

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

April 10, 1996

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO.
1-21-96

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

REASON FOR TRANSMITTAL

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

SUBJECT: REVISED FOOD STAMP FORMS--DFA 285-A3, "IMPORTANT FACTS FOR THE FOOD STAMP APPLICANTS"; FS 8, "IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT REQUIRED VERIFICATIONS IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM"; AND FS 9, "FOOD STAMPS IMPORTANT INFORMATION"

This letter transmits copies of the revised DFA 285-A3 (2/96), "Important Facts for Food Stamp Applicants"; the FS 8 (2/96) "Important Information About Required Verifications In The Food Stamp Program"; and the FS 9 (2/96), " Food Stamps Important Information". These forms have been revised to incorporate several regulation changes and to update the discrimination and reasonable accommodation information to be consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (P.L. 101-336). A description of the changes made to these forms is provided in the Attachment.

STOCK

The California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) warehouse will no longer stock the 4/93 version of the DFA 285-A3. Counties should begin using the 2/96 version as soon as it is available in the warehouse. It is expected to be available about mid-April. Counties may continue to use up their stock of the FS 8 and FS 9. The warehouse has a small supply of the older versions that will last approximately two to three months. Once the stock has been depleted, the new versions will be used. County Welfare Departments (CWDs) may order stock from the warehouse according to the normal procedures contained in the County Forms Catalog.

TRANSLATIONS

Counties that need a camera-ready copy of the forms, should call:

- For English and Spanish: the Forms Management Bureau at (916) 657-1907 or CALNET 437-1984.

- For the Asian language versions (Chinese, Cambodian and Vietnamese): The Language Services Bureau at (916) 654-1305 or CALNET at 464-1305. These translations will be forwarded to the County Forms Coordinator when they are available.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter, please contact Melissa Buchanan of the Food Stamp Program Bureau at (916) 654-8467 or CALNET 464-8467.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Wagstaff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "B".

BRUCE WAGSTAFF
Deputy Director
Welfare Programs Division

Attachment

DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES TO THE DFA 285-A3, FS 8, AND FS 9

DFA 285-A3

Page 1

- The Reasonable Accommodation statement was added in bold near top of page to meet ADA language requirements.
- Non-discrimination information has been revised to be consistent with current language.
- Under "Your Rights" section, the bullets dealing with the right to ask for help in completion of application or any other forms and the right to have forms translated have been moved to the beginning of the listing.
- Under "Your Responsibilities", bullets were eliminated, material was grouped by subjects and wording was changed to include "You must" at the beginning of each item.

Page 2

The page numbers were moved from the top of the page to the bottom so each page is numbered consistently. Page two was reformatted to center the title and general instructions for reporting responsibilities. There are now two separate columns, one dealing with "Monthly Reporting" and one dealing with "Non-Monthly Reporting".

Monthly Reporting

You Must Report If:

- Fifth bullet was reworded to include reporting of any child up to age 22 or any adult who starts or stops school, college or training.
- A bullet was added telling recipients they must report if there is any change in an order for court ordered child support paid by a household member for a child not living in the home.

You May Report If:

- A bullet was added telling recipients they may report the payment of child support by a household member for a child not living in the home.
- The bullet regarding medical expenses was reworded to be consistent with recent regulation changes.

Non-Monthly Reporting

You Must Report If:

- A bullet was added telling recipients they must report if there is any change in an order for court ordered child support paid by a household member for a child not living in the home.

You May Report If:

- The reporting of medical expenses was moved to this section.
- A bullet was added telling recipients they may report the payment of child support by a household member for a child not living in the home.

Page 3

- A bullet was added in the second column to tell recipients that they cannot trade or sell coupons for weapons, ammunition, explosives or controlled substances.
- Under "Disqualification Penalties", information has been added spelling out the penalties for being found guilty of having traded or sold coupons for weapons, ammunition, explosives, or controlled substances.

FS 8

Front Page

- Addition of a paragraph entitled "Proof of Allowable Court Ordered Child Support Paid".

Back Page

- Addition of a paragraph entitled "Court Ordered Child Support Allowance".
- Under first paragraph listing of kinds of proof needed, added "for employment" to the phrase "Inability to work due to mental or physical unfitness". The phrase now reads "Inability to work due to mental or physical unfitness for employment".

