

## CHAPTER 2-000 CLIENT PROCESSING

2-001 Application: Application is the first step in client processing.

Application forms must be readily accessible to any group, organization, or private citizen who requests them.

2-001.01 Right to File: The local office must protect an individual's rights during the application process. The local office must post signs in the certification office which explain the application processing standards and the right to file an application on the day of initial contact.

Every household must be given an opportunity to receive an application on the same day it expresses an interest in receiving SNAP benefits, and the worker must encourage the household to file the application the same day it is requested. If the local office receives a request for an application, the form must be mailed to the household on the date of the request.

{Effective 6/28/11}

2-001.02 Application Process: The application process must be completed no later than 30 days following the date the application was filed, unless processing is delayed. The following steps are included in the application process:

1. The individual completes and files an application form;
2. The worker screens from the application to determine eligibility for expedited service;
3. The worker schedules and conducts the interview;
4. The worker verifies the information as required; and
5. The worker enters information on the automated system.

Eligible households are given an opportunity to participate within 30 days from the date the application was filed. This opportunity includes allowing sufficient mailing time for the household to receive its EBT card.

{Effective 12/26/07}

2-001.02A Filing an Application: Households may submit SNAP applications to the local office in person, by mail, by fax or other electronic transmission, or through an authorized representative. The household may file an incomplete application which minimally must include the applicant's name, address, and the signature of a responsible member of the household or the authorized representative.

Applications signed with a mark (X) must be witnessed. The household does not have to be interviewed before the application is filed. An application containing the minimal information is considered filed on the day it is received by the agency.

The agency must enter the date of receipt on the appropriate application form. When a faxed application is received in the office during a non-work day, it must be documented as being received the first work day following the date the fax or other electronic transmission was received in the agency office. Time standards for application processing begin with this date. The worker must screen each application to determine if the household is eligible for expedited service. When a resident of an institution jointly applies for SSI and SNAP benefits before leaving the institution, the filing date of the application is the date of release from the institution.

Applications must be pended on the automated system within two working days from the date the application is filed with the agency.

{Effective 6/28/11}

2-001.02B Withdrawing an Application: The household may voluntarily withdraw its application at any time before the determination of eligibility.

The worker must document in the case file that contact was made with the household to confirm the withdrawal and must also document the reason for the withdrawal. The household must be advised of its right to reapply at any time after a withdrawal. The agency must not allow an application to be withdrawn once the eligibility determination has been made.

2-001.02C Time Standards: The agency is required to process applications so that eligible households are allowed an opportunity to participate in the program within 30 days after the application is filed. Certain households are entitled to expedited service and if eligible must be allowed to participate within seven days.

At initial application the appropriate time standard must include the time needed for the receipt of the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. At recertification or when there has been a break in service the time standard must include the time needed for the receipt of a replacement card, if needed.

2-002 Interviews: The interview portion of the application process allows the worker to explain the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and to discuss information on the application with the applicant. Interviews may be conducted in person or by telephone. Interviews may be conducted at a mutually acceptable location other than the household's home or the SNAP office. Households must have an interview at initial application and at recertification.

A face-to-face interview must be held if the household requests one. If a client, for good reason, is unable to conduct a face-to-face interview in the DHHS office, then the worker and the client must identify a mutually acceptable time and place, such as a hospital, senior or community center, or the client's home.

Unless the household requests a face-to-face interview, a telephone interview must be conducted. The agency may conduct a face-to-face interview if there is questionable information on the application.

{Effective 6/28/11}

2-002.01 (Reserved)

2-002.02 Scheduling Interviews: The agency must schedule an interview for all applicant households who are not interviewed on the day they submit their application. The interview must be scheduled as soon as possible to ensure that eligible households receive an opportunity to participate within 30 days after the application is filed.

At initial application the appropriate time standard must include the time needed for the receipt of the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. At recertification or when there has been a break in service the time standard must include the time needed for the receipt of a replacement card, if needed.

2-002.02A Missed Interview: If a household fails to appear for the first interview, the household must be notified in writing that they missed the scheduled interview. The household must be advised that they are responsible for rescheduling the missed interview.

If the household contacts the local office within 30 days after the application filing date, a second interview must be scheduled. The household's application must not be denied before the 30<sup>th</sup> day after the application filing date if it is due to the household missing the first interview.

{Effective 1/3/2005}

2-002.03 Site of and Attendance of Interviews: Interviews may be conducted by telephone or at the SNAP office or another mutually agreed upon location, including a household's residence. If the interview will be conducted at the household's residence, it must be scheduled in advance with the household. The interview must be conducted with the head of household, his/her spouse, another responsible household member, or an authorized representative.

{Effective 6/28/11}

2-002.04 Confidentiality of Interviews: The worker must conduct the interview as an official and confidential discussion of household circumstances. The applicant's right to privacy must be protected during the interview, and steps must be taken to preserve the privacy and confidentiality of the information provided at the interview.

2-002.05 Content of Interview: The worker must go beyond a simple review of the information on the application by exploring and resolving any unclear or incomplete information with the household. During the interview, the worker must explain:

1. The application process;
2. The household's rights, including the right to appeal and the method of filing an appeal;
3. The penalty warning on the application including the penalties for intentional program violation;
4. The work requirements, if applicable;
5. The household's responsibility to:
  - a. Comply with all requirements;
  - b. Notify the worker of the changes required to be reported;
  - c. Cooperate with quality control reviews and audits; and
6. To households also applying for or receiving PA benefits that time limits and other PA-related requirements do not apply to the receipt of SNAP benefits. Households that cease receiving PA benefits because they have reached a time limit, have begun working, or for other reasons may still qualify for SNAP benefits.

The worker must obtain written consent for verifications and, if appropriate, must register all nonexempt household members for work. The worker must also provide the household with written notice of its rights.

{Effective 6/28/11}

2-002.05A Racial/Ethnic Group Data: The individual making application may indicate his/her racial or ethnic group on the application. It is a federal requirement that this information be submitted to FNS-USDA on an annual basis.

The worker must enter the racial data on the automated system. An annual report of SNAP participation by racial group is compiled based on information entered on the automated system.

{Effective 6/28/11}

2-003 Verification

2-003.01 Required Initial Verification: Information listed below must be verified before eligibility can be determined.

Exception: Households eligible for expedited processing may have all verification postponed for the first issuance except identity of the person making the application and the household's authorized representative, if applicable.

