

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
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July 19, 1988

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-64-88

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: NEGATIVE ACTION CASE DOCUMENTATION

REFERENCE: ACIN NO. I-50-88

The purpose of this Notice is to provide information which can be used by County Welfare Departments to reduce the number of invalid actions being found by quality control reviewers in the Food Stamp program negative case sample. According to Federal findings, in Federal fiscal year 1987, improper procedures were used in 17.73 percent of cases where benefits were denied or terminated. The primary reasons for improper denials/terminations were incorrect application of State regulations concerning denials prior to the 30th day subsequent to application, incorrect application of State regulations concerning scheduling of second interviews, and insufficient documentation of negative case actions.

All County Information Notice I-50-88, dated June 9, 1988, addressed the 30 day denial and second interview issues. Below we provide you with profiles of the types of cases which were found in error because of insufficient documentation. We believe that proper case documentation can be easily accomplished with some attention to detail. The payoff should be an immediate reduction of errors cited in this area.

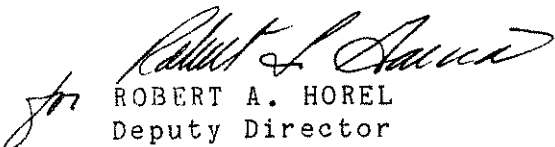
Any case action must have supporting documentation present in the case file to show why that action was taken. If that documentation is not present, then the reviewer will cite it as an improper action. For example, when an application is denied because the applicant did not appear for the second interview, the case file must contain copies of the correspondence showing the dates and times those interviews were scheduled, and a notation that those appointments were not kept. Supplying a copy of the Notice of Action is not sufficient documentation. If an applicant/recipient is determined to have too much income, the case file should mention who the employer is, how long the person has been working, and how much money he/she is making.

Another problem area of incomplete documentation is in instances where Food Stamp eligibility has been terminated at the same time as eligibility for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). If a Food Stamp recipient's public assistance benefits are discontinued because of failure to meet AFDC requirements, eligibility for nonassistance food stamps must still be determined. Counties are sometimes failing to document in the case file that this determination was made. Similarly, if General Relief program requirements are not met, ongoing eligibility for Food Stamp benefits must be evaluated. Again, evidence of this determination should appear in the case file.

An additional area of difficulty involves cases where action is taken based on verbal communication with the client. Any action which occurs as the result of a telephone call or in-person contact (e.g., a change of address or income) must be documented in writing in the case file. Such documentation should include the date of call or contact, the name of the person providing the information, and the factual information affecting the case. If the Monthly Eligibility Report (CA 7) contains the information, a reference to it and the accompanying AFDC case can be made.

While the examples above cover common problem areas, this letter cannot deal with every actual or potential instance of deficient documentation. To avoid error citations due to insufficient documentation, it is necessary to make sure that any action you take is both understandable by reading the case file and supported by the facts and information contained in that file.

Staff of the Quality Control Branch are available to advise Counties about negative action case documentation standards for quality control purposes. If you have any questions concerning this subject, please contact the State's local Quality Control Branch district office.

  
ROBERT A. HOREL  
Deputy Director

cc: CWDA