STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND WELFARE AGENCY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 445-9537

November 28, 1983

ALL-COUNTY LETTER NO. 83-123

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: NOTICES REGARDING FOOD STAMP MONTHLY REPORTING/RETROSPECTIVE BUDGETING REQUIREMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF REVISED CA 7 FOR FOOD STAMPS AND AFDC

Attached are three notices which are required by MPP Sections 63-034 and 63-300.41 to provide affected recipients with a written explanation of Food Stamp Program Monthly Reporting/Retrospective Budgeting (MRRB) requirements and of the Monthly Eligibility Report (CA 7). The notice regarding the CA 7 will also explain CA 7 revisions to AFDC recipients.

The CHANGES IN FOOD STAMP PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS notice informs recipients of the major changes in program requirements that will occur when MRRB is implemented. The explanation should help recipients understand and better prepare them to comply with the new requirements. The IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT THE MONTHLY ELIGIBILITY REPORT (CA 7) contains a brief explanation of Food Stamp Program MRRB requirements and provides more detailed instructions for completing the revised CA 7. The notice, NEW FOOD STAMP PROGRAM BUDGETING REQUIREMENTS, explains the change in budgeting requirements for food stamp households subject to retrospective budgeting but not monthly reporting.

The notices are to be used as follows:

CHANGES IN FOOD STAMP PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT THE MONTHLY ELIGIBILITY REPORT (CA 7), AND BLANK CA 7.

In accordance with Section 63-034, beginning January 1, 1984, these two notices and a blank CA 7 must be sent to currently certified food stamp households subject to monthly reporting. To satisfy the purpose of providing advance notification of MRRB requirements and preparing recipients to comply with the new requirements, these notices and the CA 7 should be provided to affected currently certified households no later than January 15, 1984. The notices and a blank CA 7 must also be provided, along with a verbal explanation of MRRB, to all households subject to

monthly reporting who apply for food stamps in January. If counties wish to provide the notification to affected currently certified households in late December rather than in January, such action would satisfy the requirements of Section 63-034. In addition to providing this notification to affected households who apply in January, counties may wish to provide the notification and verbal explanation of MRRB to affected households who apply in December 1983 as well.

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT THE MONTHLY ELIGIBILITY REPORT (CA 7)

To assist recipients that may not have saved this notice, counties are urged to send another copy of this notice to all affected food stamp households with the first required CA 7s that are sent around February 1, 1984. As a means of helping AFDC recipients understand the revisions to the CA 7, counties should include this notice with the first mailing of the revised CA 7s which will be due by February 5, 1984.

In addition, in accordance with Section 63-300.41, beginning in January 1984, this notice, a blank CA 7, and a verbal explanation of MRRB must be provided to food stamp households subject to monthly reporting at the certification interview, that is, at application and recertification interviews.

NEW FOOD STAMP PROGRAM BUDGETING REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with Section 63-034, beginning January 1, 1984 this notice must be sent to currently certified food stamp households subject to retrospective budgeting but not monthly reporting. To meet the notice's intent of informing recipients of the new requirements, counties should provide affected currently certified households with this notice no later than January 15, 1984. This notice must also be provided, along with a verbal explanation of retrospective budgeting, to January applicants subject to only retrospective budgeting. If counties wish to provide this notice to affected currently certified households in late December rather than in January, such action would satisfy the requirements of Section 63-034. In addition to providing this notice to affected January applicants, counties may wish to provide the notice and a verbal explanation of retrospective budgeting to affected December applicants as well.

In addition, in accordance with Section 63-300.41, beginning in January 1984, this notice and a verbal explanation of retrospective budgeting must be provided to food stamp households subject to only retrospective budgeting at the certification interview.