1. Required verification:
  - a. Identity of the person making application and the authorized representative, if applicable;
  - b. Social Security numbers or proof of application for Social Security number;
  - c. Residency;
  - d. Alien status for household members applying for SNAP benefits;
  - e. Eligible student status if claimed;
  - f. Resources if the total amount of countable resources indicated on the application is \$1500 or more;
  - g. Income; and
  - h. Expenses allowed as a deduction:
    - (1) Medical expenses and disability if claimed;
    - (2) Dependent care costs; and
    - (3) Child support costs;
2. Eligibility factors verified if questionable:
  - a. Citizenship;
  - b. Work requirements;
  - c. Household composition;
  - d. Shelter costs;
  - e. Utility costs; and
  - f. Countable resources under \$1,500.  
{Effective 6/28/11}

2-003.01A Questionable Information: Information on the application is questionable if it is inconsistent with:

1. Statements made by the applicant;
2. Other information on the current application or a previous application; or
3. Any information received by the local office.

2-003.01A1 Discrepancies: If information from a source of verification contradicts information given by the household, the worker allows the household to resolve the discrepancies before the eligibility determination.

2-003.02 Sources of Verification: The worker must use documentary evidence as the primary source of verification for all eligibility factors except residency or household composition, if questionable. Residency or household composition may be verified through either readily available documentary evidence or a collateral contact.

2-003.02A Documentary Evidence: Any written confirmation of a household's circumstances (such as wage stubs) is considered documentary evidence. The worker must not limit documentary evidence to any single type of document. This evidence may be obtained from the household or another source. The worker must accept any reasonable documentary evidence provided by the household. If documentary evidence cannot be obtained or is insufficient to make a firm determination of eligibility or benefit level, the worker must substitute a collateral contact or a home visit.

{Effective 6/28/11}

2-003.02B Collateral Contact: An alternate source of verification is the collateral contact. This is confirmation of a household's circumstances by a person outside the household. A collateral contact is not restricted to any particular individual; it can be anyone who is expected to provide an accurate verification of the household's statements. Collateral contacts are designated by the household, but the household may request assistance from the local office in making this designation. When the worker decides the collateral contact is unacceptable, the worker must ask the household to name another collateral contact. Verification by a collateral contact may be given in person or by telephone. Documentation regarding the collateral contacts must be noted in the case file.

2-003.02C Home Visit: A visit to the household's home is used for verification only when the household cannot provide documentary evidence. The worker must schedule home visits with the household in advance.

2-003.02D Interfaces – Automatic Exchanges: Interfaces are automated exchanges of information received from the Department of Labor, Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service, and other divisions of our agency. The interface process begins when an individual is added to the automated system. Every pending or active SNAP household member whose income and resources are used to determine eligibility will have his/her SSN routinely matched against automated exchanges.

{Effective 6/28/11}

2-003.03 Responsibility for Providing Verification: The household has the primary responsibility for providing verification to support income statements and to resolve questionable information. The worker must not require the household to present verification in person at the local office. Verification may be supplied in person, through the mail, electronically, or through an authorized representative. The worker must offer assistance to households in obtaining verification provided the household is cooperating with the worker during the application process. The worker is responsible for getting verification from acceptable collateral contacts.

{Effective 9/4/2002}

2-003.04 Verification After Initial Certification

2-003.04A At Recertification: At the time of recertification the worker verifies:

1. Resources if the total amount of countable resources indicated on the application is \$1500 or more;
2. Earned income;
3. Unearned income if the source or the amount has changed;
4. Medical expenses, dependent care costs, and child support costs claimed by the household if any changes have occurred since last verified;
5. Social Security numbers if not previously provided; and
6. Questionable information.

Changes reported at the time of recertification are subject to the same verification procedures that apply at initial certification.

{Effective 6/28/11}

2-003.04B During the Certification Period: Verification requirements during the certification period are determined by the household's reporting category.

2-003.04C At Interim Report: Upon receipt of the Interim Report Form, the worker verifies:

1. Resources, if reported as changed and if the total is \$1500 or more;
2. Earned income, if reported as changed;
3. Unearned income, if reported as changed;
4. Medical expenses, dependent care costs, and child support costs, if reported as changed; and
5. Questionable information.

Other changes reported on the Interim Report Form are subject to the same verification procedures that apply at initial certification.

{Effective 6/28/11}

2-004 Processing Applications Under Special Circumstances: Certain types of applications have special processing procedures: This section describes these applications and their processing standards. Special procedures are used for households which are:

1. Entitled to expedited service including migrant and seasonal farm workers;
2. Applying for ADC, AABD, Emergency Assistance, Employment First supportive services, or the State Disability Program;
3. Applying for or receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
4. Living in chemical dependency treatment centers or group living arrangements including shelters for battered women and children;
5. Furnishing board to individuals;
6. Using an authorized representative to apply;
7. Categorically eligible; and
8. Providing foster care.

2-004.01 Expedited Service: Expedited service standards require that processing be completed with timeframes that are shorter than the usual 30 days. If this is an initial application, the criteria apply to the month of application.

The household may be certified under expedited service procedures if they are determined to be entitled to expedited service and have either provided all the required verifications since the last certification or have been certified under the 30-day processing standards since the last expedited service certification. If otherwise eligible, a household cannot waive its right to expedited service.

If otherwise eligible, the following households are entitled to expedited service.

1. Households with less than \$150 in monthly gross income provided their liquid resources do not exceed \$100;
2. Households whose combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than the household's monthly rent or mortgage and utilities; and
3. Migrant or seasonal farmworkers who are destitute provided their liquid resources do not exceed \$100.

2-004.01A Special Procedures for Expedited Service: The worker must follow special procedures in determining eligibility for households which may be entitled to expedited service.

2-004.01A1 Expedited Application: When an application is received by a local office, it is screened for entitlement to expedited service upon receipt. If the household appears at the local office and submits an application, the application should be screened prior to the household leaving the local office. If the household leaves before screening can be completed or submits an application through the mail, fax or other electronic transmission, it is screened upon receipt.

If the application is complete enough to determine the household is entitled to expedited service, the expedited time frame starts with the receipt date of the application. The local office schedules an interview to meet the expedited time frame. If an application is not complete enough to determine if the household is entitled to expedited service, the local office schedules an interview to meet the expedited time frame. If an interview is scheduled and the household does not appear for the interview, the local office sends the household a Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI). If the interview is not rescheduled by the household in time to meet the expedited time frame from the receipt date of the application, the household loses its entitlement to expedited service and the application is approved or denied within the normal 30 days.

2-004.01A2 Verification: Once a collateral contact is named, the worker must act promptly to help the household obtain verification.

2-004.01A2a Identity: Before initial certification, the worker must verify the identity of the person making the application in all cases. If an authorized representative makes application, the worker must verify the identity of the head of the household and the authorized representative.

If identity cannot be verified within the expedited timeframe, the household is not entitled to expedited processing.

2-004.01A2b Residency: All reasonable efforts must be made to verify the household's residency within the expedited processing time frames.

2-004.01A2c Resources: The worker must verify the resource level if the total amount of countable resources indicated on the application is \$1500 or more during the application process if it can be done within the expedited time frames. If the household has more than \$100 in liquid resources, the household is not entitled to expedited processing.

