

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



May 19, 2008

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-33-08

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS
ALL COUNTY FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT
AND TRAINING 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: FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2009 HANDBOOK FOR COUNTIES NOT OFFERING A FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM

REFERENCE: MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (MPP) SECTION 63-407

The purpose of this letter is to transmit the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009 handbook for those counties not offering a Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) Program. As required by the Federal Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and pursuant to the Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Section 63-407.842(a), counties not participating in the FSET program must submit data for inclusion in California's statewide FSET plan.

The data required for those counties not participating in the FSET program is minimal. The non-FSET handbook consists of a template, instructions, and a brief definitions section explaining those terms relevant to counties not participating in FSET. Counties should use the enclosed handbook, including the template in submitting their data to CDSS as this will expedite the CDSS review process and reduce our potential for error in compiling county data.

It is important that counties provide reasonably accurate estimates of their work registrant and Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependent (ABAWD) populations for FFY 2009. Counties should be able to use the data from their most recent work registrant and ABAWD statistical reports to assist in the development of FFY 2009 estimates. These estimates should be consistent with data reported on the following reports:

The Annual Work Registrant and Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) Program Caseload Report (STAT 48); and

Food Stamp Program Work Registrant, Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD), and Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) Program Caseload Report (STAT 47)

Data tables for the STAT 48 and STAT 47 can be found at <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/research/> under Food Stamp Data Tables, or follow the quick link at the top of the page to navigate directly to the reports.

Counties are reminded that FNS utilizes the data from the STAT 47 and 48 forms to determine each state's future allocation of FSET funds and the 15 percent ABAWD exemptions. Therefore, it is important that counties report data on the STAT 47 and 48 reports in an accurate and timely fashion.

The deadline for submitting your county's work registrant and ABAWD estimates is June 20, 2008. Please ensure that your county's completed handbook is in our office by the above date. Please forward an electronic copy in Microsoft Word and mail a hard copy to the following CDSS staff person:

ATTN: Mr. Robert Nevins, Food Stamp Analyst
California Department of Social Services
Food Stamp Branch
744 P Street, M.S. 16-32
Sacramento, CA 95814

E-mail: robert.nevins@dss.ca.gov

Fax: (916) 657-1295

If you have questions regarding the Food Stamp Work Registrant, ABAWD, and FSET Program Caseload Report, STAT 47 and STAT 48, please contact Mark Sticklin of the Data Systems and Survey Design Bureau at (916) 654-1273. If you have any questions about this letter, or the submittal of your estimates, please contact Robert Nevins, Food Stamp FSET Analyst, at (916) 654-1408 or Randy Shiroy, Manager, at (916) 654-1435.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

RIGHTON YEE, Chief
Food Stamp Branch

Attachment

**FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2009 HANDBOOK FOR COUNTIES NOT OFFERING A FOOD
STAMP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (FSET) PROGRAM**

**GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING WORK REGISTRANT AND ABAWD ESTIMATES
(October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2009)**



Prepared by the
California Department of Social Services
Food Stamp Branch
April 25, 2008

Non-FSET COUNTY COVER SHEET
(To be completed by counties not offering FSET)

County of _____

ABAWD Waiver County? Yes___ or No___

Prepared by: _____

Title: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Date Submitted: _____

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide counties not offering a Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) program with instructions regarding the annual work registrant and Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) information that must be submitted to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) requires CDSS to submit an annual FSET plan for review and approval. The State's plan consists of a synopsis of the individual FSET plans developed by counties. As part of the plan, FNS asks for various statewide estimates of work registrants and ABAWDs. This information must be obtained from all counties, regardless of whether or not they offer an FSET program. Counties not participating in FSET should complete and submit their work registrant and ABAWD estimates to CDSS no later than **June 20, 2008**.

PLAN PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

County estimates should be submitted using the format in this handbook and should be reasonably accurate projections that are consistent with numbers previously reported by the county on the following reports:

The Annual Work Registrant and Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) Program Caseload Report (STAT 48); and

Food Stamp Program Work Registrant, Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD), and Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) Program Caseload Report (STAT 47)

Data tables for the STAT 48 and STAT 47 can be found at: <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/research/> under Food Stamp Data Tables and follow the quick link at the top of the page to navigate directly to the reports. Counties are encouraged to review the above data reports and definitions provided in these guidelines prior to preparing their estimates.

