

## Chapter 17

### Simplified-Reporting Procedures for All Households

#### 1700 Simplified Reporting

Simplified reporting is a term used to describe the limited reporting requirements for all households receiving food assistance benefits.

Six-month reporting is a term used to describe those simplified reporting households who are required to submit a report form during the sixth month of the certification period.

All households are assigned a 12-month certification period (unless ineligibility can be predicted with reasonable certainty based on information provided at the certification interview)

#### Reporting Requirements

1. All households are required to report when their income exceeds 130% of the poverty level for their household size. Do not consider ineligible or disqualified persons in determining the household size for reporting purposes.
2. Households containing an ABAWD, exempt from the time-limits only because he or she meets the 20 hour/week work requirement (80 hours a month) must report when that person's work hours fall below 20 hours per week.

Households must report required changes by the 10th day of the month after the month during which the change occurred.

Households with no earned income and all adult household members are elderly or disabled have no additional required reporting requirements during their assigned certification period. Eligibility and benefit level for the entire certification period are determined prospectively based on the best information available at the time of certification to anticipate for the entire certification period.

All other households are subject to six-month reporting. They are sent a computer generated six-month report form, which must be completed and returned by the specified filing date in order to continue receiving benefits, if eligible. Eligibility and benefit levels for the first six months of the certification period are determined prospectively, based on the best information available at the time of certification to anticipate for the first six months of the certification period. Eligibility and benefit level for the last six months of the certification period are determined prospectively based on information reported on the six month report form to anticipate for the remaining six months of the certification period.

All households must be provided with information at certification to advise them of their gross income limits for reporting purposes.

No other changes must be reported by households during their certification period, except for those changes required on the six month report form.

If a household voluntarily reports a change, the change will only be acted on if the change will result in an increase in the household's benefits.

## 1701 Information to be Provided to Clients subject to Six-Month Reporting

A household will be placed on six-month reporting at application, recertification, and when changes occur. The caseworker must explain six-month reporting requirements as stated in [Section 1700](#) of this chapter and provide the household with the following information:

1. Household will be certified for 12 months and will be required to submit a complete six-month report form in the sixth month of the certification period.
2. The six-month report form will be mailed to the household in the month (fifth month) before the report is due.
3. Provide a copy of the six-month report form and “Six Month Reporting Requirements for Certain Food Assistance Households” handout.
4. An explanation about how to complete the form and when to return it.
5. An explanation about what must be reported and the verification needed to process the form.
6. An explanation that assistance in completing the form will be provided by the county department if the household requests assistance.
7. The telephone number the household may call to ask questions or obtain help in completing the six month report.
8. Failure to return the completed form and provide the required verification will result in case closure.

A currently certified household that becomes subject to six-month reporting during the certification period must be notified of the fact that the household is required to six-month report and given an opportunity to come into the office for an oral explanation. Failure to come into the office does not relieve the household of the requirements or responsibilities for six-month reporting.

## 1702 Information Provided to Elderly/Disabled Households

Households with no earned income and all adult household members are elderly or disabled will not be required to complete a six-month report. At certification these households must be given an explanation of simplified reporting. Provide these households with a copy of the “Simplified Reporting” handout.

## 1703 Six-Month Report Form

Six-month reporting households are sent a six-month report form during the fifth month (report month) of the certification period to be completed and returned between the first and tenth of the sixth month (processing month) of the certification period. The six-month report form is generated on the 20th of the month. When the 20th of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, these forms are generated on the business day prior to the 20th. Six-month report forms are mailed on the 24th of the month. When the 24th of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, these forms are mailed on the last business day prior to the 24th. The form may be submitted to the county office in person, by mail, electronic transmission (fax) or via the client portal on the internet ([MyAlabama.gov](http://MyAlabama.gov)). Households who report non-receipt of the form may have another form generated upon authorization by the worker on the SR universe screen on SCI-II, or the

household may be referred to the internet, or the form may be given to households as needed in the county office.

The six month report form should be submitted to the county office by the 10th of the processing month. If the six-month report form is not received in the county office by the 10th day of the processing month, an automated notice is generated after the close of business on the 15th and mailed to the household to inform the household that its benefits will be terminated if the completed form is not received by the last day of the processing month. This is the only notice that a household will receive informing the household that benefits will be terminated if a six-month report form is not received by the last day of the processing month. The end of the month notice has been discontinued. Six-month report forms received in the county office between the 1st and the 10th of the processing month must be logged on the SR universe by the 15th to prohibit the reminder/termination notice from being generated and mailed to the household. Failure to log these forms on the SR universe can result in a case and procedural error due to the incorrect notice.

The following is a chart that shows the six-month reporting cycle for all households required to file a six month report based on the beginning of the certification period.