If the household is determined to have excess resources, the household is not entitled to receive SNAP benefits.

{Effective 6/28/11}

2-004.01A2d Income: The worker must verify that the household's total monthly income is \$149.99 or less if it can be done within expedited time frames.

If the household is determined to have excess income, the household is not entitled to receive SNAP benefits.

{Effective 6/28/11}

2-004.01A2e Deductions:

2-004.01A2e(1) Medical: If the worker is unable to verify the household member's eligibility for the medical deduction and expenses, the following procedures apply:

1. If the worker is unable to verify disability within expedited guidelines, the worker must allow the medical deduction for the first issuance. To allow the medical deduction for the second issuance, verification is required;
2. If the household claims medical expenses and no insurance, the worker must allow the client's estimate of expenses for the first issuance;
3. If the household claims medical expenses and insurance, the worker must ask the household what portion will be reimbursed by insurance and allow the portion of the medical expenses which will not be reimbursed as a deduction for the first issuance; and
4. If the household is unable to provide information on which portion is reimbursable by insurance, no deduction is allowed.

In all cases, verification must be provided before the second issuance of the certification period or the worker must remove the expense from the budget.

2-004.01A2e(2) Dependent Care: If the household claims an allowable dependent care expense that is not reimbursed from another source and the worker is unable to verify the expense in time to meet the expedited timeframes, the worker must use the client's statement for the initial issuance. To allow the dependent care deduction for the second issuance, verification is required.

2-004.01A2e(3) Housing and Utilities: The household is entitled to expedited processing if their combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than the household's monthly rent or mortgage payment and utility allowance.

If the household is responsible for utilities, either the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA), Limited Utility Allowance (LUA), One Utility Allowance (OUA) or Telephone Allowance are used for the utility deduction.

{Effective 6/28/11}

2-004.01A2e(4) Child Support: When the household is entitled to expedited processing and has an obligation to pay child support for a non-household member, the worker must use the client's statement for the first issuance. To allow the child support deduction for the second issuance, verification is required.

{Effective 9/4/2002}

2-004.01A2f Social Security Number: The worker must ask a household to furnish or apply for a Social Security number for each household member before certification. Certification must not be delayed if the SSN(s) is not provided within the expedited timeframe.

Parents of a newborn child may apply for an SSN for the child at the hospital when this service is available. A household must provide proof of application for an SSN for a newborn child at its next recertification or within six months following the month the baby is born, whichever is later.

{Effective 9/4/2002}

2-004.01A2g Work Registration: Household members who must be work-registered meet this requirement when they are included on the signed application.

{Effective 6/25/95}

2-004.01A2h Other Verification: Verifications that cannot be obtained in time to meet expedited processing standards must be postponed. All required verifications must be provided before the second issuance of the certification period.

{Effective 6/25/95}

#### 2-004.01B Processing Standards for Expedited Service

2-004.01B1 Issuance of Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Card: The EBT card must be available for the household or its authorized representative no later than the seventh calendar day after the application filing date.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.01B2 Combined Allotment: The prorated first month's expedited benefit and the full second month's aggregate benefits must be issued to households entitled to expedited service which apply for food stamp benefits on or after the 16th of the month, and, at a minimum, provide verification of the identity of the person making application and the authorized representative if applicable. The household must be eligible for the application month and the second month of the certification period. The second month's benefit is an aggregate benefit. All of the following conditions must be met to be an aggregate benefit:

1. The application month must be expedited;
2. The eligibility for benefits must be determined during the application month;
3. The application date must be the 16th of the month or later; and
4. The household must be eligible for benefits for both the application month and the following month.

2-004.01B3 Interviews: An expedited household must have a face-to-face interview before certification to complete the application process unless the household qualifies for a waiver of the face-to-face interview.

If the face-to-face interview is waived, a telephone interview must be completed.

{Effective 12/26/2007}

2-004.01B4 Late Determinations: If the initial expedited screening fails to identify that a household is entitled to expedited service and the worker later learns of this entitlement, the worker must:

1. Provide expedited service; and
2. Use the date the worker learns that the household is entitled to expedited service instead of the application filing date when determining time limits for expedited processing.

2-004.01C Certifying Households Entitled to Expedited Service: There is no limit to the number of times a household can be certified under the expedited procedures as long as the household has provided the required verifications or was certified under the 30-day processing standards since the last expedited certification.

When a household is determined not to be eligible for expedited service, the worker must process the application within 30 days.

2-004.01D Destitute Households: Migrant or seasonal farmworker households may have little or no income at the time of application and may be in need of immediate food assistance, even though they receive income at some time during the month of application. The following procedures must be used to determine when migrant or seasonal farmworker households in these circumstances may be considered destitute and, therefore, entitled to expedited service and special income calculation procedures.

2-004.01D1 Terminated Income: A household whose only income for the month of application was received before the date of application, and was from a terminated source, must be considered a destitute household and must be provided expedited service.

1. If income is received on a monthly or more frequent basis, it must be considered as coming from a terminated source if it will not be received again from the same source during the balance of the month of application or during the following month.
2. For a household that normally receives income less often than monthly, the income must be considered as coming from a terminated source if it will not be received in the month in which the next payment would normally be received.

2-004.01D2 New Source of Income: A household whose only income for the month of application is from a new source must be considered destitute and must be provided expedited service if income of more than \$25 from the new source will not be received by the 10th calendar day AFTER the date of application.

1. Income which is normally received on a monthly or more frequent basis must be considered to be from a new source if income of more than \$25 has not been received from that source within 30 days BEFORE the date the application was filed.

2. If income is normally received less often than monthly, it must be considered to be from a new source if income of more than \$25 was not received within the last normal interval between payments.

2-004.01D3 Terminated Source and New Source: Households may receive both income from a terminated source before the date of application and income from a new source after the date of application and still be considered destitute if they receive no other income in the month of application and income of more than \$25 from the new source will not be received by the tenth calendar day AFTER the date of application.

2-004.01E Consideration of Income for Destitute Households: These procedures apply at initial certification and at recertification but only for the first month of the certification period. Once a household is determined destitute, the worker must use the following guidelines in considering income:

1. For initial applications and for recertifications taken more than 30 days after the certification period has expired:
  - a. Consider in full any income received between the first of the month and the application date; and
  - b. Disregard any income from a new source that is anticipated to be received after the application date;
2. For recertifications before the certification period has expired or in the first 30 days after its expiration, disregard income in the first month of the new certification period from a new source if income of \$25 or more will NOT be received by the tenth calendar day AFTER the household's normal issuance cycle.

{Effective 6/25/95}

2-004.01E1 Travel Advances: Some employers provide travel advances to cover the travel costs of new employees who must journey to the location of their new employment. These payments are excluded as reimbursements. Receipt of travel advances will not affect the determination of when a household is destitute.