WORK REGISTRATION AND ABAWD INFORMATION

Provide a clear explanation of the methods used to estimate work registrant and ABAWD counts. Use data from the current fiscal year, whenever possible, in formulating the projection. Be as accurate as possible in developing these estimates.

A. WORK REGISTRANT POPULATION

1. Work Registrant Counts

Estimate the following:

- a. The number of work registrants in the existing food stamp caseload expected to be in the county on October 1, 2008, (see STAT 48)._____
- b. The anticipated number of new work registrants to be added between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009, (see STAT 47)._____
- c. The total number of work registrants in the county between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009 (a+b=c). _____

2. Unduplicated or Duplicated Work Registrant Count

FNS requires states to give an unduplicated count of work registrants. Unduplicated means the following:

Individuals included in the work registrant count as of October 1 are not included in any subsequent count of work registrants for the remaining months of the year; and

Individuals certified for food stamps or registered for work more than once in a 12-month period are only reported as a work registrant once during that 12-month period.

Clearly explain whether the estimated number of work registrants is based on a duplicated or unduplicated count. If a county can only provide a duplicated count of work registrants, estimate in this section the portion of reported work registrants believed to be duplicated. If your estimate significantly differs from previously reported data, detail the methodology used in making this estimate.

B. ABAWD POPULATION

1. ABAWD Counts

Estimate the following:

- a. The number of ABAWDs in the existing non-assistance food stamp caseload expected to be in the county on October 1, 2008. _____

Note: The ABAWD population is a subset of the work registrant population. There are always fewer ABAWDs than there are work registrants because there are added exemptions from the ABAWD work requirement which do not apply to work registration

- b. The anticipated number of new ABAWDs to be added between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009, (see STAT 47). _____

Note: ABAWD counts on the STAT 47 are duplicate counts. Counties should adjust the ABAWD numbers to reflect an unduplicated estimate.

- c. The total number of ABAWDs in the county between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009 (a+b=c). _____
- d. The anticipated number of ABAWDs in waived areas of the county during the fiscal year. For counties with a full county waiver, this is the same as the ABAWD population for the federal fiscal year or the above total in c. _____
- e. The anticipated number of ABAWDs exempted under 15 percent ABAWD exemption allowance during the fiscal year (see STAT 47 if applicable). For counties with an ABAWD waiver during the entire period of FFY 2009 this number is zero. _____

- f. Total subset of ABAWDs waived or receiving the 15 percent exemption during the federal fiscal year (d+e=f). _____
- g. At-risk ABAWDs expected in the county during the federal fiscal year (c-f=g). _____

2. Unduplicated or Duplicated ABAWD Count

FNS requires states to give an unduplicated count of ABAWDs so counties must make every effort to do so. Unduplicated means the following:

Individuals included in the ABAWD count as of October 1st are not included in any subsequent count of ABAWDs for the remaining months of the year. Note: This includes ABAWDs who fail to meet the work requirement and regain eligibility in the same year; and

ABAWDs certified or registered more than once in a 12-month period are only reported once during that 12-month period.

Clearly explain whether the estimated number of ABAWDs is based on a duplicated or unduplicated count. If a county can only provide a duplicated count of ABAWDs, estimate in this section the portion of ABAWDs believed to be duplicated. If your estimate significantly differs from previously reported data, detail the methodology used in making this estimate.

3. Use of the 15 Percent Exemption

Provide the criteria that the county will use to exempt additional ABAWDs under the county's 15 percent ABAWD allocation. If the county is not using the exemption, provide an explanation, e.g., an ABAWD waiver county should just note, N/A waiver county, below.

a. 15 Percent Exemption Criteria

b. Reason for Not Using the 15 Percent Exemption

DEFINITIONS

ABAWD - An Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) is a non-assistance food stamp (NAFS) recipient between the ages of 18 and 49 who does not qualify for one of the ABAWD exemptions listed in Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Section 63-410.3 (see list below). Food stamp eligibility for ABAWDs is limited to any 3 months in a 36-month period (a 3-month time limit) unless the individual meets the ABAWD work requirement (see definition below).

ABAWD Exemptions - Persons are exempt from the ABAWD work requirement if they are exempt from food stamp work registration (see list of work registration exemptions below);

Under 18 or over 50 years of age;

Residing in a food stamp household that includes a child under 18 years of age;
or

Pregnant.