FS 9

Front Page

- The reasonable accommodation statement was added and the non-discrimination language was revised to be consistent with currently acceptable language.
- Second column, "Monthly Report" paragraph, the DFA 377.5 was added as a method of reporting changes in the household.
- Second column, "Property Limit" paragraph was reworded regarding vehicle valuation due to the changing excess value exclusion amount. No specific amount is given.

Back Page

- Under "College or Junior College Students", being age 50 or over was added as a reason for a student to be eligible.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR FOOD STAMP APPLICANTS

These pages give you important information, including your rights and responsibilities. If you need more information or have questions, ask your worker. The County needs facts about you and your household to see if you are eligible for Food Stamp benefits and to figure how much you will get if you are eligible.

IF YOU HAVE A DISABILITY AND NEED HELP APPLYING FOR OR CONTINUING TO RECEIVE CASH AID, FOOD STAMP BENEFITS, AND SERVICES, TELL THE COUNTY.

The law says that all applicants/recipients for aid, benefits, or services are to be treated fairly without regard to race, color, national origin, political affiliation, religion, marital status, sex, age or disability.

If you think you have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint by:

1. contacting your county's civil rights coordinator; or
2. writing to:
 - State Department of Social Services
Civil Rights Bureau
744 P Street MS 15-70,
P.O. Box 944243, Sacramento, CA 94244-2430
 - or for Food Stamps only to:
U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Food and Consumer Service, Civil Rights Office,
550 Kearney Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

You may also file by calling (916) 654-2107 or for the hearing impaired toll free 1-800-952-8349 (TDD).

YOUR RIGHTS

- To ask for help to complete your application or any other food stamp form.
- To ask for forms and notices to be translated if you don't read English.
- To be treated with courtesy, consideration and respect.
- To be interviewed promptly by the county when you apply and to have your eligibility determined within 30 days.
- To discuss your case with the County and to review your case yourself when you request to do so.
- To be told the rules for getting food stamps right away. If we think you might be eligible, you will get an interview within three days.
- To ask to have your Food Stamp I.D., authorization document, or issuance card, or food stamps replaced if lost in the mail, damaged, stolen or destroyed. The County will tell you if you are eligible.

- To be given a written notice when your application is approved, denied, or when your benefits change or stop.
- To have your records kept confidential by the County and State.
- To file a complaint or to ask for a State hearing within 90 days of any action if you think the action was wrong. You can write to your County Welfare Department or call toll free 1-800-952-5253 or for the hearing impaired (TDD) 1-800-952-8349.
- To be represented at a State Hearing by yourself or by a household member, friend, attorney, or other person of your choice. NOTE: You may get free legal help at your local legal aid office or welfare rights group.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE)

You must sign under penalty of perjury that each member applying for food stamps is a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or lawful alien resident. Information you give us on immigration status will be checked with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Information we get from INS may affect your eligibility for food stamps.

Social Security Number

You must give us the Social Security Number (SSN) for each applicant for food stamps. Anyone who refuses to give either a SSN or proof of application for a SSN will be disqualified from getting benefits. (Providing a SSN is required for all applicants by Section 1137 of the Social Security Act: 7 U.S. Code Section 2025e).

The SSNs will be used in a computer match to check income and resources with records from tax, welfare, employment, the Social Security Administration and other agencies. Differences may be checked out with employers, banks or others. Making false statements or failing to report all facts or situations which affect eligibility for food stamps may result in discontinuance and/or repayment of benefits and/or criminal or civil action.

Verification(s)

You must give proof or more facts when we ask. If you can't get proof, give the name of some other person or agency we may contact to get it. When you can't get the proof you need, we will help you get it.

Cooperation

You must cooperate with County, State and Federal staff. You may not get benefits or your benefits may be stopped if you don't cooperate.

YOUR REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

You must report all changes to the County. If you're not sure how to report changes, what changes to report, or what proof we need, ask your worker. Your worker will tell you if you are a monthly or nonmonthly reporting household.

MONTHLY REPORTING

How You Must Report

You must turn in a complete Monthly Eligibility Report by the 5th of each month.