If the travel advance is an advance of wages later earned by the employee and the advance is by written contract, the travel advance must be counted as income.

The receipt of a wage advance for travel costs of a new employee does not affect the determination of whether subsequent payments from the employer are from a new source of income, nor whether a household must be considered destitute.

2-004.01E2 Sources of Income: A household member who changes jobs but continues to work for the same employer must be considered as still receiving income from the same source. A migrant farmworker's source of income must be considered to be the same grower for whom the migrant is working at a particular point in time, and not the crew chief.

A migrant who travels with the same crew chief but moves from one grower to another must be considered to have moved from a terminated income source to a new source.

Expedited service procedures will be followed when determining eligibility for migrant and seasonal farmworker households.

2-004.01F Migrants: If a migrant household which is eligible for expedited services applies on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of a month, the local office must notify the migrant household in writing that it must provide:

1. Postponed verification from sources within the state before the second issuance; and
2. All verification from out-of-state sources before the household's third issuance.

If a migrant household which is eligible for expedited services applies after the 15<sup>th</sup> of a month, the local office must notify the migrant household in writing that it must provide all postponed verifications before the third month of the certification period to continue to be eligible to receive benefits.

The notice must also advise the household that if verification results in changes in a household's eligibility and benefit levels, the local office will act on these changes without sending the household a notice of adverse action.

{Effective 6/25/95}

2-004.01F1 Out-of-State Verification: Migrant households are entitled to postpone out-of-state verification only once each season. If a migrant household requesting expedited service has already been allowed to postpone out-of-state verification during the current season, the local office must grant a postponement only for the initial month's issuance and not for the second month's issuance.

2-004.01F2 In-State Verification: When in state verification that has been postponed is received, the local office must issue the second month's benefits within seven calendar days from receipt of the verification or the first of the second month, whichever is later.

{Effective 10/28/96}

2-004.01F3 Recertification: Verification factors are treated the same at time of recertification as at initial application with two exceptions as follows:

1. If a household has postponed providing verification at time of last certification, the verification must be provided before recertification; and
2. If a household reported a change within the certification period that resulted in a benefit decrease and it was not verified, verification of the change must be obtained before recertification

## 2-004.02 Assistance Households

2-004.02A Application Procedures: Households in which all members are applying for ADC, AABD, or the State Disability Program must be allowed to apply for food stamp benefits at the same time they apply for assistance benefits. The food stamp eligibility and benefit level determinations are based solely on food stamp criteria.

Households whose assistance applications are denied must not be required to complete a new food stamp application. The worker must determine or continue food stamp eligibility for these households on the basis of the application filed for food stamp purposes and any other documented information obtained after the application which may have been used in the determination and which is relevant to the food stamp eligibility or benefit level.

The local office must encourage county-administered relief programs, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or any other local agencies to advise households of possible food stamp eligibility, provide applications, and allow households to leave signed applications.

2-004.02B Interviews: At initial application, the local office must conduct a single interview for both the Food Stamp and assistance programs including ADC, AABD, and State Disability. Assistance households must not be required to see different eligibility workers or have two interviews to obtain assistance and food stamp benefits. Following the single interview, separate workers may process food stamp and assistance applications.

2-004.02C Certification: All requirements for procedures, notices, and time standards apply to the certification of assistance households as well as to households not receiving assistance.

2-004.02D Verification: Evidence provided for required assistance verifications may also be used for food stamp verifications if the evidence meets food stamp verification requirements.

2-004.02E Anticipation of Grant: If the worker can anticipate the amount and receipt date of the first grant and if this receipt date is in a subsequent month, the worker must vary the household's food stamp benefit level according to the anticipated receipt of payment. The worker must notify the household of this action on the approval notice. If the amount or receipt date of the first grant cannot be reasonably anticipated at the time of the food stamp eligibility determination, the worker must handle the grant as a change in circumstances when it is received.

If the household is notified in advance in writing that its food stamp benefits may be reduced or terminated when the grant is received, a notice of adverse action is not required. However, if the worker has not previously notified the household of the potential reduction or termination, the worker must notify the household of the action on the approval notice.

2-004.02F Time Standards: The worker must follow the required 30-day application processing standards. Action on the food stamp application must not be delayed or denied on the grounds that the assistance determination has not been made.

2-004.03 Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Households: Households in which all members are recipients of or applicants for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may have their applications for food stamps processed under the guidelines of this subsection. The Social Security Administration (SSA) may complete and forward initial and recertification food stamp applications for these households to the local office.

2-004.03A Social Security Administration (SSA) Responsibilities: SSA is responsible for the following case actions:

1. Informing SSI households of their right to apply for food stamp benefits, either through the SSA office or the local office;
2. Referring households which do not qualify for SSI/food stamp joint processing to the appropriate local office;
3. Accepting, completing, and forwarding signed applications from SSI households to the appropriate local office within one working day including applications for residents of institutions after release from the institution;
4. Returning a completed application to the household for signature when application is taken by telephone and informing the household that the signed application must be forwarded to the SSA office or the local office;
5. Screening all applications for expedited services on the day the SSA receives the signed application and marking "Expedited Processing" on the first page of all applications which appear to be eligible for expedited services; and
6. Informing households which appear to meet the criteria for expedited service that benefits may be issued a few days earlier if the household applies directly at the local office.

2-004.03B Local Office Responsibilities: The local office is responsible for the following case actions:

1. Determining if members of SSI households whose applications are forwarded by SSA are already participating in the Food Stamp Program;
2. Determining eligibility for expedited services beginning with either the date the signed application is received at the local office, or, if processed before release at an institution, the date of release, by screening all applications received from the SSA for expedited services;
3. Determining final eligibility, providing a notice of action, and issuing food stamp benefits to eligible SSI households within 30 days of the date the SSA office received the signed application or within 30 days of release from an institution;
4. Providing a notice of expiration of the certification period and ensuring that the notification informs households they are entitled to a waiver of the face-to-face interview if they are unable to appoint an authorized representative;
5. Completing the application process and approving or denying timely applications for recertification in accordance with 475 NAC 2-007, "Recertification"; and
6. Providing notice to the household of the determination of their eligibility. The notice sent to the household also includes a form for reporting changes.

{Effective 6/25/95}

### 2-004.03C Local Office Procedures

2-004.03C1 Obtaining Information: The local office must not require applicant SSI households to come to the local office to complete an eligibility determination. SSI households, which apply for food stamps benefits through the Social Security Administration, must not be contacted before the notice of action is sent unless:

1. The application is improperly completed;
2. Mandatory verification is missing; or
3. Certain information is determined questionable.

The local office may verify SSI benefit payments through the State Data Exchange (SDX) or Beneficiary Data Exchange system (BENDEX) without a release statement from the SSI household.

