



Family Assistance Letter # 115
OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE
May 9, 2012

TO: Directors, County Departments of Job and Family Services

FROM: Trudie J. Bormann, Deputy Director
Office of Family Assistance

SUBJECT: **Food Assistance Recertification Timeliness Measure**

This letter is to inform you that effective October 1, 2012 the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will begin monitoring the timeliness of recertifications for the Food Assistance Program.

Background

Section 11(e)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 entitles Food Assistance recipients to a timely recertification. Specifically, the Act requires that eligible assistance groups receive benefits no later than one month after the last allotment was received, provided the assistance group files a timely reapplication and is still found eligible.

New Timeliness Measure

FNS will be reviewing our quality control sample to determine a recertification timeliness rate for the state. FNS has defined a timely recertification as one that maintains the assistance group's date of issuance. For example, an assistance group's date of issuance is the 7th of each month. A timely recertification will maintain that issuance date. In reviewing recertification timeliness, client caused delays will be taken into consideration. Client caused delays include:

1. If the client is not timely in filing an application for recertification;
2. Misses an interview; or
3. Does not timely return requested verifications.

When a client caused delay is found the case will be dropped from review. For verifications to be considered returned untimely by the client, there must be at least ten days left in the certification period when the additional verifications are requested. Request for verifications when there are less than ten days left in the recertification period will cause the case to be considered untimely.

Managing Recertification Volume

Many county agencies have expressed concern related to high recertification volumes for April through September. In order to redistribute recertifications the county agency may assign a four, five or six month certification period, at the assistance group's

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recertification, and then at the next recertification assign a twelve month certification period. This will allow counties to balance out recertification levels. County agencies are not allowed to bring in assistance groups earlier than the last month of their certification period.

Monitoring

Reports are being developed to allow the county agencies and the state the ability to measure and monitor recertification timeliness. Once these reports are completed the county agencies will be notified of how to access them. We expect them to be available in October 2012. Program Policy Services will monitor the reports like they currently do for application timeliness and will address issues as they occur.

Questions can be sent to Program Policy Services either by email at TANF-FSTA@jfs.ohio.gov or by calling 1-866-886-3537 (option 6).

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