

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



March 20, 2007

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-13-07

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

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

SUBJECT: FOOD STAMP RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM REGULATION PACKAGE

This notice advises County Welfare Departments of proposed changes to the Food Stamp (FS) Manual of Policies and Procedures regarding the optional Restaurant Meals (RM) program. These changes will repeal obsolete language that requires a separate paper identification (ID) card be issued to identify homeless, elderly, or disabled FS households eligible for the RM program. Additional changes will adopt language specifying that eligibility for the RM program be electronically verified using the Golden State Advantage Card, California's electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card, at the point-of-sale (POS) device.

Previously, the separate ID card had the recipient's name, signature, expiration date, and program code displayed on the card. This raised privacy and security concerns. In addition, any informational changes required a new card. The separate card and replacements created additional workload for the county. However, prior to EBT, this was the only effective method for enforcing restrictions in the RM program.

Modifications have been made to the EBT system that allow for electronic verification of household eligibility for the RM program. Currently, when the recipient swipes their EBT card through the POS device at the restaurant, only those households indicated as eligible for the RM program are able to purchase meals at participating restaurants. This change has several advantages:

- Recipients no longer need to carry a separate paper ID card and there is increased privacy.
- Restaurant employees no longer have to look at the paper ID.
- County workload is decreased because no ID card is issued.

Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, and Tuolumne counties have implemented the optional RM program. Recipients are informed of the names and addresses of participating restaurants when they become eligible. With the availability of the RM "indicator code" in the EBT system and the success of the program in the first wave of counties, more counties may want to elect this option.

If you have questions regarding this letter or the RM Program, please contact Jan Johnson of the Food Stamp Policy Development Unit at (916) 657-3500.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

RICHTON YEE, Chief
Food Stamp Branch