SSA is not responsible for providing information regarding SSI program benefits for households, which apply for food stamp benefits through the local office. This information must be supplied by the SSI household or obtained by the local office.

2-004.04 Households in Chemical Dependency Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers: Persons who regularly participate in chemical dependency treatment and rehabilitation programs may apply for food stamp benefits. The worker must verify that the center is a private or public nonprofit organization.

If an alcoholic treatment and rehabilitation program is located on an Indian reservation and a state agency has not certified or licensed the program, approval to participate may be granted if the program either is funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) or was funded by NIAAA and is now funded by Indian Health Service (IHS) funding.

Children of residents of drug and alcohol treatment centers who live with their parent(s) in the treatment center may qualify for food stamp benefits. Children who are served meals by the center are eligible to participate as part of the parent(s)' household.

### 2-004.04A Treatment Center Responsibilities

2-004.04A1 Application: The treatment center must:

1. Have knowledge of the household's circumstances and carefully review these circumstances with the household before application is made; and
  2. Provide the household with an authorized representative. An employee of the treatment center must act as an authorized representative and apply for the individual. The individual cannot file an application on his/her own behalf. This employee will act on behalf of the resident, receive the allotment, and make food purchases for the resident with his/her EBT card.
- {Effective 1/3/2005}

2-004.04A2 Notifications: The treatment center must notify the local office of changes in the household's circumstances, such as changes in income. The center must also supply the local office with a list of residents currently participating in the Food Stamp Program. This list must be signed by a responsible treatment center official and must be provided semi-monthly or monthly.

2-004.04A3 End of Residence: The treatment center must take the following actions when a household leaves the center:

1. Return the EBT card to the departing household;
2. Ensure that the departing household receives its full allotment if the benefits have already been issued and no benefits have been spent on that household's behalf that month;
3. When a household leaves on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month, ensure that a household's EBT account contains one-half of its monthly allotment if benefits have been issued and any portion of them has been used;
4. If an aggregate benefit allotment has been issued to the household on or after the 16<sup>th</sup> of the application month and the household leaves the treatment center on or after the 16<sup>th</sup> of the application month but before the first day of the full month, the treatment center must ensure the full month's benefits are not used by the treatment center and remain in the EBT account;
5. Report the departure to the local office; and
6. If the household leaves the center without taking its EBT card, return the card to the Issuance and Collection Center.

The treatment center is not allowed to act as an authorized representative for the household once that household leaves the center.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.04A4 Liability: The treatment center is responsible for any misrepresentation which it knowingly commits in the certification of center residents. The center is also strictly liable for all misuses of EBT benefits on behalf of a resident household and for all overissuances which occur while the household is a resident of the center.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.04B Local Office Responsibilities:

2-004.04B1 Application: Each treatment center resident must have his/her eligibility determined as a one-person household. When expedited services are necessary, the initial application must be processed on an expedited basis. The worker must complete verification and documentation requirements before issuing a second allotment. When normal processing standards apply, the worker must complete the verification and documentation requirements before determining eligibility on the initial application.

2-004.04B2 Ongoing Case Management: The worker must process changes in household circumstances and recertifications using the same standards that apply to all other food stamp households. Households in treatment centers have the same rights as all other food stamp households including notices of fair hearings and entitlement to lost benefits.

The local office must conduct periodic random on-site visits to the center. During these visits, the local office must ensure that:

1. The center's list of participating residents is accurate; and
2. The local office's records are consistent with the list and are up to date.

2-004.04B3 Ending Residence: If a household leaves the center before that month's issuance has been made, the EBT card with the entire allotment must be returned to the household.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.04C Claims and Disqualification: The treatment center may be penalized or disqualified if it is determined administratively or judicially that food stamp benefits were misappropriated or used for purchases that did not contribute to a certified household's meals. The worker must:

1. Notify the Central Office promptly when there is reason to believe a treatment center is misusing benefits; and
2. Establish an Accounts Receivable for any overissuance of benefits held for resident households if any overissuances are discovered during an investigation or a hearing procedure for redemption violations.

If a treatment center loses its state license, its residents are no longer eligible for food stamp benefits. Residents are not entitled to a notice of adverse action, but the worker must send them written notices explaining the reason for termination and the effective date.

2-004.05 Households in Group Homes: Disabled residents of a nonprofit group home which serves 16 or fewer people may apply for food stamp benefits. The worker must verify that the group home is licensed or certified by the appropriate state agency and is a nonprofit organization. The following living arrangements which are certified or licensed under 1616(e) of the Social Security Act meet the criteria to be an eligible institution:

1. Licensed Boarding Homes;
2. Certified Adult Family Homes;
3. Licensed Assisted Living Facilities; and
4. Licensed Centers for the Developmentally Disabled.

The group home may act as the authorized representative, residents may apply on their own behalf, or residents may name an authorized representative of their choice. Any combination of these methods may be used in any single group home. Residents have the right to apply as a one-person household or to form groups and apply as households with more than one member. Residents who use the group home as the authorized representative must always be considered a one-person household.

{Effective 1/3/2005}

2-004.05A Group Home Responsibilities:

2-004.05A1 At Application: The group home must:

1. Have knowledge of the household's circumstances and carefully review these with the household before application is made; and
2. Determine if a resident may apply for food stamp benefits on his/her own behalf based on the resident's physical and mental ability to handle his/her own affairs.

2-004.05A2 During Residence: The group home must:

1. Provide the local office with a list of currently participating residents which is signed by a responsible official of the group home on a semi-monthly or monthly basis;
2. Ensure that each resident's benefits are used for that resident if residents purchase or prepare food for home consumption; and
3. Notify the local office of changes in the household's circumstances if the group home is acting as the authorized representative.

2-004.05A3 Ending Residence: If a group home is acting as an authorized representative for a household, the group home must:

1. Return the EBT card to the departing household;
2. Ensure that the departing household's EBT account contains the household's full allotment if the benefits have already been issued and no benefits have been spent on that household's behalf that month;
3. When a household leaves on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month, ensure that a household's EBT account contains one-half of its monthly allotment if benefits have been issued and any portion of those benefits that have not been used;
4. If an aggregate benefit allotment has been issued to the household on or after the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month and the household leaves the group home on or after the 16<sup>th</sup> of the application month but before the first day of the full month, the group home must ensure the full month's benefits are not used by the group home and remain in the EBT account;

5. Ensure the departing resident his/her pro rata share of one-half of the monthly allotment if s/he has:
  - a. Been part of a group of residents certified as one household; and
  - b. Left on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month;
6. Allow residents who apply on their own behalf and retain their EBT card to keep the benefits when they leave (a pro rata share must be available to the departing resident who was part of a group certified as one household);
7. Report the departure to the client's worker if the group home has acted as the authorized representative; and
8. If the household leaves the group home without taking its EBT card, return the card to the Issuance and Collection Center (ICC).

