker households, it should be noted that if eligibility for expedited processing can be determined in Part Four, it is not necessary to complete Part Five. Part Five is needed only if the migrant/seasonal farmworker fails to meet any of the eligibility criteria in Part Four.

Districts must issue written instructions to all appropriate staff informing them that all applicants, including applicants filing jointly for temporary assistance and for food stamps, must be screened for expedited processing by using the DSS-3938 on the initial day of application. This form must be placed in the case record upon completion of the screening.

B. Expedited Processing Criteria

In order to be eligible for expedited processing, a food stamp household must meet one of the criteria listed below:

- The household must have a total gross income of less than \$150 and liquid resources not exceeding \$100 in the month of application;
- The household must consist of destitute migrant and/or seasonal farmworkers whose liquid resources do not exceed \$100; or
- The household must have in the month of application combined gross monthly income and liquid resources that are less than the household's monthly shelter costs (rent or mortgage/fuel/utility/telephone). (Districts must use the standard utility allowance, if appropriate.)

Further clarification of these criteria can be found in Food Stamp Source Book (FSSB) Section V-I-all. Households who meet one of these criteria are eligible for expedited processing, even if they live where meals are provided.

To identify households eligible for expedited processing, districts must use a receptionist or other agency employee to screen all public assistance and non-public assistance food stamp applications as they are filed or as individuals come in to apply. Districts must now incorporate use of the DSS-3938: "Expedited Food Stamp Screening Sheet" (which had been optional) during this screening process, and the form must be filed in the case record upon completion.

C. Expedited Processing Time Standards

When the screening process identifies a household as eligible for expedited processing of its food stamp application, districts must determine the household's eligibility for food stamp benefits and make such benefits available to the household no later than five calendar days following the day the application was filed. The first day of the five-day count is the first calendar day after the application was filed. If an application must be mailed, the mail time to and from the applicant, as well as the time the applicant has the application, is not included in the five-day count.

When screening does not identify a household as being eligible for expedited processing, and the district subsequently determines that the household is eligible for expedited processing, the district must provide expedited processing to the household within the time standards set forth above, except that the expedited processing time standard must be calculated from the date the district determines that the household is eligible for expedited processing.

D. Verification of Identity for Expedited Processing

In all cases, the applicant's identity (i.e., the identity of the person making the application) must be verified through a collateral contact or readily available documentary evidence. All possible sources of direct or collateral documentation must be explored, such as a telephone contact with shelters or community agencies, a statement from a third party, or a notarized statement from the applicant. The district request form to send for a birth certificate, signed by the applicant, can be used as verification of identity if no other verification is available.

If the household's identity cannot be verified within the expedited processing time standards, then the household is not entitled to expedited processing.

E. Verification of Alien Status for Expedited Processing

If a household submits unverified information that an alien has an eligible status, the local district should attempt to verify this eligible status within the expedited processing time standards. If this is not possible, however, the verification must be postponed but must be verified within the time limits found on page 6 of this ADM.

If, however, the household is unable to submit even unverified information that an alien has an eligible status, the alien must be treated as an ineligible alien and may not receive benefits until an eligible status is verified.

F. Verification of Residency, Income, Resources, Social Security Number and Other Factors for Expedited Processing

Districts must make all reasonable efforts to verify, within the expedited processing time standards, the household's residency, income statement (including a statement that the household has no income), liquid resources, Social Security Number and all other factors required as specified in FSSB Section V-E-1.1, through collateral contacts or readily available documentary evidence.

Districts also may verify factors other than identity, residency and income, provided that verification can be accomplished within the expedited processing time standards. Districts should attempt to obtain as much additional verification as possible during the interview, but should not delay the certification of households entitled to expedited processing when the district has determined it is unlikely that other verification can be obtained within the expedited processing time standards.

Benefits must not be delayed beyond the expedited processing time standards solely because these eligibility factors have not been verified.