<b>IF YOUR CERTIFICATION PERIOD BEGINS:</b>	<b>YOU WILL RECEIVE A REPORT IN:</b>	<b>YOU MUST RETURN REPORT BY THE 10TH:</b>
JANUARY	MAY	JUNE
FEBRUARY	JUNE	JULY
MARCH	JULY	AUGUST
APRIL	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
MAY	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
JUNE	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
JULY	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
AUGUST	DECEMBER	JANUARY
SEPTEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
OCTOBER	FEBRUARY	MARCH
NOVEMBER	MARCH	APRIL
DECEMBER	APRIL	MAY

1. Report month is the month the household is mailed a six month report form and the month for which the household must report all income and household circumstances. (Fifth month of twelve month certification period.)
2. Processing month is the month the household must return the six month report and the month during which budget changes must be made for the last six months of the certification period. (Sixth month of 12 month certification period.)

## **1704 Required Actions on Six-Month Reports**

### **A. Processing of Six-Month Reports Received in the Processing Month**

Six-month report forms which are received by the 10th of the processing month and are complete must be processed within 10 days of receipt in the county office.

If the form is received by the 10th of the processing month and is incomplete, the county office must return the incomplete form within 10 days. A manual Notice of Incomplete Six-Month Report will be sent to the household when an incomplete six-month report is received by the county office. The eligibility worker should not return the six-month report form if it is complete except for required verification. If the household returns the completed form and/or required documentation and verification by the end of the processing month, the county office must process the complete form within 10 days. If the household fails to respond to the Notice of Incomplete Six-Month Report by the end of the processing month the case will close for failure to provide a complete six-month report. If the household provides the completed six-month report along with required documentation and verification in the month (seventh month) after the processing month, the household's benefits must be reinstated. See Section 1704-C, Special Procedures for Processing Six-Month Reports Received in the Month After Processing Month.

If the household submits the completed six-month report after the 10th of the processing month but before the end of the processing month, the county office has 10 days to process the completed form to completion. Benefits must not be prorated.

If the household submits an incomplete six-month report after the 10th of the month but before the end of the processing month, the form must be returned to the household within 10 days. A manual Notice of Incomplete Six-Month Report will be sent to the household for required verification. If the household returns the completed form and/or required documentation and verification by the end of the processing month, the county office must process the complete form within 10 days. Benefits must not be prorated. If the household fails to respond to the Notice of Incomplete Six-Month Report by the end of the processing month the case will close for failure to six-month report. If the household provides the completed six-month report along with required documentation and verification in the month (seventh month) after the processing month, the household's benefits must be reinstated. See Section 1704-C, Special Procedures for Processing Six-Month Reports Received in the Month after Processing Month.

When the last day of the month falls on a weekend or a holiday, those reports received in person, by mail, fax, or internet (MyAlabama.gov) on the first workday after the final deadline must be considered as received before the deadline. If the form is complete, the caseworker must reopen the case within 10 days. Benefits must not be prorated. If the form is incomplete, follow the policy and instructions in Section 1704-C, Special Procedures for Processing Six-Month Reports Received in the Month after Processing Month.

If in the month following the month of termination (7th Month), it is discovered/determined that the complete six-month report was received in the county office before the final deadline, but due to agency error the form was not processed, the report must be processed and the case reopened without a new application. The original certification period must be retained in this situation. Benefits must not be prorated. If such a discovery is made after the seventh month, the household must be sent an application and informed to reapply. Eligibility and benefit level for the new certification period will be determined following usual policy. The certification period assigned will be based on the new application date. The policy found in Chapter 16 should be followed to determine the amount of any restoration of lost benefits the household is entitled due to the agency error in processing the six-month report.

Benefits shall be denied or terminated at any time it is determined that the household is prospectively ineligible except as provided in Chapter 10, Section 1000 C.

## **B. Reports Made by the Household Outside of the Six-Month Report**

If additional information is reported by the household in the processing month before the six-month report form is processed to completion, this information must be reviewed to determine if this information should be processed in conjunction with the six-month report. Review this information to determine if the reported change occurred in the report month. If not, this information should be processed outside of the six-month report form. Send the household a request for verification (DHR-FSD 958), if verification is not provided when this additional information is reported, if verification is provided, the caseworker must send a Notice of Adverse Action (10 day notice) to decrease benefits if the reported change causes a reduction in benefits. If the household fails to provide verification, the household must be sent a Notice of Adverse Action (10 day notice) to close the case due to failure to provide verification. If the household provides the requested verification in the month following case closure, the household's benefits may be reinstated. See Section 1706-C, Special Procedures for Reopening Cases After Household Fails to Provide Verification.

If additional information is reported by the household in the processing month after the six-month report form has been processed to completion, this information must be reviewed to determine if this reported change causes a decrease or increase in the household's benefits. If the reported change causes an increase in benefits, this change must be processed to completion within 10 days. However, a change to increase benefits must not be processed without verification.

If the reported change causes a decrease in benefits, action must not be taken to process this change until recertification. In some cases the caseworker must complete a trial budget to determine what effect the reported change may have on the monthly allotment. If the allotment decreases due to the reported change, a letter (no effect) must be sent to the household notifying the household that the change was received however it will not affect the allotment until recertification.