The group living arrangement must not serve as a household's authorized representative once that household leaves the facility.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.05A4 Liability: The group home is liable for any overissuances to a resident household when the group home is acting as the authorized representative.

2-004.05B Local Office Responsibilities: The local office must:

1. Require the group home to provide its list of current participants on a periodic basis;
2. Conduct periodic onsite visits to ensure that the list is accurate and that local office records are consistent and up-to-date;
3. Classify all residents who apply through the facility's authorized representative as a one-person household and determine eligibility accordingly;
4. Process initial applications on an expedited basis when expedited services are necessary and complete verification and documentation before issuing the second allotment;
5. Complete verification and documentation requirements before determining eligibility when normal processing standards apply;
6. Use the standard certification and household size procedures for any resident or group of residents who apply on their own behalf;
7. Process recertifications and changes in household circumstances using the same standards that apply to all other food stamp households;
8. Give resident households the same rights to notices of adverse action, to fair hearings, and to entitlement to restoration of lost benefits as all other food stamp households;

9. Allow households applying on their own behalf to continue to participate if the group home's status as an authorized representative is suspended by FNS, provided the households are otherwise eligible; and
10. If the group home has been active as an authorized representative and the household leaves the facility before an issuance is made, the group home must return the EBT card with full allotment to the ICC.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.05C Household Responsibilities

2-004.05C1 Reporting Changes: If a resident or residents make application on their own behalf, the household is responsible for reporting changes to the local office. This includes reporting the household's departure from the group home.

2-004.05C2 Liability: If a resident makes application on his/her own behalf, s/he is responsible for any overissuances to the household.

2-004.05D Use of EBT Benefits: The group home may purchase and prepare food to be consumed by eligible residents if the meals are normally obtained at a central location as part of the group living arrangement, or if meals are delivered to the individual residents.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.05D1 Group Home As Authorized Representative: If the resident uses the facility as the authorized representative, the facility may either:

1. Receive the EBT card and spend the food stamp benefits for food prepared by and/or served to the eligible resident; or
2. Allow the resident to use all or any portion of the allotment on his/her own behalf.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.05D2 Residents Without Authorized Representatives: If the resident is certified on his/her own behalf, the resident's EBT benefits are:

1. Given to the facility to use for purchasing food served communally or individually to eligible residents;
2. Used by eligible residents to purchase and prepare food for their own consumption; or
3. Used to purchase meals prepared and served by the group home.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.06 Shelters for Battered Women and Children: Before certifying residents of shelters for battered women and children, the local office must determine that the shelter for battered women and children meets the definition and document the basis of the determination. Shelters having FNS authorization to redeem at wholesalers are considered as meeting the definition and the local office is not required to make any further determination. The local office may choose to maintain a list of shelters meeting the definition to allow for prompt certification of eligible residents.

2-004.06A Processing Applications: The worker must:

1. Consider shelter residents as separate from their former households if the former household which includes them in the allotment also includes the persons who subjected them to abuse. Shelter residents who are included in these certified households may receive an additional allotment as a separate household only once during a month. Benefits are prorated from the filing date;
2. Certify shelter residents who apply as separate households solely on their income, resources, and the expenses for which they are responsible. They are certified without regard to the income, resources, and expenses of their former household. Jointly held resources are considered inaccessible;
3. Consider room payments to the shelter as shelter expense;
4. Process applications of shelter residents eligible for expedited service; and
5. Take prompt action to ensure that the former household's eligibility or allotment reflects the change in the household's composition by issuing a notice of adverse action.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.07 Boarders: Boarders are not eligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program as separate households. To be eligible, an individual must be a member of the household with which s/he lives. A boarder may participate with the household s/he lives with upon the household's request.

2-004.07A Boarder Status: A boarder is an individual to whom a household furnishes lodging and meals for reasonable compensation. The following persons are not considered boarders:

1. The spouse of a member of the household;
2. Children who are under parental control of an adult member of the household;  
Note: Foster care children are not required to be considered members of the household unless the household chooses to include them.

3. Parents and children who live together; or
4. Any person who lives with the household and pays less than a reasonable monthly amount in cash for meals.

{Effective 2/28/96}

2-004.07A1 Determining Reasonable Payment: A reasonable monthly payment must equal or exceed:

1. The maximum total allotment for the size of the boarder household when more than two meals per day are furnished; or
2. Two-thirds of the maximum total allotment for the size of the boarder household when two meals or fewer per day are furnished.

Note: When boarder payments for rooms are distinguishable from payments for meals, only the amount paid for meals is considered in determining reasonable compensation.

2-004.07A2 Residents of a Commercial Boardinghouse: Residents of commercial boardinghouses are boarders and are therefore ineligible. The following provisions apply when determining whether a person is a resident of a commercial boardinghouse:

1. A boardinghouse is defined as an establishment which:
  - a. Is licensed as a commercial enterprise which offers meals and lodging for compensation; or
  - b. Offers meals and lodging for compensation with the intention of making a profit.
2. The number of boarders in the boardinghouse must not be used to determine if a boardinghouse is a commercial enterprise.
3. The household of the proprietor of a boardinghouse may participate in the Food Stamp Program separate and apart from the residents if the household meets all of the eligibility requirements.

2-004.08 Authorized Representatives: The head of the household, his/her spouse, or any other responsible household member may designate an authorized representative to act on behalf of the household in one or all of the following capacities:

1. Making application;
2. Fulfilling household responsibilities during the certification period such as submitting information on changes in household circumstances;
3. Obtaining the benefits; and
4. Using the benefits.

The designation of the authorized representative must be in writing. Normally the authorized representative is designated at the time of application, but the household may select an emergency authorized representative at a later time.

{Effective 9/4/2002}

2-004.08A Selection: The authorized representative must be fully aware of pertinent information about the household's circumstances, and must also be one of the following:

1. An adult who is not a household member;
2. An employee of a chemical dependency treatment and rehabilitation center acting on behalf of the center's residents;
3. An employee of a group living arrangement acting on behalf of the residents of the group living arrangement;
4. A representative of an authorized shelter for battered women and children.

2-004.08B Use: Authorized representatives may be used when the head of the household or his/her spouse or other adult member of the household cannot be interviewed or is unable to get benefits or food because of factors such as illness, employment, or transportation problems. Individuals who are residents of a chemical dependency treatment and rehabilitation program are an exception to this policy and must have authorized representatives. The client's worker must ensure that authorized representatives are properly selected and designated.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.08B1 Making Application: A responsible member of the household must review the application made by the authorized representative whenever possible, because the household is held liable if an overissuance results from erroneous information given by the authorized representative. The household is held liable for an overissuance. The authorized representative bears no liability for overissuances other than the disqualification as an authorized representative.

