



Ted Strickland, Governor
Douglas E. Lumpkin, Director

Family Stability Letter # 90
OFFICE OF FAMILIES & CHILDREN
September 4, 2009

TO: Directors, County Departments of Job and Family Services

FROM: Trudie J. Bormann, Deputy Director
Family Stability
Office of Families & Children

SUBJECT: Food Assistance Application/Reapplication Interview Scheduling

On June 29, 2009 we received clarification from the United States Department of Agriculture – Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) national office regarding food assistance application and reapplication interview scheduling. This clarification provided scheduling requirements affecting the interpretation of rule 5101:4-2-07. The clarification stated, “*For households which are not interviewed on the day they apply, the State agency must provide households with a notice that gives a specific date and a reasonable frame of time in which households can be interviewed. The State must guarantee that households will be interviewed when they visit the local office during the specified time.*” The clarification was prompted due to negative quality control (QC) errors determined by FNS for inappropriate denials. FNS determined cases were being denied in error since they were not given appropriate notification of their interview.

We realize that several counties have taken advantage of case banking and are sending appointment notices allowing an applicant to come in for the interview over a several day period. We also understand case banking and this scheduling method have assisted counties in efficiently processing cases, and we have expressed these concerns to FNS. Furthermore, we requested FNS allow us 120 days to implement this new clarification, the same as we would be allowed with a new policy change, before we would be cited with any negative QC errors.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, FNS responded on August 6, 2009 that they were unable to allow the 120 day QC variance in this instance. They acknowledged that this clarification would cause a significant change to current procedure; however, they went on to express their encouragement for counties to move forward on this change as soon as possible. This means FNS QC will continue to cite counties for negative errors if a case has been denied and a specific interview date along with a reasonable range of time (not more than a four hour window) have not been provided. Counties will need to revise their appointment notices to provide each applicant with a specific interview date along with an appointment time to accommodate this clarification as soon as possible. If a county chooses to provide a range of time for an individual to come in for an interview the range cannot exceed four hours.

If you have questions regarding this letter, please direct them to the TANF-FSTA mailbox or by calling 1-866-886-3537 (Option 6).

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