Monthly Reporting Requirements

YOU MUST REPORT IF:

- Anyone gets money from work, relatives, Social Security, Veteran's benefits, tax refunds, or any other source.
- Anyone gets free rent or utilities.
- Anyone's job or training program changes.
- Anyone's income or source of income changes, starts or stops.
- Any child up to age 22 or any adult starts or stops school, college or training.
- You move in with someone else or anyone moves into or out of your home, including newborns, other children, spouses, absent parents, other relatives and non-relatives.
- Anyone moves to another address, plans to move, or gets a new mailing address. If you move to another County and you want to keep getting benefits, you must tell the County giving you aid and/or benefits AND ask for food stamps again in the new county.
- Anyone gets payments or allowances for job, training or school expenses, such as educational grants and loans, transportation to and from job or training, etc.
- Anyone is self-employed.
- Anyone has job, training or school costs, such as dependent care, transportation, tuition, books, etc.
- Anyone has expenses that are paid for in total or in part by someone else, such as housing, utilities, medical, dependent care, etc.
- Any change in the order for court ordered child support paid by a household member for a child not living in the home.
- Anyone gets, sells gives away or transfers real property, such as a house, buildings or land; or personal property, such as money, a bank account, a motor vehicle, a boat, a trust fund, etc.
- Anyone's citizenship/immigration status or documentation changes.
- Anyone reaches 60 years of age.

YOU MAY REPORT IF:

- Any household member, who is disabled or age 60 or over, has changes in medical expenses or any new medical expenses.
- Any household member begins to pay court ordered child support for a child not living in the home.

NONMONTHLY REPORTING

How You Must Report

You must report all changes within 10 days:

- by mail, telephone or in person at the County Food Stamp office OR
- on a DFA 377.5, Food Stamp Household Change Report OR
- on a Monthly Eligibility Report if you get AFDC.

Nonmonthly Reporting Requirements

YOU MUST REPORT IF:

- Your total monthly income starts, stops, or changes by more than \$25.
- Anyone's source of income changes.
- You move in with someone else or anyone moves into or out of your home, including newborns, other children, spouses, other relatives or non-relatives.
- Anyone moves to another address, plans to move, or gets a new mailing address.
- The total of your household's stocks, bonds, or other money is more than \$2000 (or \$3000 if you have a household member who is age 60 or over).
- If there is a change in the order of any court ordered child support paid by a member of the household for a child not living in the home.

YOU MAY REPORT IF:

- A household member is age 60 or older.
- Any household member, who is disabled or age 60 or over, has changes in medical expenses or any new medical expenses.
- Anyone in the household starts or stops a physical or mental illness.
- You have changes in your dependent care costs.
- Anyone's citizenship/immigration status or documentation changes.
- Any household member begins to pay court ordered child support for a child not living in the home.

Budgeting Rules--Monthly Reporting

The amount of food stamps you can get depends on your income and allowable expenses. What you report on the Monthly Eligibility Report will be used to figure the amount of food stamps you can get two months later. For example, your income and allowable expenses from January are used to figure the food stamp benefits you would get in March. This method is called retrospective budgeting.

WORK AND TRAINING RULES

You may need to take part in work or training activities. Your worker will look at your facts to see if the rules apply to you. Your worker will tell you what you need to do before and after your application is approved.

If you don't follow the work and training rules, and don't have a good reason, we may deny your application, change the amount of benefits you get, or disqualify a member or your household from getting food stamps for two months.

If someone joins your food stamp household who has been disqualified because they didn't follow the work rules, your food stamp household may be disqualified for up to two months.

VOLUNTARY QUIT

If you quit your job without a good reason, your household may be disqualified for three months. If someone else quits a job without a good reason or joins your household, your household may be disqualified for up to three months.

STANDARD UTILITY ALLOWANCE (SUA)

If you are billed for heating and/or cooling costs that are not included in your rent or mortgage payment, you may be eligible for the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA). The SUA is one deduction for all of your eligible utility costs. If your utility bills are more than the SUA, you may switch between actual and the SUA at recertification and one other time during each 12 month certification period. If you have other utility costs but your heating or cooling costs are included in your rent, your benefits will be figured on your actual utility costs. Ask the County to check your facts to see if you are eligible for the SUA.

PENALTY WARNING

If you don't report all facts or give wrong facts to get or keep getting benefits, you can be legally prosecuted with penalties of a fine and/or imprisonment. You may be found to have committed a felony if more than \$400 is wrongly paid out in food stamp benefits because you didn't report all of your facts or changes in income, property or family status.