{Effective 1/3/2005}

2-004.08B2 Use of EBT Card: The authorized representative may purchase food for the household if s/he has the household's full knowledge and consent and the household's EBT card and Personal Identification Number (PIN) number.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.08C Exclusions: The following persons must not serve as authorized representatives:

1. Retailers who are authorized to accept food stamp benefits unless the Central Office has granted written approval;
2. Employees of the local office unless the Central Office has granted written approval;
3. Individuals disqualified for intentional program violation unless the disqualified individual is the only adult household member able to act on the household's behalf and the local office has determined that no one else is available to serve as authorized representative; and
4. Meal providers for the homeless.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.08D Disqualification of Authorized Representatives: Local offices which have evidence that an authorized representative has misrepresented a household's circumstances and has knowingly provided false information pertaining to the household, or has improperly used food stamp benefits may disqualify that authorized representative from participating as an authorized representative in the Food Stamp Program for up to one year.

The worker must send written notice to each affected household and the authorized representative 30 days before the date of disqualification. The notification must include:

1. The proposed action;
2. The reason for the proposed action;
3. The household's right to request a fair hearing;
4. The telephone number of the office; and, if possible
5. The name of the person to contact for additional information.

Note: This provision is not applicable for drug and alcohol treatment centers and group homes which act as an authorized representative for their residents.

2-004.09 Categorically Eligible Households: Households in which all members are authorized or receive an ADC, AABD, SDP or SSI cash payment are categorically eligible. Households in which one or more members are authorized to or receive ADC-Emergency Assistance or Employment First supportive services are categorically eligible. In addition to individuals receiving benefits, the term recipients includes the following:

1. Individuals whose ADC, AABD, or SDP benefits are being recouped;
2. Individuals whose SSI benefits are suspended or being recouped; and
3. Individuals entitled to an ADC grant but who do not receive a grant because the grant is \$9.99 or less.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-004.09A Households Not Considered Categorically Eligible: Some examples of households that are not considered categorically eligible for the Food Stamp Program are those where:

1. The entire household consists of:
  - a. General assistance applicants;
  - b. Clients eligible for medical assistance only;
  - c. Individuals in non-exempt institutions;
  - d. SSI recipients in 1619(b) status who do not receive an SSI payment; or
  - e. Residents of an institution who jointly apply for food stamp benefits and SSI, and who are determined eligible for SSI before the release from the institution. These individuals are not considered categorically eligible until the date of release from the institution.
2. The household is disqualified because the head of household failed to comply with work requirements.
3. A member of the household is disqualified because of an intentional program violation (IPV). Individuals:

- a. Found to have committed an IPV:
  - (1) Through an Administrative disqualification hearing;
  - (2) By a federal, state, or local court; or
  - (3) Who have signed either a waiver of right to an administrative disqualification hearing or a disqualification consent agreement;
- b. Found by a federal, state, or local court to have used or received food stamp benefits in a transaction involving the sale of a controlled substance;
- c. Found by a federal, state, or local court to have used or received food stamp benefits in a transaction involving the sale or in the purchase of firearms, ammunition or explosives;
- d. Convicted by a federal, state, or local court of trafficking of food stamp benefits of an aggregate amount of \$500 or more;
- e. Found by a federal, state, or local court or by a state agency to have made a fraudulent statement or representation with respect to the identity or place of residence in order to receive food stamp benefits in more than one household in the same month; or
- f. Found by a federal, state, or local court to have committed and have been convicted after August 22, 1996, of a drug-related felony involving the possession, use, sale or distribution, including the intent to sell or distribute, of a controlled substance when the individual has:
  - (1) Three or more drug-related felony violations and convictions for possession or use;
  - (2) Been convicted of a felony involving the sale or distribution of a controlled substance, including the intent to sell or distribute; or
  - (3) Fewer than three drug-related felony violations and convictions for possession or use but is not participating in or has not completed an approved substance abuse treatment program since the last conviction.

{Effective 4/10/2006}

2-004.09B Processing Applications:

2-004.09B1 Categorical Eligibility: If after reviewing the household's eligibility using food stamp criteria, it appears the household will not be eligible using food stamp rules but may be categorically eligible, the worker may delay acting on the application until the categorical eligibility is determined. The 30-day processing standard applies. The worker uses the following procedures:

1. If eligibility has not been determined by the 30th day, the worker denies the case but advises the household that benefits will be issued back to the application date if the household is later found to be categorically eligible. The worker sends a notice asking the household to contact the local office if later approved.
2. If the household's application is or has been denied for food stamp benefits and is later found to have been categorically eligible, the worker uses the original application to certify the case. Another interview is not required but the application may have to be updated. If changes are made on the original application, it would need to be initialed and signed again by the client or his/her authorized representative. If eligible, benefits would be issued from the date of the original food stamp application or the date categorical eligibility was determined, whichever is later. This would be done using the procedures for restoring benefits.

2-004.10 Foster Care Children: Households may determine whether children receiving payments from any publicly funded foster care agency are included as part of their household for purposes of the Food Stamp Program. Foster care children may not participate as separate households.

If the household chooses to include foster care children in their food stamp household, the income and resources of these individuals are considered available to the household. If the household chooses not to include these individuals, their foster care payments, other income, and resources are not considered available to the household.

2-005 Delays in Application Processing: If the worker does not determine eligibility and provide an opportunity to participate within the 30 days following the date the application was filed, the worker must process the application applying the policies in the subsections of this reference.

2-005.01 Determining Cause: The worker must first determine whether the delay was the household's fault or the worker's fault. The worker must consider a delay to be the household's fault if the household has failed to complete the application process even though the worker has taken all the action required to assist the household. The following actions must have been taken by the worker before a delay can be considered the household's fault:

1. If the household fails to complete the application form, the worker must offer or attempt to offer assistance in completing the application.
2. If the verifications are incomplete, the worker must provide the household with a written statement of the required verification and offer to assist the household in obtaining verification. The worker must allow the household at least ten days from the date of the written statement to provide the particular verification.
3. If the household misses a first scheduled interview, the household must be notified it missed the scheduled interview and that the household is responsible for rescheduling the missed interview.

4. If the household missed a scheduled interview and contacts the office in the first 30 days following the application filing date, the worker must reschedule the interview.
5. If the household missed a scheduled interview and contacts the local office to reschedule the interview in the second 30 days after the application filing date, the worker must follow the procedures for delays caused by the household.

If the worker fails to take any of the required actions specified in this subsection, the delay is the worker's fault.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-005.02 Delays Caused by the Household: If the worker cannot determine eligibility by the 30<sup>th</sup> day following the date the application was filed, because the household failed to take the necessary actions, the worker must:

1. Send a notice of denial on the 30<sup>th</sup> day following the date the application was filed;
2. Reopen the case without a new application if the household takes the required action within the next 30 days;
3. Take no further action if the household does not take the required action within 60 days following the date the application was filed; and
4. Provide benefits only for the month after the application month if:
  - a. The household caused the delay in the first 30 days; and
  - b. The household is found eligible during the second 30-day period.

