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**OFFICE OF FAMILY STABILITY LETTER #64A**  
February 20, 2008

**TO:** Directors, County Departments of Job and Family Services

**FROM:** Jeanne Carroll, Deputy Director  
Office of Family Stability

**SUBJECT: Food Stamp Payment Accuracy**

On July 11, 2007, Family Stability Letter #64 was sent to all County Departments of Job and Family Services (CDJFS) Directors providing information on the status of Ohio's Food Stamp Reinvestment Plan implementation. The federally approved reinvestment plan required the Office of Family Stability (OFS) establish the Food Stamp Payment Accuracy County Performance Measurement System and the County Incentive System. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an update on reinvestment activities, outline further information on the incentive distribution, and offer suggestions and guidance for use of incentive dollars.

The Food Stamp Payment Accuracy Supervisors (Jamie Carmichael and Suzanna Haydu) have worked cooperatively with many counties in recent months implementing strategies for improved food stamp payment accuracy and on the development and monitoring of continuous improvement plans. This process has resulted in noticed improvements made by some counties employing new strategies. Momentum is building as the supervisors visit with more counties and use the ideas of one county to help another.

The County Incentive System, as described in the federally approved reinvestment plan, will award a total of \$1,019,789 to high performing counties and counties that exhibit the largest degree of improvement with respect to food stamp payment accuracy. One third of the total amount (\$339,903) will be awarded to the 10 CDJFSs that achieve the highest food stamp payment accuracy rate in FFY 08 (October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008). Two thirds of the total amount (\$679,859) will be awarded to the 10 CDJFSs whose food stamp payment accuracy rates improve the most in FFY 08 compared to FFY 07.

The formula for the highest food stamp payment accuracy rate incentive awards will distribute the total dollar amount (\$339,930) among the top 10 performing counties by weight of average caseload for FFY 2008. The formula for the most improved incentive awards will distribute the total dollar amount (\$679,859) among the 10 counties with the highest payment accuracy percentage point increase from FFY 2007 to FFY 2008 by weight of average caseload for FFY 2008.

Incentive awards will be issued to the counties in FFY 2009 and can be used for food stamp program activities thru June 30, 2010 and must be fully expended by September 30, 2010.

Allowable county expenditures for these incentives could include, but are not limited to: Enhancing automated county systems; offering overtime to conduct third party reviews; hiring an outside consultant to conduct a process review and offer solutions; hiring an outside consultant to operate a find-n-fix; hiring temporary help to pilot a call center; purchasing a phone system for the start up of a call/change center; purchasing a screening tool for expedited case processing; purchasing a scheduling manager system; or hiring contract trainers to work with caseworkers having difficulties.

It is important to realize that reviewers from the Office of Research, Assessment and Accountability (ORAA) have already begun to examine cases for FFY 2008. FFY 2007 final county data has recently been issued by ORAA and this data will be used as the base year for identifying the most improved awards. Improving food stamp payment accuracy is a constant challenge that requires our constant attention and ongoing focus. As the state rate continues to place Ohio at risk for federal sanction, we collectively must recommit ourselves to this challenge.

The Office of Family Stability is committed to working with you to improve Ohio's food stamp payment accuracy. If you have any questions or concerns about this process please contact your assigned Outcome Management Supervisor.

cc: Helen E. Jones-Kelley, ODJFS Director  
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