



CDSS

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

August 16, 2011

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE: I-14-11E

ERRATA

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CalWORKs PROGRAM SPECIALIST
ALL CALFRESH PROGRAM COORDINATORS
ALL QUALITY CONTROL PROGRAM COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME FRAME REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CALFRESH AND CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS (CalWORKs) PROGRAMS

REFERENCES: WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTIONS 18912 AND 18914; ALL COUNTY LETTER 00-32 AND 09-62; APPLICATION FOR CALFRESH PART 1 (DFA 285-A1) AND PART 2 (DFA 285-A2); APPLICATION FOR CASH AID, CALFRESH AND/OR MEDI-CAL ASSISTANCE (SAWS 1) AND (SAWS 2A); RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FORMS (DFA 285-A3) AND [SAWS 2A (QR)]; MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES SECTIONS 11-601.3, 21-107, 21-115.2, 21-115.3, 40-126.1, 40-129.4, 40-129.9, 40-129.11, 40-129.71, 40-157, 44-211.511, 44-317.13, 63-108.5, 63-300.2 (QR), 63-300.3, 63-300.32, 63-300.321, 63-300.4, 63-300.45, 63-300.451, 63-300.5, 63-300.5(j), 63-301.1, 63-301.32, 63-301.5, 63-301.521, 63-301.522, 63-301.53, 63-301.531, 63-301.531(a), 63-301.532, 63-301.541(b), 63-301.541(c), 63-301.543, 63-301.543 (a), 63-301.545, 63-301.549, 63-301.6, 63-301.61, 63-301.7 AND 63-601.

The purpose of this notice is to provide clarification to the County Welfare Departments (CWDs) of the application processing time frames and requirements for expedited service and normal 30-day processing for CalFresh. There are no changes to CalWORKs in this erratum.

CalFresh Program

Expedited Service (ES) Time Frame Begins

Page two, the last paragraph, and the third sentence reads:

The first day of the three-day ES time frame starts on the first *calendar* day following the filing of the application (MPP Section 63-300.32 and 63-301.531(a)). This is true also for paper and online applications. *If the applicant was not eligible at application, but an entitlement is discovered later in the application process, the CWD must determine program eligibility by conducting an interview within the standard three-day processing time frame.* In this instance, the processing standards must be calculated from the day following the discovery of entitlement to ES.

The revised sentence reads:

The first day of the three-day ES time frame starts on the first *calendar* day following the filing of the application (MPP Section 63-300.32 and 63-301.531(a)). This is true for paper and online applications. *If the application was not screened for ES, but entitlement is discovered later in the application process, the CWD must determine entitlement by conducting an interview within the standard three-day processing time frame.* In this instance, the processing standards must be calculated from the day following the **discovery** of entitlement to ES. For example, a household consisting of a single mother with two minor children applies for CalFresh benefits on June 3rd and the CWD schedules the household for an interview on June 8. On the day of the interview, as the CWD reviews the information on the application, the CWD discovers that the household is entitled to ES. On June 9, the CWD determines the household entitled to ES and the three-day time frame starts.

When the Third Day Falls on a Weekend and/or Holiday

Page three, in the first paragraph, second sentence reads:

For households entitled to ES at initial application, the CWD must make the benefits available to the recipient's Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card no later than the third calendar day following the date the application was filed or submitted on-line (MPP Section 63-301.531(a)). If the third calendar day falls on a weekend and/or holiday when the benefits cannot be issued, the CWD must issue the benefits and have the EBT card

available to the household to use on the last working day before the weekend and/or holiday or the first working day after the weekend and/or holiday and within the ES deadline. *For example, if the application for ES is filed on Thursday, benefits must be made available to the household on that following Monday. However, if Monday happens to be a holiday, benefits must be issued and made available to the household on that Friday or Saturday if benefits can be issued on that day.*

The revised sentence reads:

For households determined entitled to ES at initial application, the CWD must make the benefits available to the recipient's Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card no later than the third calendar day following the date the application was filed or submitted on-line (MPP Section 63-301.531(a)). *If the third calendar day falls on a weekend and/or holiday when the benefits cannot be issued, the CWD must issue the benefits and have the EBT card available to the household to use on the last working day before the weekend and/or holiday and within the ES deadline.* *For example, if the application for ES is filed on Thursday, benefits must be made available to the household on that following Monday. However, if Monday happens to be a holiday, benefits must be issued and made available to the household on that Friday, or Saturday.*

Mail Time is Not Counted ES Time Frame

Page three, third paragraph, first sentence reads:

Once the CWD mails the application and other required forms to the household for signature, the mailing time that is calculated in the ES three-day standard processing time frame starts when the forms are in the mail, the days the forms are in the household's possession pending signature and the return mail time (MPP Section 63-301.531 and 63-301.532). For example, the CWD conducts a telephone interview Thursday morning for ES and determines the household entitled for ES benefits. The CWD informs the household that the application and other required forms will be mailed to the household for their review and signature. The household is instructed to review the information on the application and required forms, sign and return them as soon as possible. The CWD mails the application packet that afternoon. The household receives the application packet on Friday. The application packet is reviewed, signed and mailed back to the county on Saturday. The ES time frame starts to count from the time the packet is in the mail and does not stop until the packet is date received and date stamped that Monday morning.