The household is not entitled to benefits for the application month when the delay is the household's fault. The local office must prorate the benefits back to the date the household took the required action to establish eligibility.

2-005.03 Delays Caused by Local Office: If the local office has not determined eligibility by the 30<sup>th</sup> day following the date the application was filed because of local office failure to act, the following actions must be taken:

1. Hold the application as pending for an additional 30 days and notify the household of any further action needed to complete the application process. This notice must be sent by the 30<sup>th</sup> day after the application was filed.
2. Provide benefits that are retroactive to the application date if:
  - a. The household is determined eligible during the second 30-day period; and
  - b. The household was eligible for the application month; or
3. Deny the application if the household is determined ineligible during the second 30 days.

2-005.04 Delays Beyond 60 Days: When eligibility has not been determined within 60 days following the date the application was filed, the following steps must be taken:

1. If the local office caused the delay in the second 30 days, the worker must continue to process the original application until an eligibility determination is made.
2. If the local office caused the delay in the first 30 days but the household caused the delay in the second 30 days, the local office must:

- a. Deny the application; and
- b. Require the household to file a new application if the household wishes to participate.

The household is not entitled to retroactive benefits if it caused the delay during the second 30 days. A notice of denial is not necessary if the pending notice informed the household that it must file a new application if it did not provide verification.

2-006 Denials: Households that are determined ineligible must be sent a notice of denial within 30 days of the date the application was filed.

2-006.01 Failure to Appear: When the household fails to appear for a scheduled interview, the worker must send a notice informing the household that the application will be denied if the household fails to contact the office to reschedule the second interview within 30 days of the application filing date.

If the household fails to appear for a second interview, the application is denied.

{Effective 1/3/2005}

2-006.02 Refusal to Cooperate: "Refusal to cooperate" is the term used to describe situations where the household is able to cooperate but clearly demonstrates that it will not take the actions required to complete the application process.

If the household refuses to cooperate with the local office in completing the application process, the local office must deny the application at the time of the refusal. In some situations, there may be a question about whether a household has refused to cooperate or whether it has merely failed to comply with requirements. In these cases, the worker must not consider the household's action or inaction a refusal to cooperate.

If someone outside the household (i.e., the employer, financial aid officer, etc.) fails to cooperate with a request for verification, the worker must not deny the application. Non-household members, or disqualified household members are not considered persons "outside" the household.

2-006.02A Program Evaluation Review (PER) Refusal to Cooperate: If a household's case is closed for refusal to cooperate with a:

1. State PER review, the household may reapply but it is ineligible until:
  - a. It cooperates with PER; or
  - b. 95 days after the review period ends.
2. Federal QC review, the household may reapply but is ineligible until:
  - a. It cooperates with QC; or
  - b. Seven months after the review period ends.

Households that continue to refuse to cooperate after the termination period ends with either a State PER review or a Federal QC review are subject to 100% verification when or if they reapply for FS benefits.

2-006.02B Worker Action: The worker must deny the application or end the participation of a household that refuses to cooperate in any subsequent review of its eligibility, including:

1. Reporting changes;
2. Recertifications; and
3. Program Evaluation Reviews.

The household may reapply once it has been denied or terminated for refusal to cooperate, but it must not be determined eligible until it cooperates.

2-007 Recertification: A household may file an application for recertification before the end of the current certification period. If an application is filed timely, the worker must ensure that an eligible household receives uninterrupted benefits.

Any application filed before the certification period expires is considered a recertification. Benefits are not prorated.

An application filed after the certification period has expired but within 30 days following the expiration date is also considered a recertification. Since the filing date is later than the last day of the previous certification period, benefits are prorated from the date the application is filed.

{Effective 6/9/2003}

2-007.01 Timely Filing: Change Reporting (CR) households which are certified for less than three months are provided a notice of expiration at the time of initial certification. Households which are certified in the second month of the certification period have 15 days from the date a notice of expiration is received to file a timely application for recertification. Other households must return an application for recertification by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month the certification period expires.

{Effective 1/3/2005}

2-007.02 Scheduling the Interviews: A face-to-face interview must be conducted with a member of the household or its authorized representative at least once every 12 months for households certified for less than 12 months. The following situations are exceptions to having a face-to-face interview once a year:

1. Household is certified for longer than 12 months; or
2. Household is granted a waiver of the face-to-face interview.

The interview must be scheduled so that the household has at least ten days after the interview in which to provide verification before the certification period expires. If a household misses its scheduled interview, a notice of missed interview must be sent to the household. If a household misses its scheduled interview and requests a second interview, the worker must schedule a second interview.

{Effective 1/3/2005}

2-007.03 Interview: In addition to submitting the application in a timely manner, the household must appear for a scheduled interview and provide the required verifications within ten days of the date verifications were requested. If the household meets these requirements, the worker must approve or deny the household's application by the end of the certification period. If the household does not meet these requirements, a denial notice is sent on the 30<sup>th</sup> day following the application filing date.

{Effective 1/3/2005}

2-007.04 Verification after Interview: The household must be provided a written notice of the required verifications and the date the verification requirements must be satisfied.

Households who have applied but eligibility has not been determined by the end of the current certification period must be allowed a minimum of ten days to provide the required verification. When all the required verification is provided in the ten days, the household, if eligible, must be given an opportunity to participate within five working days after the household provides the missing verification. Benefits cannot be prorated if verification is received within the required ten days.

{Effective 1/3/2005}

2-007.05 Application Received After the End of the Certification Period: Households who apply after the end of their certification period must be allowed a minimum of ten days to provide the required verification information. When all the required verification is provided in the ten days, the household, if eligible, must be given an opportunity to participate within five working days after the household provides the missing verification.

When the household submits an application after the expiration of the last certification period, the first month's benefits must be prorated from the application filing date.

{Effective 1/3/2005}

#### 2-007.06 Delays

2-007.06A Caused by Household: A household will lose its right to uninterrupted benefits and have its application approved or denied by the end of the certification period for any of the following reasons:

1. The household returns the application for recertification after the timely filing deadline;
2. The household does not attend the scheduled interview; and/or
3. The household does not return requested verifications within ten days of the date the worker requests it.

In the above situations, the worker has 30 days from the filing date to act on the application.

2-007.06B Caused by Local Office: When the local office fails to provide an eligible household that has filed a timely application the opportunity to participate the failure is considered an administrative error. The household is entitled to retroactive benefits because the household was unable to participate in the month after the certification period expired.

2-007.07 Categorical Eligibility: The worker must assume categorical eligibility for public assistance households at the time of recertification if the public assistance redetermination is late. If the household is later found ineligible for public assistance and is not otherwise eligible for food stamps benefits, the worker must close the case.