

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



February 28, 2006

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-14-06

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS
ALL QUALITY CONTROL COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: DENIAL OF APPLICATIONS ON THE 30TH DAY FOLLOWING THE APPLICATION DATE WHEN THE HOUSEHOLD FAILS TO KEEP APPLICATION INTERVIEW APPOINTMENTS

The purpose of this notice is to: (1) remind counties to deny applications on the 30th day after the application date, if the household fails to keep its application interview appointment and, (2) clarify the application denial process for missed interviews; thereby aiding in the reduction of California's high negative error rate. Per Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) section 63-301.32, if the household fails to keep its first scheduled interview, a Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI) must be sent to the household. A second interview must be scheduled if the household requests another interview within 30 days of the initial application date.

Denials of applications due to missed interviews cannot occur prior to the 30th day after the initial application date. The 30-day count begins the day after the application date; the application date is day zero. For example: A household applies on March 1, so the denial notice is sent on March 31st. A denial action may be taken in a county's automated system prior to the 30th day after application; however, the denial notice cannot actually be sent until the 30th day. For further clarification, examples of when to deny cases at application for missed interviews are attached.

Errors will be largely reduced by adherence to correct denial actions for missed interviews. Recent Quality Control (QC) review findings of cases denied benefits reveal that 30-40 percent of the errors were attributable to improper denials for missed interviews prior to the 30th day after application. Currently, the State's food stamp negative case error rate is one of the highest in the Nation and it is of utmost importance that the negative error rate be reduced. Counties are encouraged to remind staff to correctly deny applications for missed interviews on the 30th day and not prior to it.

Prior to the above rule for missed interviews, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) operated under the authority of a federal waiver to allow denials for missed interviews prior to the 30th day after an application was filed. With filing of the

federal Noncitizen Eligibility and Certification Regulations on November 21, 2000, to complete the implementation of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), the waiver was not renewed by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) because of the new "second scheduled interview" rule. Further, FNS has indicated that they will no longer grant waivers in this area. (Note: California still has a waiver in place to deny an application prior to the 30th day after the application date due to failure of the applicant to provide verification. If a household is denied prior to the 30th day due to failure to provide verification within 10-days of a request by the County Welfare Department and then provides it prior to the 30th day, the denial must be rescinded per MPP 63-301.33.)

If you have any questions about the policy discussed in this notice, please contact LeAnne Torres, Food Stamp Policy Implementation Unit at (916) 654-2135. For questions regarding California's negative error rate, please call Richard Trujillo, Quality Control Unit at (213) 833-2249.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

RIGHTON YEE, Chief
Food Stamp

Branch

Attachment

Examples of Denials at Application Bases on Household Failure

Scenario #1: The household applies for food stamps on March 3rd and is scheduled for its first interview on March 10th. The household fails to keep the appointment. The County Welfare Department (CWD) sends a Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI). The household does not call to reschedule the interview appointment within 30 days of the application date.

Action: The denial notice cannot be sent to the household until the 30th day following the initial application date. However, the CWD may take a denial action in their automated systems (but may not actually send the denial notice) prior to the 30th day. For Quality Control purposes, a copy of the NOMI should be in the case record. (Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) section 63-301.32)

Scenario #2: The household applies for food stamps on March 1st and is scheduled for its first interview on March 1st. The household fails to keep the first interview. The CWD sends a NOMI. The CWD reschedules the interview at the household's request within 30 days of the initial application date for March 22nd. The household fails to keep the second interview.

Action: The CWD cannot deny the application until the 30th day after the application date, which is March 31st. The CWD may take a denial action in their automated systems prior to the 30th day. However, the denial notice cannot be sent to the household until the 30th day after the application date. (MPP section 63-301.32)

Scenario #3: The household applies for food stamps on March 3rd and is scheduled for its first interview on March 8th. The household keeps its interview and is asked by the CWD to return verification within 10 days or by March 18th. The household does not provide the verification by March 18th.

Action: The CWD can deny the application by sending a denial notice prior to the 30th day after the initial application date. If the requested verification is provided by the household by the 30th day after the application date, the denial must be rescinded. (MPP section 63-301.33)