G. Work Registration and Expedited Processing

Prior to certification, districts must require the applicant to register for work, unless the applicant is exempt. Any household member, or the household's authorized representative, may work register to the best of their ability for those household members required to register for work. The district may attempt to register household members by other means, such as calling the household. Registration of household members other than the applicant and verification of questionable work exemptions must be postponed if it cannot be accomplished within the expedited processing time standards.

H. Office Interviews and Expedited Processing

If a household meets the expedited processing criteria from the initial screening, an eligibility interview must be conducted to process the application and determine the benefit level within the expedited processing time standards.

For applicants entitled to expedited processing and a waiver of the office interview, the district must conduct the interview by telephone or home visit and must complete the application process within the expedited processing time standards.

The district must make reasonable efforts to contact the household to schedule an interview. If the district is unable to contact the household and conduct the interview within the expedited processing time standards, a determination of eligibility cannot be made.

I. Joint Processing of Applications and Expedited Processing

All SSI households applying for food stamps must be certified in accordance with the expedited processing time standards. Food stamp applications submitted by an SSI household at a Social Security Office must be screened for expedited processing in accordance with FSSB Section IV-K-5.1.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) will inform households which appear eligible for expedited processing that benefits may be received a few days sooner if they choose to apply directly at the district food stamp office.

For "pure" SSI households who choose to file an application at their SSA office, the expedited processing time standards begin the date the CORRECT district office receives the food stamp application. Food stamp applications sent to an incorrect district office must be forwarded to the correct office on the same day they are received.

J. Limitation on Number of Times for Expedited Processing

There is no limit on the number of times an applicant household can receive expedited processing. However, prior to each expedited certification, the household either must provide the verification that was postponed at the previous expedited certification or must have been certified under normal processing (no pended verification) standards.

K. Certification Periods for Expedited Processing Cases

If expedited processing was performed and a food stamp case was opened, but verification was postponed, districts may certify these households for the month of application (the month of application and the subsequent month for those households applying after the 15th of the month) or may assign a normal certification period to those households whose circumstances would otherwise warrant a longer certification period.

- a. MONTH OF APPLICATION - When certified only for the month of application, the household must recertify for ongoing benefits. As with any recertification, the household must verify all circumstances as they exist at the time the recertification is done. Otherwise, continued benefits will not be authorized. The recertification notice must be issued at certification with the "Action Taken" notice.
- b. LONGER THAN ONE MONTH - When a certification period of longer than one month is assigned, the district must notify the household in writing, as defined in FSSB Section VII-B-2.1, that no further benefits will be issued until the postponed verification is completed. Households that applied before the 15th of the month may not receive benefits beyond the application month if verification is not completed. Households that applied after the 15th of the month may not receive benefits after the second month unless pended verification is received.
 - (1) A household certified for two months must be issued a recertification notice at certification with the "Action Taken" notice.
 - (2) A household certified for three months must be issued a recertification notice during the second month.
 - (3) A household certified for four months or more that has not completed pended verification must be issued a timely Adverse Action notice to discontinue benefits effective the end of the second month.

L. Finger Imaging and Expedited Processing

Districts must finger image food stamp applicants as part of the application process. Applicants who decline to be finger imaged will be denied. Recipients who decline to be finger imaged will lose their eligibility for assistance. Under expedited processing, finger imaging must be completed for all required household members within 30 days of application.

IV. SYSTEMS IMPLICATIONS

None.

V. FORMS INFORMATION

Since many districts are already using the DSS-3938, this form will not be drop-shipped. Requests for supplies of the DSS-3938 (Rev. 2/97) should be submitted on the DSS-876 (Rev. 2/96): "Request For Forms Or Publications" and should be sent to:

Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Document Services
P.O. Box 1990
Albany, NY 12201
Attention: Document Supply Control and Distribution

Note: All requests for approval of local equivalent forms must be submitted in accordance with the procedures described in 89 INF-53 and pages 12-1 through 12-7 of the Local District Manager's Guide.

Questions concerning ordering forms should be directed to Document Services at 1-800-343-8859, ext. 6-6223.

VI. EFFECTIVE DATE

This administrative directive is effective immediately.

Patricia A. Stevens
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Temporary Assistance