Shortly after MRRB implementation, the IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT THE MONTHLY ELIGIBILITY REPORT (CA 7) and NEW FOOD STAMP PROGRAM BUDGETING REQUIREMENTS

will be revised for ongoing use in the Food Stamp Program. The explanation of MRRB implementation will be deleted and any revisions that will enhance recipients' understanding of MRRB requirements and the CA 7 will be made. The attached notices should be used to satisfy the requirements of Section 63-300.41 until revised versions are released to you. Any recommendations counties may have for revision of these notices should be directed to the Food Stamp Policy Implementation Bureau, 744 P Street, M.S. 15-52, Sacramento, CA 95814.

The attached copies can be used as a master for reproduction by counties. Spanish and Vietnamese translations of the three notices are being developed and will be provided in the near future. Counties needing translations of these notices in other languages should contact Jeanne Rodriguez, Manager, Language Services Unit, at (916) 323-9562. The final English version of the revised CA 7 was released under All-County Information Notice I-95-83, August 26, 1983. Additional CA 7 implementation instructions and information regarding ordering of forms is contained in All-County Letter No. 83-110, October 21, 1983.

Effective December 1, 1983, any questions regarding food stamp use of these notices should be directed to Jesus Hernandez, Food Stamp Policy Implementation Bureau at (916) 445-6907. Prior to that date, you may direct questions to your Food Stamp Consultant at (916) 322-5475.

Any questions regarding use of the IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT THE MONTHLY ELIGIBILITY REPORT (CA 7) for AFDC should be directed to Henry Puga, AFDC Policy Implementation Bureau at (916) 322-5330.

Kyle S. McKinsey

KYLE S. McKINSEY
Deputy Director

Attachment

IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ
CHANGES IN FOOD STAMP PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Beginning January 1, 1984, Food Stamp Program requirements will change. Around the first of each month **you will receive a report form called the Monthly Eligibility Report (CA 7). You must complete this report and return it to the welfare department by the fifth of that month.** The information on this report will be used to determine if you are still eligible for food stamps and the amount of food stamps you will get for the next month. **If you do not complete and return the Monthly Eligibility Report (CA 7) to the welfare department, you will stop receiving food stamps.**

The monthly report form instructions also tell you to attach proof of your income and other items regarding your household circumstances. If you do not attach proof of your income when asked to, you will stop receiving food stamps. If you do not attach proof of the other items when asked to, you may receive fewer food stamps or no food stamps for the next month. Therefore, you should begin to save your paystubs and other kinds of proof that you will have to attach to your report form.

If the monthly report you return to the welfare department is incomplete, it will be sent back to you. If this happens, you must finish completing your report and return it as soon as you can, or you may not receive food stamps for the next month.

If you receive AFDC or another cash aid, you have been completing a Monthly Eligibility Report (CA 7) each month. You will notice that we have made some changes to the enclosed report form. When the new Food Stamp Program requirements begin in January, this new report form **must** be completed for both your cash aid and food stamps. The report asks you a lot of questions. That is because it now must be completed for both cash aid and food stamps. Although the report is long, all of the information that you report is needed to determine if you are still eligible for aid and the amount of cash aid and food stamps you should receive.

With this notice, you are also receiving two other forms: the IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT THE MONTHLY ELIGIBILITY REPORT (CA 7), and a SAMPLE MONTHLY ELIGIBILITY REPORT (CA 7). These will help you get ready for the new requirements that begin in January. Please read the Important Notice About the Monthly Eligibility Report. For practice, you may want to complete the Monthly Eligibility Report (CA 7). DO NOT return this sample report to the welfare department. If you do not understand the Important Notice About the Monthly Eligibility Report or how to complete the sample monthly report, ask your Eligibility Worker for help. Save the Important Notice About the Monthly Eligibility Report; it will help you complete your Monthly Eligibility Report (CA 7) during the next few months.

