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**State of Wisconsin
Governor Scott Walker**

**TO: Income Maintenance Supervisors
Income Maintenance Lead Workers
Income Maintenance Staff
W-2 Agencies
Workforce Development Boards
Job Center Leads and Managers
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators**

**FROM: Deborah Waite, Deputy Bureau Director
Bureau of Enrollment Policy & Systems
Division of Health Care Access and Accountability**

BEPS/DFS OPERATIONS MEMO					
No: 12-16					
DATE: 04/04/2012					
FS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input type="checkbox"/>	BC+	<input type="checkbox"/>
SC	<input type="checkbox"/>	CTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	FSET	<input type="checkbox"/>
BC+ Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	BC+ CORE	<input type="checkbox"/>		
CC	<input type="checkbox"/>	W-2	<input type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input type="checkbox"/>
CF	<input type="checkbox"/>	JAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	JC	<input type="checkbox"/>
RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>	WIA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/> *
				EP	

SUBJECT: APPLICATION PROCESSING AND PROGRAM ACCESS

CROSS REFERENCE: FSHB [1.2.3.1](#), [2.1.1.1](#), [2.1.2](#), [2.1.4](#), [2.2.1](#), [3.16.1](#); Ops Memo [09-12](#), [09-67](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memo is to provide the Income Maintenance (IM) consortia, MilES and Tribal IM agencies with several FoodShare (FS) policy and process reminders related to application processing and program access requirements.

BACKGROUND:

As a result of local agency management evaluation reviews completed by federal and state agencies, some inconsistencies and compliance issues were identified related to application processing, timeliness, and program access.

APPLICATION PROCESSING:**FILING DATE:**

An applicant must be allowed to set a filing date by submitting name, address and signature. Although agencies may encourage applicants to provide additional information, it cannot be required. The filing date cannot be set unless all three items are provided.

Example 1: An application was received with name, address, and signature on 2/14/11. The interview was completed on 2/27/11. The application filing date is set at 2/14/11 even though the interview was not completed until 2/27/11.

Example 2: A client registration was completed without a signature on 01/23/11. The applicant returned the signature page on 1/31/11. The filing date for this application is the date the signature page was returned on 1/31/11.

SIGNATURE:

The applicant must sign the completed:

- CWW generated Application Summary,
- The CWW Application Registration (RFA),
- The FoodShare Wisconsin Registration Application form [F-1609A](#) or
- The FoodShare Wisconsin Application Form [F-16019B](#).

A signature on any of the forms listed above is a valid signature and no additional signature is required for processing that application or renewal.

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES:

The designation of an authorized representative must be made in writing by the head of the household, the spouse, or another responsible member of the household by completing the FoodShare section of the Medicaid/BC+/FoodShare Wisconsin Authorization of Representative form (F-10126). The identity of the applicant and the authorized representative must be verified before the authorized representative may act on behalf of the food unit.

EXPEDITED BENEFITS:

The applicant's identity is the only required verification for expedited services. Any document which reasonably establishes the applicant's identity must be accepted. No requirement for a specific type of document, such as a birth certificate or photo ID, may be imposed.

If the primary person has an authorized representative, then the identity of the primary person and the authorized representative must be verified to process expedited benefits.

Collateral contact may be used to verify identity, if documentary evidence is unavailable.

INTERVIEW REQUIREMENT:

An interview is required to complete the application process. This is true even if a completed ACCESS or paper application was submitted.

Agencies are responsible for scheduling the application interview, if the interview is not completed on the day of application.

The interview must not simply be a review of the information that appears on the application, but must explore and resolve unclear and incomplete information with the household.

After the interview has been completed the applicant must verify certain information.

➤**Note:** Requests for verification should only be generated after the interview has been completed and should not be made prior to the interview.

FS may be denied for excess income without further verification, only if an interview has been completed and the basis for excess income is clearly documented. This includes documentation of employer name, amount and frequency of pay, name of the person who provided income information during the interview, and a comparison of the applicant's income to the gross income limit based on household size.

FS benefits denied for excess income without an interview would be considered an invalid denial and will result in an increase in the negative error rate if reviewed by QC.

Households that meet criteria for expedited benefits through a CARES eligibility determination may be allowed to postpone their interview under certain circumstances. An interview must be completed prior to issuance of ongoing FS benefits. The intent of this policy is to improve timeliness of expedited benefit issuance, while assisting agencies to manage workload.

TIMELY APPLICATION PROCESSING:

For households eligible for expedited issuance, benefits must be available to the applicant no later than the seventh calendar day following the date an application was filed.

For households eligible for non-expedited issuance, benefits must be available to the applicant as soon as possible, but no later than 30 calendar days following the date the application was filed.

If 30th day falls on a weekend or postal holiday:

- The action to deny benefits should be taken the next business day.
- Benefit approval must be processed no later than the due date. Waiting until the next business day or later to process verification for an eligible household is untimely and therefore not allowable.

CERTIFICATION PERIODS:

The certification period for FS eligibility for most food units is 12 months. Food units where all members are homeless and food units that include a migrant or seasonal farm worker have a 6-month certification period.

►**Note:** Certification periods cannot be extended beyond the end of the existing certification period without completing the renewal process. Extending certification periods as a method of managing workload is not allowable.

WORK REQUIREMENTS:

Regardless of the implementation of a voluntary FSET program and waiving time limited benefits for ABAWDS, other federal work requirements must be met as a condition of FS eligibility and cannot be waived, unless an exemption from work requirements is met (See [FSHB 3.16.1.3](#) for FSET Exemptions). A FS member must be denied FS benefits for 30 days, if 30 days prior to application or anytime thereafter the member voluntarily and without good cause:

- Quit a job of 30 hours a week or more (or quit a job with earnings equivalent to 30 hours/week at federal minimum wage),
- Reduce work hours below 30 hours/week (or reduce work hours below the equivalent of working 30 hours/week at federal minimum wage), or
- Refuse a bona fide offer of suitable employment.

Individuals who fail to meet work requirements without Good Cause are sanctioned for 30 days from the FS filing date. If there are no other eligible members in the household, the application must be denied and the applicant will need to re-apply either after the sanction period ends or anytime s/he becomes exempt from meeting work requirements prior to the end of the sanction period.

For ongoing cases or for applications with more than one person in the food unit, the sanction period begins the 1st of the month following the month in which the person was given proper notice that they have been sanctioned. The sanctioned individual's participation status will be a Gross Deemer. His or her income will be used in the FS benefit determination for the rest of the FS group.

Registering for work is required at application and recertification, unless an exemption from work requirements is met. (See [FSHB 3.16.1.3](#) for FSET Exemptions) Registering for work is accomplished when the application or renewal is signed. A referral to the FSET program is not required for FS applicants or recipients that are not exempt from meeting work requirements, because participation in FSET is voluntary in Wisconsin.

CONTACTS:

BEPS CARES Information & Problem Resolution Center

*Program Categories – FS – FoodShare, MA – Medicaid, BC+ – BadgerCare Plus, SC – Senior Care, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, CC – Child Care, W-2 – Wisconsin Works, FSET – FoodShare Employment and Training, BC+ Core – BadgerCare Plus Core, CF – Children First, EA – Emergency Assistance, JAL – Job Access Loan, JC - Job Center Programs, RAP – Refugee Assistance Program, WIA – Workforce Investment Act, Other EP – Other Employment Programs.

DHS/DHCAA/BEPS/MR