

# **Operations Memorandum - SNAP OPS130805**

**August 28, 2013**

**SUBJECT: Verification of Dependent Care Expenses and Shelter and Utility Expenses**

**TO: Executive Directors**

**FROM: Tom Strickler, Director, Bureau of Operations**

## **Purpose**

To inform County Assistance Offices (CAOs) of changes to verification requirements for dependent care expenses and shelter/utility costs. These changes are expected to simplify the administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and improve customer service for SNAP households. This change applies to all SNAP applications received or currently pending as of the issuance of this memo.

## **Background**

All applicant households are required, as a condition of eligibility, to prove certain information about their circumstances. At application, CAO staff must verify information that is listed on the application such as income, resources and any expenses the household claims they have. At Semi-annual Reporting (SAR) and renewals, this information is only verified again if there has been a change or the information provided is questionable.

## **Discussion**

The Department of Public Welfare is waiving the requirement to verify dependent care expenses and shelter and utility expenses and will allow the applicant's/recipient's statement as verification. The CAO will only need to verify this information if it is questionable.

To be considered questionable:

- Information on the application must be inconsistent with other information on the application or previous applications.
- Information is inconsistent with information received by the CAO, known in the case record, presented during the interview, or provided from other sources, such as Pelican, for dependent care expenses.

Verification should be requested when information provided by the applicant is incomplete, unclear, or contradictory. When determining if information is questionable, the decision shall be based on each household's individual circumstances.

**NOTE: Determination of questionable information shall not be based on race, religion, ethnic background, or national origin. CAOs should not target groups such as migrant farmworkers or American Indians for more intensive verification under this provision. The rationale for determining information questionable should be entered in the narrative.**

Example 1:

An applicant states their rent is \$800 a month. However, in the system, we have the rent as \$350 and the applicant is at the same address. This information would be considered questionable and verification should be requested. The CAO should narrate that the information is questionable and request verification of the expense.

Example 2:

An applicant states their rent is \$400 a month. However, in the system, we have the rent as \$350 and the applicant is at the same address. When questioned, the applicant says that her rent has been raised. As the information is no longer inconsistent, no further verification is required.

**REMINDER: If an applicant/recipient is receiving subsidized childcare, dependent care expenses can be verified through Pelican.**

### **Next Steps**

1. Share and review this information with appropriate staff members.
2. Direct questions regarding this Operations Memorandum to your Area Manager.
3. This Operations Memorandum will become obsolete when the information is incorporated into the SNAP Handbook.