### **C. Special Procedures for Processing Six-Month Reports Received in the Month after Processing**

The following reinstatement/reopen policy and procedures apply to those households who submitted the six-month report in the processing month but failed to provide the required documentation and verification for processing by the end of the processing month (Section 1704-A).

Example: Household's certification period is October through September. The February six-month report is due March 10th. The incomplete report is received on March 10th and is returned to the household on March 20th. The household submits the February six-month report again on March 25th and the form is still incomplete. The form is sent back to the household on March 29th. The household returns the February six-month report with the missing documentation/verification on April 11th. This household's eligibility must be reinstated. The new application date becomes April 11th and the certification period April through September. Benefits are prorated for the month of April.

This policy must also be applied to those households who submit the six-month report for the first time in the month (seventh month) after the processing month and the case has been terminated for failure to six-month report (REJ/CLO 7/41).

Example: Household' certification period is December through November. The April six-month report is due May 10th. The household does not submit the completed April six-month report until June 3rd. This household's eligibility must be reinstated. The new application date becomes June 3rd and the certification period June through November. Benefits are prorated for the month of June.

The caseworker must determine if the six-month report is complete or incomplete. If complete, the form must be processed, the case reopened and the household notified of continued eligibility. The household must be eligible for benefits for the month of reinstatement (seventh month) and the remaining months of the current certification period; otherwise, the case must remain closed. **If eligible, benefits for the month of reinstatement must be prorated. The new application date becomes the date the county office received the six-month report with all required**

**documentation and verification. The household must not be assigned a new certification period of 12 months but assigned a certification period for the last six months of the current certification period.** The county must reset the certification period. The certification period and start issuance month must begin with the month the case is reopened (seventh month) in order to accomplish proration of benefits. **Households with a new application date after the 15th of the month are not entitled to a combined allotment under this policy.**

Example: Household is originally assigned a certification period of November through October. The six-month report for March is due April 10th. The incomplete report is received on April 10th and is returned to the household on April 20th. The household returns the completed March six-month report on May 3rd. The county must reinstate the household's eligibility. The new application date becomes May 3rd and the certification period May through October. Benefits must be prorated for the month of May.

If the six-month report form is incomplete, the caseworker must return the form with a Notice of Incomplete Six-Month Report form. The Notice of Incomplete Six-Month Report form must include the date by which the completed form with the required documentation and verification must be returned to the county office. If the household fails to return a complete form with the required documentation and verification by the end of the seventh month, the case must remain closed and the household must reapply.

Example: Household is originally assigned a certification period of November through October. The six-month report for March is due April 10th. The incomplete report is received on April 10th and is returned to the household on April 20th. The household returns the March six-month report on May 3rd and the form continues to be incomplete. The county office must return the form again along with a Notice of Incomplete Six-Month Report form. The household returns the completed six-month report on May 30th. Within 10 days, the county must reinstate the household's eligibility. The new application date becomes May 30th and the certification period May through October. Benefits must be prorated for the month of May.

If in the seventh month the household submits an application but only needs to submit a completed six-month report to be reinstated, the caseworker must send the household the appropriate six-month report form. Advise the household to send the completed six-month report with documentation and verification and the case can be reopened without having to schedule another interview. The household needs to know that the completed form with documentation and verification must be submitted to the county office by the end of the seventh month. If the household fails to take the required action, the case must remain closed. Do not register the application in these cases. If the application is registered in error and the household returns the completed six-month report, the application date must be changed to the date the completed six-month report was received in the county office. If the application is registered in error and a completed six-month report form is never returned by the household, the application must be denied on the last work day of the 7th month using REJ/CLO Code 26. The county office must send a manual Notice of Denial/Form 660 to the household explaining why the application was denied. Thoroughly document the county actions in the case file.

If in the seventh month the household has submitted a six-month report and later submits an application, do not register the application. If the report is complete, the county office must process the completed six-month report, reopen the case, and notify the household of continued eligibility following reinstatement policy stated above.

If the report is incomplete when received in the seventh month, the caseworker must return the form with a Notice of Incomplete Six-Month Report form. The Notice of Incomplete Six-Month Report form must include the date by which the completed form with the required documentation and verification must be returned to the county office. If the household fails to return a completed form with the required documentation and verification by the end of the seventh month, the case must remain closed and the household must reapply.

If the application is registered in error and a completed six-month report is not returned by the end of the seventh month, the application must be denied on the last work day of the seventh month using REJ/CLO Code 26. The county office must send a manual Notice of Denial/Form DHR-FAO 660 to the household explaining why the application was denied. Thoroughly document the county actions in the case file.

## **D. Notices**

The following automated notices will be sent to six-month reporting households as appropriate.