The revised sentence reads:

The first day of the count is the first calendar day after the filing of the application. If the household mail in an application and it does not contain sufficient information to indicate whether the household is entitled to ES, the CWD shall conduct a telephone interview of the applicant; after conducting the interview, the CWD shall mail the application to the household for signature. Once the CWD mails the application and other required forms to the household for signature, the mailing time involved shall not be calculated in the ES three-day standard processing time frame. The time frame shall include the time the application is in the CWD's possession prior to mailing it to the household and prior to issuing benefits. The time frame also includes the time the application is in the household's possession pending signature (MPP Section 63-301.531 and 63-301.532).

For example, the CWD receives and date stamps an incomplete application on Thursday. The CWD conducts a telephone interview Friday afternoon for ES and determines that the household is entitled to ES benefits. The CWD informs the household that the application and other required forms will be mailed to them for their review and signature. The household is instructed to review the information on the application and required forms, sign and return them as soon as possible. The CWD mails the application packet that afternoon. The household receives the application packet on Monday. The application packet is reviewed, signed and mailed back to the county on Tuesday. The CWD receives the application, other required forms and necessary verification on Thursday. The first day of the ES time frame starts the day after the application was received and date stamped in the welfare office, which was Friday. The second day is when the household receives the packet to review and sign the application and forms, which is Monday. The third day is when the CWD receives the application packet, issues the ES benefits, and makes them available to the household, which is Thursday.

Denial Notice

Page five, first paragraph reads:

A denial notice for ES is not appropriate because ES is an entitlement to a service within CalFresh (MPP Section 63-108.5). However, if the household is determined not to be entitled to ES and ineligible for regular CalFresh, then the CWD must issue a denial notice. The case file must contain documentation to support entitlement or non-

entitlement for ES (MPP Section 63-300.5(j)). Counties, however, must advise households of the basis for the denial.

The revised sentence reads:

A denial notice for ES is not appropriate because ES is an entitlement to a service within CalFresh (MPP Section 63-108.5). However, if the household is determined not to be entitled to ES and ineligible for regular CalFresh, then the CWD must issue a denial notice. The case file must contain documentation to support entitlement or non-entitlement for ES (MPP Section 63-300.5(j)).

In addition, we are including information regarding when determining the utility amount to use, actual expenses can no longer be used. Instead, the CWD must determine which utility allowance the household can claim, Standard Utility Allowances (SUA), Limited Utility Allowance (LUA), or Telephone Utility Allowance (TUA) when determining ES eligibility test. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) gave states the option to either use actual utility costs or mandatory utility allowance when determining ES entitlement. California opted to employ a mandatory SUA, if the household has incurred heating/cooling costs, but if the household has other utility costs that are not heating or cooling expenses, the CWD must then determine the appropriate utility allowance to use when calculating ES entitlement for households with qualifying costs for which ES entitlement will be based upon the determination that their rent or mortgage and utilities combined gross income and liquid resources. Under this option households entitled to SUA, LUA, or TUA may not claim actual utility expenses, even if the expenses are higher than the SUA, LUA, or TUA amount.

Use of a Mandatory Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) When Determining Entitlement for Expedited Service

When determining entitlement to Expedited Service (ES) and the household is otherwise eligible, the following criteria are used:

- Households with less than \$150 in monthly gross income as defined in Section 63-502.1; and
- \$100 or less in liquid resources
- Migrant or seasonal farm worker household who is destitute provided that their liquid resources do not exceed \$100, or
- Household whose combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than the household's monthly rent or mortgage, and utilities (including entitlement to a Standard Utility Allowance (SUA), as appropriate) in accordance with MPP Section 63-502.363.

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CWDs are reminded that even though liquid resources are otherwise exempt due to Modified Categorical Eligibility, they are still counted and should be applied for the purpose of determining entitlement for ES.

If you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter, please contact Rosie Avena in the CalFresh Policy Bureau, at (916) 654-1514 or e-mail at rosie.avena@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

LINDA PATTERSON, Chief
CalFresh Branch