DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814

October 2, 1995

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO.
I-45-95

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

[ ] State Law Change
[ ] Federal Law or Regulation Change
[ ] Court Order or Settlement Agreement
[ ] Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
[X] Initiated by CDSS

SUBJECT: MAXIMUM CERTIFICATION PERIODS FOR FOOD STAMP ONLY CASES AND STATE AGENCY OPERATIONS REVIEW FINDINGS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Office of Inspector General (OIG) recently conducted a nationwide audit titled "Food Stamp Program - Certification Periods, Duplicate Participation, and Disqualification." A component of this audit was to determine if existing computer systems contain an automatic cutoff of participation and benefits for households which have not been recertified at the end of their certification period, in accordance with Title 7, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 272.10(b)(1)(iii). In addition, the USDA, Food and Consumer Service (FCS) has completed the annual State Agency Operations Review of the administration and operation of the Food Stamp Program in California for Federal Fiscal Year 1994. As a result of the OIG audit and the State Agency Operations Review, we believe that it is important to reiterate the following points.

Certification Periods for Nonassistance Food Stamp Cases

Per Manual Section (M.S.) 63-504.122, nonassistance households subject to monthly reporting shall be certified for a period not to exceed 12 months, but not less than 6 months. FCS has requested that all County Welfare Departments (CWDs) verify that current procedures ensure that participation and benefits are terminated for such households not recertified by the end of their certification period as required by M.S. 63-504.1. In addition, CWDs using automated systems must verify that their existing systems contain the edit check necessary to automatically terminate benefits unless households are recertified. Any systems which are noncompliant with this requirement must be brought into compliance as soon as possible.

Verification Requirements for Expedited Services

M.S. 63-301.541(a) provides that for expedited service households, the identity of the individual filing an application shall be verified through collateral contact or readily available documentary evidence. Further, while M.S. 63-301.541(b) allows CWDs to make reasonable efforts to verify residency, income, liquid resources, and other factors required by M.S. 63-300.51, benefits shall not be delayed beyond the three day time standard solely because these eligibility factors have not been verified.

Waiver of Requirement for In-Office Interview

In-office interviews are to be waived using the following criteria:

No Option

M.S. 63-300.42 provides that the requirement for an office interview shall be waived if requested by any household which is unable to appoint an authorized representative and has no members able to come to the food stamp office because they are 65 years of age or older, or are mentally or physically handicapped. This requirement shall also be waived if requested by any household which is unable to appoint an authorized representative and lives in a location which is not served by a certification office.

Case by Case

M.S. 63-300.43 provides that the office interview shall be waived on a case-by-case basis for households unable to appoint an authorized representative and which have no members able to come to the food stamp office because of transportation difficulties or similar hardships which the CWD determines justify such a waiver. These hardship conditions include, but are not limited to: illness, care of a household member, prolonged severe weather, or work hours which preclude an in-office interview. The CWD shall document in the case file why a request for a waiver was granted or denied.

As stated in M.S. 63-300.44, if the in-office interview is waived using the above criteria, the CWD has the option of conducting a telephone interview or a home visit. The home visit shall be used only if scheduled in advance with the household.

Residency

M.S. 63-401.5 states that neither a permanent dwelling nor a fixed mailing address are required as a condition of eligibility. In addition, there is no requirement that an applicant express the intent to reside permanently in the county to establish residency.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact David Badal of the Food Stamp Program Bureau, Policy Implementation Unit at (916) 654-1405.

Bruce Wagstaff

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c: CWDA