

DATE: June 8, 2016

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #16-06-02

SUBJECT: Elderly/Disabled Simplified Application Process (ESAP) for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Demonstration Project

TO: Executive Directors

FROM: Inez Titus
Director
Bureau of Operations

PURPOSE

This memo provides information on the ESAP demonstration project for SNAP. This project seeks to simplify the application and recertification process for households with members who are elderly or who have a disability and have no earned income. This project will begin June 20, 2016.

BACKGROUND

Through the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and federal regulations at 7 CFR 273.2(e), 273.2(f), and 273.10(f)(1), Pennsylvania has requested and received federal approval to implement the ESAP demonstration project. The purpose of ESAP is to increase SNAP participation for individuals with disabilities and individuals over age 60. The application and recertification process will be simplified to reduce barriers to participation for these populations. This demonstration project will result in more effective administration of the SNAP program.

DISCUSSION

ESAP is available to households that meet all of the following criteria:

- Every member in the household is at least 60 years old, has a disability or both;
- No member of the household has earned income; and
- The members purchase and prepare meals together.

These households can use a simplified paper application, (PA 1935), or follow a simplified COMPASS application. ESAP households will also have a simplified renewal application, (PA 1939). ESAP households will be distinguished by a new SNAP program status code (FS75).

If a household does not meet the eligibility requirements for ESAP, the household must follow the existing SNAP eligibility process.

Current SNAP households that meet the ESAP requirement will move from FS00 to FS75 at the next County Assistance Office (CAO) contact that requires eligibility to be run (including, for example, renewals and changes in income).

Verification

Whenever possible, data exchanges should be used as verification for ESAP households. Data exchanges may not be able to verify some information, such as medical expenses, identity, some income (such as pensions), and disabilities. In those instances, the individual must provide documentation.

ESAP households reporting requirements

ESAP households are considered change reporting households. The household will receive a letter (PA 1942) outlining the reporting requirements for the ESAP household. The household must report the following:

- A change of more than \$50 per month in the amount of unearned income;
- A change of more than \$100 a month per month in the amount of any type of income;
- A change in the source of income (for example, starting a job);
- Any change in household composition; or
- A change of address.

NOTE: These households must report changes within 10 days of the date the change becomes known to the household.

If the CAO discovers that an ESAP household did not report a change timely or at all, then the CAO must review the case for an overpayment.

Renewals/Annual Interim Contact

ESAP households have a 36-month certification period. The recertification due date will be set to the last day of the month that is 36 months from the budget open date. ESAP households will be sent a renewal form (PA 1939) to be completed at the end of its certification period. No interview is required at recertification for ESAP households unless the household requests one or if the household is no longer eligible for ESAP.

NOTE: ESAP households will not be required to participate in Semi-Annual Reporting.

When eligibility is run for a recertification on an ESAP case, and the household is no longer eligible for ESAP, a green alert will appear on the eligibility results screen.

This alert will indicate that an interview is required because the household is no longer eligible for ESAP. An interview must be scheduled and attempted before the case can be closed.

IMPORTANT: The case cannot be closed at recertification without an attempt to schedule an interview with the household.

ESAP households will receive an annual interim contact letter, (PA 1937). This letter will be sent 12 months after the date SNAP eligibility is authorized and every 12 months after that. The letter tells the ESAP household to contact the CAO if any of the following changes exist:

- Change in address;
- Change in household composition;
- New job;
- Changes in income; or
- Changes in medical expenses.

An automated case comment will be generated on the day each letter is sent.

The interim contact letter does not require the household to send anything back to the CAO to continued receipt of SNAP benefits. If no contact is made by the household, then no action is necessary. If the ESAP household contacts the CAO and reports a change, the CAO should act on the change.

NOTE: The interim contact will not be sent to ESAP households enrolled in other benefits that have the requirement to complete a reapplication on an annual basis.

ESAP Notices

No new notices have been created for ESAP. All ESAP households will receive the current notices when eligibility is determined. These notices will, however, include the reporting requirements letter (PA 1942), discussed above.

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 SNAP Handbook has been updated.