If your household receives food stamps, it must follow these rules:

- Don't give wrong or incomplete facts to get or keep getting food stamps.
- Don't trade or sell food stamp Authorization Documents (ADs) or issuance cards.
- Don't alter ADs or issuance cards to get food stamps you are not entitled to get.
- Don't use food stamps to buy ineligible items such as alcoholic drinks or tobacco, paper or cleaning products.
- Don't use someone else's food stamps, ADs or issuance cards for your household.
- Don't trade food stamp coupons for firearms, ammunition, explosives or controlled substances.

DISQUALIFICATION PENALTIES

Failing to follow these rules may result in a finding of a Food Stamp Intentional Program Violation (IPV). The penalties can result in fines up to \$250,000, imprisonment up to 20 years, and/or disqualification from the Food Stamp Program.

Disqualification means not being able to get food stamps for a period of time. The disqualification penalties are 6 months for the first violation, 12 months for the second violation, and permanent disqualification for the third violation. Additionally, if you are found guilty in any court of law for trading food stamp coupons for firearms, ammunition, or explosives, food stamps can be stopped forever for the first offense and if you are found guilty in any court of trading food stamp coupons for controlled substances, food stamps can be stopped for 12 months for the first violation and forever for the second violation. These penalties start after a State hearing or court of law finds that an individual committed an IPV. Also, anyone who is accused of committing an IPV may agree to be disqualified by signing either a Disqualification Consent Agreement or an Administrative Disqualification Hearing Waiver. Anyone who signs one of these documents accepts responsibility to repay any overissuance.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that I have received a copy of the "Important Facts for Food Stamp Applicants" (DFA 285-A3). I understand my rights and responsibilities. I agree to comply with my responsibilities. I also understand the penalties for giving wrong or incomplete facts and failing to report facts or situations which may affect my eligibility for food stamp benefits.

SIGNATURE (ADULT HOUSEHOLD MEMBER OR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE):

DATE:

WITNESS, IF YOU SIGNED WITH AN "X"

DATE:

I certify that I have informed the applicant/recipient of the above responsibilities and of the possibilities of criminal penalties for intentionally making false statements or failing to report information which affects food stamp eligibility.

SIGNATURE OF INTERVIEWING WORKER

DATE APPLICATION REVIEWED WITH CLIENT OR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT REQUIRED VERIFICATIONS IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

SAVE THIS NOTICE

Verifications are proof (such as identification cards, wage stubs, receipts, bills, etc.) that you need to show us. The following list has some of the most common examples you may need to give us so we can figure your eligibility and benefit amount. You must give us proof anytime you have a change or anytime what you tell us is questionable, out-of-date or incomplete. You may not need to give us all the items on the list; your eligibility worker will tell you what is needed. If you need help in getting any proof, the county will help you get the proof and/or tell you if there is some other way you can show proof. Please bring the proof that applies to you to your interview.

Proof of Identification

- Department of Motor Vehicles driver's license or identification (ID) card or any other ID card with your picture on it.
- Other ID for work, school, health benefits, or for another public assistance program.
- Social security number (SSN) card or other document with your SSN.
- Voter registration card, birth certificate or baptismal certificate, etc.

Proof of Application for Social Security Number

- SSN card OR proof of application for an SSN for each household member who doesn't already have an SSN.

Proof of Alien Status (one of the following)

- Alien Registration Card (green card), Refugee Information Form, Arrival-Departure Card.
- Citizenship papers.
- Other Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) papers that show your current status.

Proof of Property

- Statements/passbooks that verify current checking/savings account balances in banks, credit unions, savings and loan associations, etc.
- Motor vehicle registration papers or receipts for automobiles, boats, trailers, motorcycles, mobile homes, etc.
- Papers that show what the property is, its worth, who it belongs to, etc.

SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FORM FOR OTHER EXAMPLES.

Proof of Income

- Payroll check stubs that show name of employer and person who worked, gross amount of pay before deductions, dates of pay period, etc.
- Papers that show where the money came from, the amount, the person who got or will get the money or benefit, and what period of time it's for; such as copies of checks or award letters, loan papers, etc.

SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FORM FOR OTHER EXAMPLES.