Around the beginning of February 1984, you will receive the Monthly Eligibility Report (CA 7) for January. This will be the first monthly report you MUST complete and return to the welfare department under the new Food Stamp Program requirements. You will have to answer all of the questions on the report and list all of the income you received in January. **The report must be returned to the welfare department by February 5.** The information on this report will be used to determine if you are eligible to receive food stamps in March and, if you are, the amount you will receive. **REMEMBER, if you do not complete and return the January report, you will stop receiving food stamps in March.**

If you have any questions about this notice or the new Food Stamp Program requirements, call your Eligibility Worker.

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT THE MONTHLY ELIGIBILITY REPORT (CA 7)

There has been a change in Food Stamp Program requirements. Beginning January 1, 1984, if you receive FOOD STAMPS, you must complete and return a Monthly Eligibility Report (CA 7) every month. The information you report will be used by the county to determine if you are still eligible for food stamps and the amount of food stamps you should receive. The Monthly Eligibility Report is often called the CA 7 for short.

The budgeting method in the Food Stamp Program is also changing. Under the new budgeting method, the information you give on your CA 7 will be used to compute the amount of food stamps you will receive two months later. For example, the information on your January report, which is due to the welfare department in February, will be used to compute your March benefits. This budgeting method is like the budgeting method being used in AFDC and other cash aid programs. It is called a retrospective budgeting system.

This notice is to explain the new requirements and give you instructions on how to complete the CA 7 and what information you must verify when you return the report.

If you receive **Cash Aid**, you will notice that the Monthly Eligibility Report (CA 7) has changed. You must continue to complete this report every month so the county can determine if you are still eligible for Cash Aid and the amount of your grant. Cash Aid includes the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Entrant Cash Assistance (ECA) Programs.

The CA 7 will be mailed to you. You must complete it for the month shown in the upper right corner of the report. This report is due by the 5th of the next month and must be received by the welfare department no later than the 11th. For example, if the report month showing in the upper right corner of the CA 7 is January, your CA 7 is due on February 5th. Your report can either be mailed or brought into the welfare department. **If you do not complete and return this form to the welfare department, your benefits will be terminated.**

Each question is either marked "CASH AID AND FOOD STAMPS", or "CASH AID", or "FOOD STAMPS." Carefully read the INSTRUCTIONS section on the report and answer those questions that apply to the type(s) of benefits you receive. You may be required to give information about certain people that do not receive benefits with you.

Below are some additional instructions to help you in completing the CA 7. The question numbers below match the question numbers on the CA 7.

QUESTION #1 ADDRESS CHANGE — If you plan to move but do not know the date or exact address, check **YES** and write something like "do not know yet" in the date and address boxes.

QUESTION #2 EARNINGS — If you, or someone in your home, worked and got paid during the month shown in the upper right corner of the Monthly Eligibility Report, be sure to list the number of days and hours worked in that month. Also, list all the pay you received in that month even if some of that pay was for hours worked in the month before. For example, if someone was paid $200 on January 7, and this included $100 actually earned during the last week of December, enter the entire $200 on the report for January because the pay was **received** in January. Attach pay stubs or other proof of the amount of earnings. **What you report will be checked against earnings employers report to the state.**

#2 OTHER INCOME — If you, or anyone in your home, received other income not from a job, such as unemployment (UIB) or Social Security (green check), be sure to attach a copy of your award letter or other proof of amount of income if it just started or if it changed or stopped. **The income you report will be checked against all available state records.**

QUESTION #5 HOUSING AND UTILITIES — The **Standard Utility Allowance** is a flat amount that you can choose to have the county use as your utility cost instead of the amount of utility costs you actually have. Whether you claim the standard utility allowance or whether you report your actual utility costs was decided when you applied or were recertified for food stamps. **If you do not know which amount you decided on, ask your worker.** Follow the instructions carefully and complete only the sections that apply to you. Attach proof when required.

