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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
GOVERNOR

July 23, 2009

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NO. I-55-09

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 FOOD STAMP PROGRAM COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: ANNUAL FOOD STAMP PROGRAM SURVEY OF OPERATIONS AND ACCESS – SFY 2008/2009

REFERENCE: MANUAL SECTIONS 63-104.21(h), AND 63-205.1, ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) 94-11

The purpose of this letter is to request that all County Welfare Departments (CWDs) complete the Annual Survey of Operations and Access for the Food Stamp Program (FSP). State regulations require that an annual survey and review of hours of operation for the FSP offices be completed to ensure that the needs of recipients are adequately met.

BACKGROUND

State regulations require that all CWDs provide an annual report on their activities associated with the administration of FSP benefits in accordance with Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Sections 63-104.21 (h) and 63-205.1. The FSP survey information is collected in two primary areas – 1) Access and Awareness activities and 2) Certification activities based on county operations. It also contains information regarding face-to-face interview waivers, call/change centers and on-line applications.

The information provided on the survey is useful to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) in determining statewide program needs. It also allows CDSS to respond to information requests regarding the administration of the FSP and to aid in the analysis of legislative proposals and regulatory changes regarding the administration of the FSP in California. The survey is divided into two parts: A) Access and Awareness, and B) Certification.

Please be aware that these parts cover different time periods and information to be reported accordingly. Part A reflects activities conducted in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2008/2009, and Part B covers operations as of June 30, 2009, as well as SFY 2008/2009.

These time periods are also defined within the survey.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY CHANGES

Part A – Access and Awareness

- Items 1, 13a, and 14a have been revised to spell out the acronym VITA – Volunteers in Tax Assistance.
- Item 5 has been revised as a new question to ask which counties currently provide on-line applications.
- Item 5a has been added as a new question to request a website address from those counties that currently have an on-line application available on their websites.
- Item 5b has been added as a new question to address how the public becomes aware of the on-line application.
- Item 5c has been added as a new question to gather information on the types of features that are available when utilizing the on-line application.
- Item 5d has been added as a new question to ask the different languages that counties use on their on-line application.
- Item 8 has been revised to a new question to ask whether the county opted to waive the face-to-face interview due to implementation of a statewide waiver.
- Item 8a has been added as a new question to ask the waiver used (hardship exemption, statewide waiver, or both) to waive the face-to-face interview requirement.
- Item 8c has been revised to delete the “Mail Only” option as a primary replacement method for initial application and recertification.
- Item 9 has been revised to a new question to ask the type of telephone method(s) (i.e., Hotline, IVR, Call Center etc.) counties use to provide general information regarding the Food Stamp Program and/or information regarding noncitizen eligibility.
- Item 9a has been added as a new question for counties to identify the different languages that their telephone system provides.
- Item 9b has been changed to a new question and expanded to add a separate table to ask counties to identify the type of telephone system(s) used, to provide the telephone number(s), to specify the information and/or services available through their telephone system(s), and to provide the days and hours of operation.

- Item 9c has been added to ask counties to identify the hours and days an operator is available to answer calls on their telephone system(s).
- Item 9d has been added to ask counties to identify whether their telephone system(s) allows clients to leave messages after hours of operation.

Part B – Certification Sites

- Item 18a has been added to ask which counties offer extended office hours.
- Item 19 has been revised to add an example to the table which includes the lunch hour as an extended office hour.

The survey is in Excel format and may be accessed on line from the CDSS website at:

http://www.cdss.ca.gov/dssdb/Surveys_1429.htm.

(Please note that there is an underscore between “Surveys” and “1429” – i.e., Surveys_1429).

Information regarding how to download the survey is available on the website. After downloading the survey, information for completing and submitting the survey can be accessed by opening the survey file and clicking on the various “buttons” located at the top and left sides of the webpage. Once the survey has been completed, it is to be submitted electronically. If you have any technical questions related to the electronic completion and submission of the survey, please contact Kevin Andagan, Data Systems and Survey Design Bureau, at (916) 928-4865 or e-mail at kevin.andagan@dss.ca.gov.

Completion and submission of the survey electronically will save time, improve accuracy through the use of validation features and facilitates data compilation. Counties that are unable to submit the survey electronically may contact Rosie Avena at (916) 654-1514 or by e-mail at rosie.avena@dss.ca.gov for a hard copy. If you are filling out a hard copy, please mail the completed survey to:

California Department of Social Services
Food Stamp Policy Bureau
744 P Street, M.S. 8-9-32
Sacramento, CA 95814
Attention: Rosie Avena

Please return a completed survey no later than September 30, 2009.

All County Information Notice I-55-09
Page Four

The summary of the survey for last year, SFY 2007/2008 is available on line at:

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/research/res/pdf/foodreports/FSPSurvey0708.pdf>.

If you need assistance completing this year's survey or if you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact Rosie Avena, Food Stamp Policy Implementation Unit, at (916) 654-1514 or by e-mail at rosie.avena@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

CHRISTINE WEBB-CURTIS, Chief
Food Stamp Branch