Proof of Shelter Costs/Expenses (billed to you)

- Housing - bills/receipts for
 - rent, house/mortgage payments.
 - insurance and property taxes, if not part of your house payment.
- Actual Utility Costs - bills/receipts (if not included in your rent) for
 - gas, electricity, telephone, utility installation.
 - garbage and trash pickup, water, sewage, etc.
- Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) - bills/receipts
 - for heating or cooling costs that show you are billed separately from rent or mortgage payment.
 - or signed agreement showing that the amount you are charged is based upon a meter that shows how much gas or electricity you use each billing period.
 - for wood or other fuel used for heating or cooling.

SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FORM FOR WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY--

Actual Utility Costs And Standard Utility Allowance (SUA)

- Shared Housing or Utilities - bills/receipts
 - or other papers that show what was paid or owed, and which costs each person paid/owed.

Proof of Allowable Dependent Care Costs - bills/receipts

- that show the name of the person who gave the care, name of the person(s) cared for, cost of the care, and the name of the person who paid for the care.

SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FORM FOR WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY--

Allowable Dependent Care

Proof of Allowable Court Ordered Child Support Paid

- copies of the court order that requires a member of the household to pay child support for a child not living with the household.

SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FORM FOR WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY--

Allowable Court Ordered Child Support.

SEE OTHER SIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION

After your eligibility interview the county will tell you what to show if you need to show other proof for such things as, but not limited to, proof of:

Residency

Citizenship

Household Composition

Eligible Educational or Training Costs

Inability to work due to mental or physical unfitness for employment

Severe Disability

Medical Expenses (If elderly, age 60 or over, or disabled)

Cooperation with Work and Training Requirements (some households will need proof of going to work assignments or training, to job contacts, or on job searches.)

WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY:

Property - cash or other items belonging to you and to anyone living with you that can be changed to cash, such as, but not limited to the following:

- Cash on hand or cash kept elsewhere, and investments, stocks, and bonds.
- Checking accounts, savings accounts in banks, credit unions, savings and loan associations, etc.
- Real estate, other than the home where you live.
- Income tax refunds.
- Winnings from bingo, lottery, prizes, etc.
- Trust funds, stocks, bonds, and certificates.
- Notes, mortgages, deeds, sales contracts.
- Oil, mining, or mineral rights.
- Retirement funds that you can get if you stop work.
- Other retirement funds, such as IRAs or Keogh Plans, etc.
- List of safety deposit box contents.
- Life insurance and burial policies that show the cash surrender value.

Income - money you get from any source, such as, but not limited to the following:

- Employment, such as full-time, part-time and self-employment (including hobbies).
- Training, such as Work Study, JTPA, GAIN, or other program that may include a training allowance.
- Student grants and loans.
- Welfare, such as AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), RCA (Refugees), or GA/GR (General Assistance).
- State benefits such as UIB (unemployment insurance) and DIB/SDI (disability insurance benefits/state disability insurance).
- Workers compensation.
- Child or spousal support and alimony.
- Social Security Administration, such as supplemental security income/state supplementary program (SSI/SSP); other disability or retirement or survivors benefits.
- Veterans Administration, such as disability or GI Bill
- Military allotment of pension.
- Railroad disability or retirement.
- Other disability, retirement or pension from a private or federal, state, or local government agency.
- Roomers and boarders.
- Loans, gifts, and contributions.
- Income from rental property.

Actual Utility Costs - actual costs for your utilities (up to the maximum allowable deduction).

Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) - a monthly amount for all your utilities if you are billed for heating or cooling costs apart from your rent or mortgage payment. AND if you are billed for gas or electricity, your charges must be based upon a meter that shows the amount of gas or electricity used.

Allowable Dependent Care Costs - actual monthly costs of the care of a child or other dependent, if working, looking for work or going to school to prepare for work (up to the current maximum).

Court Ordered Child Support Allowance - actual court ordered child support paid monthly by a household member for a child not living in the home. This can include payment for current and past months support amounts, if paid in the current month.

FOOD STAMPS

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

IF YOU HAVE A DISABILITY AND NEED HELP APPLYING FOR OR CONTINUING TO RECEIVE FOOD STAMP BENEFITS AND SERVICES, TELL THE COUNTY.