#5A — **Housing costs** are what you must pay for where you live such as rent for an apartment, a house, or for a room, or a house payment. **Utility costs** are your costs for gas, electricity, and the other costs named in #5D. If you had housing and/or utility bills in the month, check **YES** to #5A and go to #5B. If you had **no** housing or utility bills in the month, check **NO** to #5A, skip the rest of #5, and go on to QUESTION #6. If you had free housing and/or utilities, report that in QUESTION #2.

#5B — Your **food stamp household** is everyone you live with that is receiving food stamps with you. **If you don't know who is in your food stamp household, ask your worker.** If only persons in your food stamp household paid your housing and utility costs, check **NO** to #5B, skip #5B-1, #5B-2, and #5B-3, and complete #5C and #5D. If anyone not part of your food stamp household helped pay your housing or utility costs in the month, check **YES** to #5B, give the name of each person and what costs they helped pay, and complete #5B-1, #5B-2, and #5B-3.

#5B-1 — If you checked **YES** to #5B, enter the amount of your rent or house payment. If this cost changed from last month or if you moved, attach proof of the cost, such as rent receipts.

#5B-2 — Only answer this if you claim actual utility costs. If you filled in an amount in **#5B-2**, attach proof that the food stamp household member(s) **paid** that amount. For example, if you paid another person for your utilities, be sure to get and attach a **receipt**. If someone else paid you and you paid the bills, you must attach both receipts for the bills you paid and a statement signed by the person who helped you pay these bills. The statement must show the amount the person paid and the date you were paid.

#5B-3 — "**Share housing or utility costs**" means that someone who is not part of your food stamp household helped you pay these expenses. "**The month before the report month**" means December if you are filling in your report for January that is due on February 5.

#5C — If you checked **NO** to #5B or #5B-3, enter the amount of your housing costs. Attach **bills** if the cost changed or if you moved.

#5D — Only answer this if you claim actual utility costs. Attach **bills** for each cost you enter.

QUESTION #6 MEDICAL EXPENSES — **Disabled** means a household member who is: 1) receiving Social Security benefits (green check); or 2) a disabled veteran; or 3) the disabled surviving spouse or the disabled surviving child of a veteran. Attach receipts or bills showing the amount of medical expenses.

SIGN AND DATE — Your report must be signed and dated **after** the last day of the month shown in the upper right corner of the report. For example, if the report is for January 1984, the earliest you should sign and date it is February 1, 1984. Sometimes more than one person needs to sign the report.

YOUR REPORT WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU AND YOUR RECEIPT OF CASH AID AND/OR FOOD STAMPS MAY BE STOPPED IF:

YOU DO NOT ANSWER EVERY QUESTION FOR THE TYPE OF BENEFIT YOU RECEIVE; or
YOUR REPORT IS NOT SIGNED BY THE CORRECT PERSON OR PERSONS; or
YOUR REPORT IS MISSING PAY STUBS OR RECEIPTS FOR EARNINGS; or
YOUR REPORT IS MISSING PROOF OF OTHER INCOME, THAT HAS CHANGED.

REMEMBER:
- Your report **may be** returned to you if it is dated incorrectly.
- You may get fewer benefits if other verification is missing.

- **CONTACT YOUR ELIGIBILITY WORKER IF YOU NEED HELP COMPLETING YOUR REPORT.**

State of California
Health and Welfare Agency

Department of Social Services

IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ

NEW FOOD STAMP PROGRAM BUDGETING REQUIREMENTS

There has been a change in Food Stamp Program requirements. Beginning January 1, 1984, a new method will be used to determine the amount of food stamps you will receive.

The amount of food stamps you receive depends on how much income you have and the amount of certain of your expenses like housing costs, utility bills, and medical bills. Under this new method, the amount of your income and expenses for one month will be used to compute the amount of food stamps you will receive two months later. For example, your income and expenses from January will be used to compute the amount of food stamps you will receive in March. This new budgeting method is called a retrospective budgeting system.

You must continue to report all changes within 10 days after you know of the change as is currently required.

If you have any questions about the new requirements, call your Eligibility Worker.