ABAWD 15% Exemption - The 15 percent exemption is a temporary exemption that counties may grant to ABAWDs who have used their three out of 36-months without meeting the ABAWD work requirement and are unable to meet the work requirement due to circumstances beyond their control. CDSS allocates 15 percent exemption months that counties may apply to ABAWDs.

Criteria for the 15 percent exemption are developed by counties and include such things as illiteracy, family crisis that interrupts FSET participation or causes a temporary reduction in hours worked, social and emotional barriers, remoteness, temporary homelessness, lack of adequate transportation, domestic violence, recent released from a drug or alcohol treatment program, working 10 to 19 hours per week and unable to meet the 20-hour work requirement, and other reasons determined on a case-by-case basis. Unlike those granted one of the ABAWD exemptions listed above, persons granted the 15 percent exemption are still considered ABAWDs and are counted as such for purposes of quarterly reports and estimated ABAWD counts in Section B.

ABAWD Waiver - The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) may approve waiver of the ABAWD work requirement for areas within a state that meet federally established waiver criteria. Waiver approval criteria include designation as a Labor Surplus Area (LSA) by the Department of Labor (DOL), having a recent unemployment rate above 10 percent or having an unemployment rate 20 percent greater than the national average over a two-year period.

ABAWD Work Requirement and Three-Month Limit - Eligibility for food stamps is limited to 3 months in a 36-month period unless the ABAWD, who is age 18 to 49, meets the following work requirements:

works 20 or more hours a week, averaged monthly;

participates in an allowable work activity such as an education or vocational training program for 20 or more hours a week; or

participates in a workfare program.

ABAWDs can continue to receive food stamps for more than three months in a 36-month period if they meet the above work requirement or one of the following conditions:

meet ABAWD exemption criteria,

live in a county with an ABAWD waiver, or

receive the 15 percent exemption.

Persons who fail to meet the ABAWD work requirement may regain eligibility if, during a 30-day period, they work, or participate in an allowable work activity for 80 hours, or participate in workfare for the required number of hours. Persons, who regain eligibility and stop meeting the ABAWD requirement for reasons such as layoff, may receive food stamps for one grace period of three consecutive months during a 36-month period.

At-risk ABAWD - An ABAWD who is residing in a non-waiver county and is in danger of losing food stamp eligibility due to exhaustion of the three months out of 36-month time limit for persons not satisfying the ABAWD work requirement.

Deferred - This term refers to a work registered person or persons temporarily excused by the county from mandatory participation in the FSET Program.

Food Stamp Employment and Training Program - A county administered program designed to assist food stamp recipients increase their employability and self-sufficiency through participation in job search, job club, workfare, education and/or vocational training components.

FSET Mandatory Participant - A Food Stamp Program applicant or recipient who is neither exempt from food stamp work registration nor deferred from participation in FSET.

Non-ABAWD - A work registrant that qualifies for one of the ABAWD exemptions at MPP Section 63-410.32 namely, under age 18 or over age 49, pregnant, or residing in a food stamp household with a child under the age of 18.

Work Registrant - A non-assistance food stamp (NAFS) applicant or recipient who is subject to food stamp work requirements at Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Section 63-407.4, unless the individual meets one of the work registration exemptions at MPP Section 63-407.21.

Work Registration Exemptions - An individual is exempt from food stamp work registrant requirements if he/she meets one of the exemptions at MPP Section 63-407.21 (see list below):

Younger than 16 years of age or 60 years of age or older;

16 or 17 year old who is not head of household, or who is attending school or enrolled in an employment training program at least half time;

Physically or mentally unfit for employment;

Complying with CalWORKs Welfare-To-Work requirements;

Caring for a dependent child under age 6 or an incapacitated person;

Receiving or has applied for unemployment insurance benefits;

Participating in a drug or alcohol treatment program that prohibits employment of 30 hours or more per week;

Employed or self-employed at least 30 hours per week or receiving weekly earnings at least equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by 30 hours;

Half-time school attendance.

Work Registrant Requirements - As a condition of food stamp eligibility, every NAFS applicant and recipient between the ages of 15 and 60 who does not qualify for a work registration exemption must comply with the following requirements:

register for work or be registered by the county;

participate in the FSET Program if assigned by the county;

provide sufficient information to determine employment status or availability for work;

report to an employer when referred by the county or its designee;
accept a bona fide offer of suitable employment; and

must not voluntarily quit a job of 30 or more hours a week or reduce work hours to less than 30 hours a week without good cause.