### **1. Reminder/Termination Notice**

This notice will be generated on the 15th of the processing month and sent to all households who do not send in a six-month report by the 10th of the processing month. The notice states as follows: This is the only notice the household will receive informing the household that the six-month report has not been submitted and failure to do so by the last day of the processing month will result in termination. The six-month reporting universe must be updated daily to reflect the receipt of these forms.

### **2. Notice of Action Notice**

This notice will be generated daily as six-month reports are processed to notify households of allotment changes or termination based on the information reported on the six-month report.

This notice will be generated when the household voluntarily reports a change outside of the six-month report which when processed will increase benefits.

This notice will be generated for other changes such as when a notice of adverse action expires to terminate benefits; process a required change according to policy; and inform households that their cases have been denied/terminated due to the household's failure to provide verification. The notice sent to households to deny/terminate benefits because the household failed to provide verification states that if the missing verification is provided before the end of the month after the case is closed, the case can be reopened without a new application.

This notice will be generated at the end of the month for those households whose cases are terminated for failure to provide a six month report. The notice sent to households to terminate benefits for failure to provide a six month report states that the case can be reopened without an application if the completed report is submitted by the last day of the seventh month.

## **1705 Completion of Six-Month Report and Verification of Information on the Six-Month Report <sup>(6)</sup>**

The household must complete the six-month report and provide verification of reported information according to policy. Upon receipt of the six-month report, the IEVS screens must be accessed to obtain the latest information available through IEVS. This information must be reviewed and compared with the information reported on the six-month report. Any outstanding IEVS matches such as New Hire reports or other reports of information must be reviewed to determine any actions due by the county office in conjunction with the six month report.

### **Address Change**

Failure by the household to answer the address change question constitutes an incomplete report. A household is required to report a change of address. If the household has moved, the new mailing address is required.

A household should complete the additional information in this section of the form if the household has moved. If the household reports a move and does not provide verification of shelter costs, no shelter costs should be included in the food assistance budget effective the following month. Failure to verify shelter costs does not constitute an incomplete report subject to termination for failure to provide verification.

If the household addresses the questions regarding utility expenses, allow the appropriate utility deduction. Verification is not required for the SUA, BUA or telephone standard.

#### **Change in Shelter/Household Did Not Move**

When the household reports an increase in shelter expenses on the six-month report and verification has not been received, the caseworker must request verification and allow the household 10 days to provide the requested verification. The household should be informed that benefits cannot be increased until verification is provided. If the verification is not provided within 10 days, action must not be taken to increase benefits or close the food assistance case for failure to provide verification. Do not make a change in the shelter costs. Document the reason the reported change was not processed. No further action is required until recertification unless the household subsequently provides the verification prior to the end of the certification period. In this case, the change may be made if it will cause an increase in benefits.

When the household reports a decrease in shelter costs on the six-month report (with or without verification) which results in a decrease in the food assistance benefits, the reported change must be made to decrease the shelter costs effective the following month.

#### **Earned Income**

Failure by the household to address the earned income questions constitutes an incomplete report.

Countable earned income received in the report month must be reported and verified if earned income has changed by more than \$100.00. If the household reports "yes", the earned income has changed by more than \$100.00, the household must provide verification of this change. If the household does not send verification and verification cannot be obtained through another source such as The Work Number or through the employer, the report must be considered incomplete and returned to the household with a Notice of Incomplete Six-Month Report form. If the household states or verifies a change in earned income of less than \$100.00, this change must be processed with or without verification.

If the household answers "yes", a member has had a change in earnings (including earnings from self-employment) because he/she started or stopped a job or changed jobs, the household must provide verification of this reported change. If the household does not provide verification, the report must be considered incomplete and returned to the household with a Notice of Incomplete Six-Month Report Form. If the county office discovers that a member of the household has quit a job or voluntarily reduced work hours, any information needed to determine whether the quit was with or without good cause should be addressed outside of the six-month report form.

If the household answers "no" to the earned income questions, the caseworker must not make any changes to the earned income amounts currently being budgeted for the household. The gross earned income amounts will remain the same for the last six-months of the 12 month certification period.

#### **Unearned Income**

Failure by the household to address the unearned income question constitutes an incomplete report.

Countable unearned income received in the report month must be reported and verified if the unearned income has changed by more than \$100.00. If the household reports "yes", the unearned income has changed by more than \$100.00, the household must provide verification of this change. If



the household does not send verification and verification cannot be obtained through another source such as IEVS, the report must be considered incomplete and returned to the household with a Notice of Incomplete Six-Month Report Form. Unearned income information which can be verified through IEVS shall be used and the change made for the following month. If the household states or verifies a change in unearned income of less than \$100.00, this change must be processed with or without verification. In those cases that involve the receipt of child support income, it is not necessary to check the child support systems (ALECS & ALACOURT) if the household states "no" that the unearned income has not changed by more than \$100.00 unless the household had reported a change in the child support income that could not be processed until six-month report.

