



Office of Families & Children Letter #86
(Family Stability)
May 26, 2009

TO: Directors, County Departments of Job and Family Services

FROM: Trudie Bormann, Acting Deputy Director
Office of Families and Children

SUBJECT: Food Assistance: Acting on Changes "Known to the Agency"

Background

Previously county agencies with combined county departments of job and family services and child support enforcement agencies were expected to act on all child support changes in food assistance cases because they were considered all one agency for purposes of information being shared. This created several problems because, even though the agencies might be combined, most eligibility workers do not have access to SETS nor is there an interface between SETS and CRIS-E to notify a worker when a change to child support payments occur.

New Interpretations of "State Agency" and "Known to the Agency"

Recently, the United States Department of Agriculture – Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) issued a clarification regarding the policy commonly known as information “known to the agency” and the definition of “state agency.”

First, FNS has narrowed the definition of “state agency” to mean:

the agency of State government, including the local office thereof, which has the responsibility for the administration of the federally aided public assistance programs within such State, and in those States where such assistance programs are operated on a decentralized basis, the term shall include the counterpart local agencies administering such programs...

For purposes of food assistance policy, "State agency" in Ohio includes the offices that administer the food and cash assistance programs and the Medicaid programs, both at the state and county levels. "State agency" does not include the child support or child care programs.

Because of this clarification, child support information is no longer considered “known to the agency” for any county department of job and family services, whether combined or separate. **Child support information must be acted on at application, reapplication and when a change is reported.**

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If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact the Office of Families and Children Program Policy Services Unit using the TANF_FSTA mailbox or at 1-866-886- 3537 (option 6).

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