**The law says that all applicants/recipients for aid, benefits, or services are to be treated fairly.
If you think you have been discriminated against, contact your county's civil rights coordinator.**

WHAT IS THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM?

It's a program that helps low-income households get more and better food than they could buy with just their money. The food stamps come from the Federal government. The Food Stamp Program rules come from Federal law and regulations. The County Welfare Department uses these rules to run the program.

HOW DO I ASK FOR FOOD STAMPS?

You ask for food stamps by filling out an application form at the closest County Welfare Department office in the County where you live. The application will be for everyone in your food stamp household. In most cases, your food stamp household will be all the people who live with you. Sometimes, people who live with you buy and fix their own food. If they do, they may be able to be in their own food stamp household. They would have to fill out their own application form if they want food stamps.

You can also ask for medical benefits and most types of cash aid at the same time by using the same form. If you are asking for your County's local cash aid (i.e., General Relief or General Assistance), you will need to use a different application form. After you turn in your application form, the County will set up a time for you to talk to a worker. Most of the time, you will be able to talk to the same worker about cash aid.

If you need food stamps right away because you do not have much money or a place to live, you may get "Expedited Service." If you meet the rules for Expedited Service, you can get food stamps within three (3) days from the date you turned in your application form.

WHAT WILL THE COUNTY ASK ME TO DO?

Your worker will need to know certain facts to find out if you meet all of the rules. You will need to give your worker proof of some of these facts. You will need to give to your worker new proof anytime the facts change and proof of your earnings each month. Your worker will tell you which facts need proof. If you don't give your worker the facts or proof, your worker may have no choice but to deny or stop your food stamps until you do all that you can to get them.

If you need help in getting the proof, your worker will help you get it or tell you if there is another way you can show proof.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RULES THAT I HAVE TO MEET TO GET FOOD STAMPS?

Here are some of the rules that everyone has to meet to get food stamps. There are others, but your worker will tell you about them. How many of the other rules apply to you will depend on your situation.

- **Social Security Number (SSN):** Everyone, even babies, must have an SSN. If someone in your household doesn't have one, you must do all you can to help that person get one.
- **Live In the County:** You must live in the County where you are asking for food stamps. If you move to a different County and still want food stamps, you will have to ask for them again in the new County.
- **Citizenship:** To get food stamps, you must be either a U.S. citizen or be in this country under an approved immigrant status. If you are not a U.S. citizen, you will need to give your worker proof of your alien status.
- **Register for Work:** Most household members between the ages of 18 and 60 who are able to, but are not working, must register for work. A single parent with children under six does not have to register. Some 16 and 17 year old household members may need to register. The entire household could have their food stamps stopped if someone who has to register doesn't do it.
- **Monthly Report:** Most households getting food stamps must send in a report to the County each month. This report is called the "Monthly Eligibility Report" (CA 7) or "Monthly Eligibility/Status Report" (SAWS 7). It must be all filled in and turned in on time or your food stamps could be lowered or stopped. If your household does not have to turn in a CA 7 or SAWS 7, you still have to report within 10 days any changes in your situation or any change of \$25.00 or more in income. These changes can be reported by either calling or writing to your worker or by completing a Food Stamp Household Change Report (DFA 377.5). If all of these changes are not reported, your food stamps can be stopped.
- **Property Limit:** There is a \$2,000.00 limit on the amount of property (e.g., bank accounts, stocks, etc.) that your household can have and still get food stamps. If someone in your household is at least 60 years old, the limit goes up to \$3,000.00. Your house and furniture are not part of the limit as long as you live in your home. If you have only one car and it has a value of less than a certain amount, it will not be counted as part of the limit. The individual vehicle value limit does change and your worker will be able to tell you what it is.

SEE OTHER SIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION

RULES (Cont.)

- **Amount of Food Stamps:** Federal law sets a limit on the amount of food stamps a household can get each month. This amount depends on the size of your household. If your household has income, the amount of that income left after giving certain deductions will be used to figure out the amount of food stamps you can get. A household cannot get food stamps if it has income that is more than the limit set for its size.

If you ever get too many food stamps, you may have to pay back the extra amount that you should not have gotten. This is called an "overissuance." Overissuances may have to be paid back, even if it wasn't your fault that it happened. In most cases, you will have some food stamps taken away each month until the overissuance is all paid back, unless it was the county's fault that you got too many food stamps. If it was the county's fault, your monthly benefits cannot be changed unless you agree to have them changed.