If the household answers "no" to the unearned income question, the caseworker must not make any changes to the unearned income amounts currently being budgeted for the household with the exception of verified upon receipt information that should be processed by the caseworker. The unearned income amounts will remain the same for the last six-months of the 12 month certification period if there is no verified upon receipt information that the caseworker is required to process.

### **Child Support Payments/Deductions**

Failure by the household to address the legally obligated child support questions does not constitute an incomplete report subject to termination. If the household does not answer these questions, remove the currently budgeted child support deduction from the food assistance budget.

The household must report and verify changes in the amount of legally obligated child support and when the obligation to pay child support ends if the household is receiving a deduction for child support payments. The household must report and verify if any other household member has a court-ordered child support obligation in order for this member to receive a child support deduction. If the household answers "yes", and does not send verification, a child support deduction must not be allowed in the food assistance budget for the last six-months of the 12 month certification period for households that were already receiving the deduction or for new court-ordered payments.

If the household answers "no", the child support deduction currently being budgeted will remain in the food assistance budget.

### **Household Composition**

Failure by the household to address the household composition question constitutes an incomplete report.

The household must report information about household members who have moved into or out of the household. The household must report income for those new members that have income and provide verification of their income. If the household answers "yes", and does not complete the information section concerning those members or the does not send verification of their income, the report must be considered incomplete and returned to the household with a Notice of Incomplete Six Month Report Form. If verification of income can be obtained through another source such as IEVS, The Work Number, the employer, or other State verification systems, the form must not be returned.

If the household answers "no" to this question, the caseworker must not make any changes in household composition.

The household must complete and sign the six-month report. Failure to date the six-month report form does not constitute an incomplete report. If the household fails to sign the report or submits the report before the last day of the report month the form must be considered incomplete.

If the household reports information/verification considered questionable, the caseworker must determine the most appropriate way to resolve the issue and take appropriate action based on the individual case situation.

## **1706 Changes Reported During the Certification Period**

The county office should react to the following changes when reported during the certification period. These reported changes and the action taken on these reported changes should be documented.

## **A. Household Reported Changes - Required Changes**

### 1. Income Exceeds the Maximum Allowable (130 of Poverty)

The household must report this change by the 10th day of the month after the month during which this change occurs. If the reported income (earned and unearned) is representative of the income the household expects to receive ongoing, within 10 days the county office should send a notice of adverse action to close the case due to excessive income. If the reported income is not representative of the income the household expects to receive ongoing the case should remain open. The eligibility worker should document the case record concerning why this reported income is not representative.

For example: All check stubs for the month reported reflect overtime. The eligibility worker should discuss the overtime with the household to determine if the overtime will continue. If the overtime is not expected to continue, no change is due to be made in the budget.

### 2. ABAWD in a Non-Exempt County

If an ABAWD is eligible because he/she is working more than 20 hours weekly, the household must report the reduction of work hours to less than 20 hours a week by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month after the month during which this change occurs.

## **B. Non-Required Changes Voluntarily Reported By the Household**

### 1. Increase in Benefits

For changes voluntarily reported by the household that increase benefits, the following actions should be taken:

- a) Document the reported change and the date of the report.
- b) Within 10 days determine the effect of the reported change on the household's eligibility and benefits.
- c) For a change which results in an increase in a household's benefits (other than the addition of a new household member or a decrease of \$50 or more in the household's gross income), the household is required to verify this change. When the change, **with the verification**, is received, the county department shall make the change no later than the first allotment available 10 days after the date the change was reported to the county department.

For example, a \$30 decrease in income reported on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May would increase the household's June allotment. If the same decrease was reported on May 28, and the household's availability date was on June 4, the household's allotment would have to be increased by July.

For changes which result in an increase in a household's benefits due to the addition of a new household member who is not a member of another certified household, or

due to a decrease of \$50 or more in the household's gross monthly income, the county department shall make the change effective not later than the first allotment available 10 days after the date the change was reported. However, in no event shall the change take effect any later than the month following the month in which the change is reported.

If the change is reported too late in the month for the county department to adjust the following month's allotment, the county department shall issue a Supplementary Allotment in order for the household to obtain the increase in benefits by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the following month, or the household's normal availability date, whichever is later.

For example, a household reporting a \$100 decrease in income at any time during May would have its June allotment increased. If the household reported the change after the 20<sup>th</sup> of May and it was too late for the county department to adjust the household's allotment normally available on June 4, the county department would issue a supplementary allotment for the amount of the increase by June 10.

- d) Without Verification- When the household reports a change which causes an increase in benefits, but does not provide verification with the change, the county department shall allow the household 10 days from the date the change is reported to provide verification. If the household provides verification within this period, the county department shall take the same action required as if the verification had accompanied the change when it was reported. Thus, the time frame for processing the change shall run from the date the change was reported, not the date within the 10 days the verification was received.

If, however, the household fails to provide the required verification within 10 days after the change is reported, but does provide the verification at a later date, then the time frame for processing the change shall run from the date verification is provided rather than from the date the change is reported.