- **College or Junior College Students:** Only students who are working, are parents of young children, are getting cash aid or are over the age of 50 can get food stamps.

There are other rules which your worker will tell you about. If you do not understand a rule, ask your worker to explain it to you. It is important that you understand all of the rules so that you can get all of the food stamps your household should be getting.

HOW DO I GET THE FOOD STAMPS?

Some Counties mail the food stamp coupon books to you. Other Counties will send you a "plastic issuance card" or an "authorization form" to be used with an identification card to get the food stamp coupon books from an issuance outlet. Your worker will tell you which method is used and how you will be able to get your food stamp coupon books. If your authorization form or food stamp coupon books are lost, stolen or destroyed, call your worker right away. You may be able to get them replaced.

HOW DO I USE THE FOOD STAMPS AFTER I GET THEM?

Sign the food stamp coupon books when you get them. This will make it easier to trace if they are lost and turned in. Keep the food stamps in the books until you are ready to pay for your food. Stores will not take \$5 or \$10 food stamps if they are not together with the food stamp coupon book that has the same serial number that is on the food stamps. Stores will take loose \$1 food stamps.

You can use food stamps to buy almost all foods, even seeds or plants to grow your own food. Sales tax will not be added to the price of any item you buy with food stamps.

You cannot use food stamps to buy alcohol or tobacco products, pet food, some already cooked food, or non-food items (like toothpaste, soap, or paper towels).

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

April 10, 1996

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO.
1-21-96

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

REASON FOR TRANSMITTAL

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

SUBJECT: REVISED FOOD STAMP FORMS--DFA 285-A3, "IMPORTANT FACTS FOR THE FOOD STAMP APPLICANTS"; FS 8, "IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT REQUIRED VERIFICATIONS IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM"; AND FS 9, "FOOD STAMPS IMPORTANT INFORMATION"

This letter transmits copies of the revised DFA 285-A3 (2/96), "Important Facts for Food Stamp Applicants"; the FS 8 (2/96) "Important Information About Required Verifications In The Food Stamp Program"; and the FS 9 (2/96), "Food Stamps Important Information". These forms have been revised to incorporate several regulation changes and to update the discrimination and reasonable accommodation information to be consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (P.L. 101-336). A description of the changes made to these forms is provided in the Attachment.

STOCK

The California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) warehouse will no longer stock the 4/93 version of the DFA 285-A3. Counties should begin using the 2/96 version as soon as it is available in the warehouse. It is expected to be available about mid-April. Counties may continue to use up their stock of the FS 8 and FS 9. The warehouse has a small supply of the older versions that will last approximately two to three months. Once the stock has been depleted, the new versions will be used. County Welfare Departments (CWDs) may order stock from the warehouse according to the normal procedures contained in the County Forms Catalog.

TRANSLATIONS

Counties that need a camera-ready copy of the forms, should call:

- For English and Spanish: the Forms Management Bureau at (916) 657-1907 or CALNET 437-1984.

DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES TO THE DFA 285-A3, FS 8, AND FS 9

DFA 285-A3

Page 1

- The Reasonable Accommodation statement was added in bold near top of page to meet ADA language requirements.
- Non-discrimination information has been revised to be consistent with current language.
- Under "Your Rights" section, the bullets dealing with the right to ask for help in completion of application or any other forms and the right to have forms translated have been moved to the beginning of the listing.
- Under "Your Responsibilities", bullets were eliminated, material was grouped by subjects and wording was changed to include "You must" at the beginning of each item.

Page 2

The page numbers were moved from the top of the page to the bottom so each page is numbered consistently. Page two was reformatted to center the title and general instructions for reporting responsibilities. There are now two separate columns, one dealing with "Monthly Reporting" and one dealing with "Non-Monthly Reporting".

Monthly Reporting

You Must Report If:

- Fifth bullet was reworded to include reporting of any child up to age 22 or any adult who starts or stops school, college or training.
- A bullet was added telling recipients they must report if there is any change in an order for court ordered child support paid by a household member for a child not living in the home.

You May Report If:

- A bullet was added telling recipients they may report the payment of child support by a household member for a child not living in the home.
- The bullet regarding medical expenses was reworded to be consistent with recent regulation changes.