The date the change shall be effective is no later than the first allotment available 10 days after the date the verification was provided, except if the change is a new household member or a decrease of \$50 or more in the household's gross monthly income, the change shall be effective no later than the first allotment available 10 days after the date the verification was provided; however, in no event shall the change take effect any later than the month following the month in which the verification was provided. If necessary, a Supplementary Allotment shall be issued following the same procedures discussed earlier.

Until the verification of a change which causes an increase in benefits is provided, the household's benefits shall not be increased due to this change.

## 2. Decrease in Benefits

- a) Document the reported change and the date of the report.
- b) Do not act on this change if the reported change will decrease the household's benefits.
- c) Notify the household that the change was received but due to the effect (decrease in benefits) the reported change had on the household's benefits; the change will not be made.

A trial budget should be placed in the case file to indicate the effect of the change, if needed.

### 3. Other Changes

The following changes shall be acted on within 10 days. The household shall be sent a notice of adverse action if these reported changes will cause a decrease or termination of the household's benefits.

- a) There has been a change in the household's PA grant.

Changes reported to the Family Assistance worker are considered known to the agency and must be acted on in accordance with the provisions in this chapter. The county department must ensure that information reported to either worker is transmitted between Family Assistance and Food Assistance units in a timely manner so that the appropriate changes can be made by the worker(s) responsible for each program area, if appropriate. <sup>(6)</sup>

- b) The household's voluntary request for case termination: This request may be verbal or in writing. If the report is in the form of a written request adverse action notice is not due the household.
- c) Removal of a household member if the household member has applied for separate food assistance benefits or has moved into another participating food assistance case and should be added to that case.
- d) A change that results in no eligible individual in the home due to the death of all household members (adverse action is not due the household).

Unverified Upon Receipt: When the county office receives a report of the death of all household members from a source which is considered unverified upon receipt, the county office must determine if the reported change can be independently verified. Such reports include but are not limited to the household's authorized representative, a family member, or obituary.

If the reported change can be independently verified from sources such as the household's Authorized Representative, an obituary, BENDEX, SDX, State Vital Statistics, or MSIQ, the county office must take action to terminate the case. Adverse action is not due the household.

If the reported change cannot be independently verified, the county office must send the household a Request for Additional Information, DHR-FAD-958. The household must be allowed 10 days to respond to the request. If there is no response from the household on or before the 10th day, the county office must send a Notice of Adverse Action, DHR-FAD-657, informing the household of case termination due to the household's failure to provide verification.

- e) A change that is considered verified upon receipt. This is:

IEVS Information from:

- ❖ Unemployment Compensation Benefits from the Department of Industrial Relations (UCB)
- ❖ Social Security Benefits (BENDEX)
- ❖ SSI Benefits (SDX)

SAVE information from the Immigration and Naturalization Service upon requests to verify alien status.

Employment and training disqualifications, intentional program disqualifications (IPV's) and other disqualifications.

A change that is considered verified upon receipt means that information is not questionable; the provider is the primary source of the information. If the information is questionable, the information is not considered verified upon receipt and should not be acted upon.

- f) Information received through IEVS (Exception - BENDEX Death Matches and Prisoner Verification System Matches) from sources that is considered unverified upon receipt (Chapter 2, [Section 205 I](#)) and other unverified information received from a third party source such as Quality Control, or an anonymous caller, shall be processed in conjunction with the six-month report if it is received after certification but before the household submits the six-month report. Information received after the six-month report has been processed, shall be handled/cleared at recertification.

#### 4. BENDEX Death Matches and Prisoner Verification Matches

BENDEX Death Matches and Prisoner Verification System Matches require contact with the household when received. The county department must follow up on these matches with a notice of match results. Inform the household of the information received by the county department, clearly explain what information the household must provide and the consequences of failure to respond. The county department must remove the individual from the household and adjust the household's benefits accordingly if the household does not respond to the request, or does respond but fails to provide sufficient information to clarify the household circumstances. Send the household a 10 day Notice of Adverse Action if the action to remove the individual results in a decrease or termination of the household's benefits.

If the information from death and prisoner matches are independently verified by the county department and the effect on the household's continued eligibility and/or benefit allotment can be readily determined, the county department must send a 10 day Notice of Adverse Action. A notice of match results would not be appropriate.

#### 5. Unclear Information

Unclear information is information received during the certification period about a household's circumstances from which the county office cannot readily determine the effect on the household's continued eligibility. It is information that is not verified or is verified but the county department needs additional information to determine how to act on the change.

Unclear information received during the certification period that is fewer than 60 days old relative to the current month of participation **and** was required to have been reported by the household or unclear information that appears to conflict with the information provided by the household at the time of certification. This unclear information must be verified with the household through a request for additional information.

If the unclear information **is not** fewer than 60 days old relative to the current month of participation and was not required to be reported or does not significantly conflict with the information provided by the household at the time of certification, the county office must not act on this information or require the household to provide verification until six-month report or recertification, whichever comes first.

## C. Special Procedures for Reopening Cases after Household Fails to Provide Verification

Six-month reporting households that fail to respond to a request for additional information/verification which results in case closure or termination of benefits may have their benefits reinstated if the requested information/verification is submitted to the county office after the case has closed but before the end of the month following case closure/termination. The county office must have issued a written request informing the household of the additional information/verification it must provide and allowed the household 10 days to provide the requested information/verification. The county office must have issued a notice of adverse action explaining the reason for the closure or if approved for expedited services with postponed verification, a notice of action informing the household of the required information/verification, when to return this information/verification, and the action the county office must take if the information/verification is not returned.

The special procedures stated below apply to six-month reporting households that report a change after certification but before the six-month report and fail to respond to the county office request for additional information/verification concerning the reported change. If the household provides the missing information/verification after the case has closed but before the end of the month following case closure/termination, benefits must be reinstated within 10 days.

Leave the food assistance case closed for the month of reinstatement. The county office must complete a trial budget to determine the amount of prorated benefits the household is entitled to for the month of reinstatement. Issue the household a restoration (Reason Code 19) for the month of reinstatement. The county office must document the reason for the restoration. The month after reinstatement, the county office must reopen the case. The new application date becomes the date the household provided all information/verification. Assign the household the original 12 month certification period. Benefits must not be prorated.

Example: Household is certified from March through February. The household reports a change in May for which the county needs additional information/verification. The household fails to respond to a request from the county office and the county office sends a notice of adverse action to close the case effective June 1. The household provides the information/verification on June 6th (month after closure/termination). The county office must run a trial budget for June (use application date of June 6th) to determine if the household is eligible for June and the remainder of the certification period. If eligible, the county office should leave the case closed and issue a restoration for June. Benefits are prorated for the month of June. The next month (July), the county office must reopen the case. The new application date becomes June 6th. The certification period will remain the same, March through February.

In those rare occasions when six-month reporting cases are closed/terminated for failure to provide information/verification the end of the fourth month of the certification period and the household provides this information/verification in the fifth month (reopen), contact the State Policy Desk for instructions on reinstating benefits for these households to ensure that SR procedures are followed and tracked sufficiently.

These special procedures also apply to six-month reporting households that are approved for expedited services with postponed verification that are terminated for failure to provide mandatory verification but provide this verification in the month after the case is terminated. If the household provides the mandatory verification after the case has closed but before the end of the month following case closure/termination, benefits must be reinstated within 10 days.

Example: Household is certified from March through February. The household filed an application for expedited services on March 16th and was approved for expedited services with postponed verification. This household was given a manual notice of action (Form 657) advising of the needed verification and the date by which this information is due to be submitted to the county office. The household failed to provide the mandatory verification by the end of April. The case is closed April 30th and is sent an automated notice about the closure. The notice informs the household of the termination and why the case was closed. It also informs the household that their case can be reopened without a new application if they provide the missing verification before the end of the month (May). The household provides the mandatory verification on May 6 (month after closure/termination). The county office must run a trial budget for May (use application date of May 6th) to determine if the household is eligible for May and the remainder of the certification period. If eligible, the county office should leave the case closed and issue a restoration for May. Benefits are prorated for the month of May. The next month (June), the county office must reopen the case. The new application date becomes May 6th. The certification period will remain the same, March through February.

## **1707 Changes Reported During the Certification Period that Change the Reporting Requirements**

### **A. Simplified Reporting to Six-Month Reporting**

#### **1. Increase in Benefits**

If a household in which all adult household members are elderly or disabled with no earned income, reports a change during the certification period that causes a change in reporting requirements and increase in benefits, the household should be notified of the change in reporting requirements within 10 days. See [Section 1701](#). This change is effective the month following the month the household is notified. The automated system must be updated promptly to reflect this change in reporting requirements.

If there are more than six months remaining in the certification period, the household should receive a six-month report form.

For example: A simplified reporting household is certified from February through January. The household reports a change in April which triggers six-month reporting. Notification is sent to the household in April advising the household that effective May their household is required to six-month report. An automated notice will be mailed to the household in June (report month) if the coding is changed to six-month before June 15.

If there are less than six months remaining in the certification period, the household will not receive a six month report form. Six month reporting requirements as stated in [Section 1700](#) will apply. The automated system must be updated promptly to reflect this change in reporting requirements.

Simplified reporting households, which include a child that will become an adult (turns 19) during the certification period, will remain a simplified reporting household during the certification period unless the household voluntarily reports a change during the certification period or the agency otherwise becomes aware of a change that will trigger six-month reporting. These cases will not have to be tracked due to age changes that would result in six-month reporting during the certification.

## 2. Decrease in Benefits

If a household reports a change during the certification period that causes a change in reporting requirements and a decrease in benefits the household should be notified of the change in reporting requirements within 10 days. See [Section 1701](#). The change in reporting requirements will be effective the month following the month the household is notified. However, the decrease in benefits will not be effective until the six-month report is received or recertification, whichever is earlier. The automated system must be updated promptly to reflect this change in reporting requirements.

For example, a household in which all adult members are elderly or disabled with no earned income reported during the certification period that their 20 year-old son has moved into the home. He is working; his earnings will not cause the household to exceed the 130% of poverty level, but will cause a decrease in the household's allotment and the household to become six-month reporter. Within 10 days notify the household of the change in reporting requirements and update the automated system to reflect the change in reporting requirements. Do not include the son and his income until the six month report form is received or at recertification, whichever is earlier.

## B. Six-Month Reporting to Simplified Reporting

### 1. Increase in Benefits

If a six-month reporting household reports a change during the certification period that causes a change in reporting requirements and an increase in benefits, the household should be notified of the change reporting requirements within 10 days. See [Section 1702](#). This change is effective the month following the month the household is notified. The automated system must be updated promptly to reflect this change in reporting requirements.

Six-month reporting households with members who become elderly (turn 60) during the certification period will remain in the six-month system until recertification unless the household voluntarily reports a change during the certification period or the agency otherwise becomes aware of a change that removes a household from six-month reporting prior to recertification. For example: A six-month reporting household with no earned income, whose only adult member becomes age 60 during the certification period. These particular cases will not have to be tracked due to the age change during the certification period.

For those households who no longer meet the six-month reporting criteria, the following actions shall be taken in addition to processing the change:

- a) The change in reporting requirements is effective the month following the month the household is notified.
- b) Within 10 days of the report, advise the household of the change in reporting requirements.
- c) Change the reporting status on SCI-II.

### 2. Decrease in Benefits

If a household reports a change during the certification period that causes a change in reporting requirements and a decrease in benefits the household should be notified of the change in reporting requirements within 10 days. See [Section 1702](#). The change in



reporting requirements will be effective the month following the month the household is notified. However, the decrease in benefits will not be effective until recertification. The automated system must be updated promptly to reflect this change in reporting requirements.

## **1708 Fair Hearings**

All households are entitled to fair hearings in accordance with [Chapter 15](#).

## **1709 Recertification of Simplified Reporting Households**

Six-month reporting households, like all other households, are subject to the normal policy for recertification. All information needed to establish the allotment for the first six months of the new certification period will be obtained during the recertification interview and established timeframes for application processing.

Households with no earned income and all adult members are elderly or disabled will be given a twelve-month certification period. These households are only required to report changes once every 12 months. All information needed to establish the allotment for the new certification period will be obtained during the recertification interview and established timeframes for application processing.

## **1710 Determining Eligibility and Allotments**

A household's eligibility for participation in the food assistance program is based on current and anticipated circumstances related to all factors of eligibility.

The policies in [Chapter 10](#) for determining resources [Section 1001](#) and deductions [Section 1003](#) apply to six-month and simplified reporting households.

In the six-month reporting system, the income is anticipated for the first six months of the certification period based on the information/verification provided by the household, as determined at the time of the interview to be most representative of the income the household reasonably anticipates receiving during the first six months.

After the first six months, the information/verification provided on the six month report is used to anticipate household circumstances for the remainder of the certification period. Earned and unearned income for the report month is used as the basis to anticipate income for the remainder of the certification period, taking into account any changes indicated by the client on the six month report form or otherwise known to the agency.

For households with no earned income and all adult members are elderly or disabled, income is anticipated for twelve months based on the information/verification provided by the household, as determined at the time of the interview to be most representative of the income the household reasonably anticipates receiving.

All households must provide verification of earned and unearned income received in the thirty (30) days prior to the interview. This income should be budgeted, unless the income is not representative of the income the household expects to receive in the future. The eligibility worker must use prudent judgment in assisting the household in the determination of the representative income. Once the representative income is determined, income received more frequently than monthly may be converted to a monthly figure (using the appropriate conversion factor of 4.3,

2.15 or 2) and this converted income placed in the food assistance budget. Income from each source should be determined and converted separately.

In order to be considered reasonable, and therefore included in the food assistance budget, an estimated date of receipt and estimated amount of income must be known. The computations must be based on the best information available by the household applying known and logical factors. Any income which is uncertain, based on amount or receipt date, should not be included in the budget.

## **1711 Documentation of Case Records**

The case record shall be documented sufficiently to substantiate the actions taken by the eligibility worker to anticipate and budget the income and resources known for the eligibility and allotment determination for each six months of the certification period. A statement shall be included to indicate that the income used is representative of income the household receives. The documentation should include computations used to arrive at the income included as well as any anticipated changes used to make adjustments in the allotment during each six months.

The case record for those households that are only required to report once every 12 months shall be documented sufficiently to substantiate the actions taken by the eligibility worker to anticipate and budget the income and resources known for the eligibility and allotment determination for the 12 month certification period.

The case record must also be documented when changes are reported or received in another manner. Any actions taken or not taken on these changes must be included in the documentation as outlined in [Section 1706](#).