Non-Monthly Reporting

You Must Report If:

- A bullet was added telling recipients they must report if there is any change in an order for court ordered child support paid by a household member for a child not living in the home.

You May Report If:

- The reporting of medical expenses was moved to this section.
- A bullet was added telling recipients they may report the payment of child support by a household member for a child not living in the home.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR FOOD STAMP APPLICANTS

These pages give you important information, including your rights and responsibilities. If you need more information or have questions, ask your worker. The County needs facts about you and your household to see if you are eligible for Food Stamp benefits and to figure how much you will get if you are eligible.

IF YOU HAVE A DISABILITY AND NEED HELP APPLYING FOR OR CONTINUING TO RECEIVE CASH AID, FOOD STAMP BENEFITS, AND SERVICES, TELL THE COUNTY.

The law says that all applicants/recipients for aid, benefits, or services are to be treated fairly without regard to race, color, national origin, political affiliation, religion, marital status, sex, age or disability.

If you think you have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint by:

1. contacting your county's civil rights coordinator; or
2. writing to:
 - State Department of Social Services
Civil Rights Bureau
744 P Street MS 15-70,
P.O. Box 944243, Sacramento, CA 94244-2430
 - or for Food Stamps only to:
U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Food and Consumer Service, Civil Rights Office,
550 Kearney Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

You may also file by calling (916) 654-2107 or for the hearing impaired toll free 1-800-952-8349 (TDD).

YOUR RIGHTS

- To ask for help to complete your application or any other food stamp form.
- To ask for forms and notices to be translated if you don't read English.
- To be treated with courtesy, consideration and respect.
- To be interviewed promptly by the county when you apply and to have your eligibility determined within 30 days.
- To discuss your case with the County and to review your case yourself when you request to do so.
- To be told the rules for getting food stamps right away. If we think you might be eligible, you will get an interview within three days.
- To ask to have your Food Stamp I.D., authorization document, or issuance card, or food stamps replaced if lost in the mail, damaged, stolen or destroyed. The County will tell you if you are eligible.

- To be given a written notice when your application is approved, denied, or when your benefits change or stop.
- To have your records kept confidential by the County and State.
- To file a complaint or to ask for a State hearing within 90 days of any action if you think the action was wrong. You can write to your County Welfare Department or call toll free 1-800-952-5253 or for the hearing impaired (TDD) 1-800-952-8349.
- To be represented at a State Hearing by yourself or by a household member, friend, attorney, or other person of your choice. NOTE: You may get free legal help at your local legal aid office or welfare rights group.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE)

You must sign under penalty of perjury that each member applying for food stamps is a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or lawful alien resident. Information you give us on immigration status will be checked with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Information we get from INS may affect your eligibility for food stamps.

Social Security Number

You must give us the Social Security Number (SSN) for each applicant for food stamps. Anyone who refuses to give either a SSN or proof of application for a SSN will be disqualified from getting benefits. (Providing a SSN is required for all applicants by Section 1137 of the Social Security Act: 7 U.S. Code Section 2025e).

The SSNs will be used in a computer match to check income and resources with records from tax, welfare, employment, the Social Security Administration and other agencies. Differences may be checked out with employers, banks or others. Making false statements or failing to report all facts or situations which affect eligibility for food stamps may result in discontinuance and/or repayment of benefits and/or criminal or civil action.

Verification(s)

You must give proof or more facts when we ask. If you can't get proof, give the name of some other person or agency we may contact to get it. When you can't get the proof you need, we will help you get it.

Cooperation

You must cooperate with County, State and Federal staff. You may not get benefits or your benefits may be stopped if you don't cooperate.

YOUR REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

You must report all changes to the County. If you're not sure how to report changes, what changes to report, or what proof we need, ask your worker. Your worker will tell you if you are a monthly or nonmonthly reporting household.

MONTHLY REPORTING

How You Must Report

You must turn in a complete Monthly Eligibility Report by the 5th of each month.

Monthly Reporting Requirements

YOU MUST REPORT IF:

- Anyone gets money from work, relatives, Social Security, Veteran's benefits, tax refunds, or any other source.
- Anyone gets free rent or utilities.
- Anyone's job or training program changes.
- Anyone's income or source of income changes, starts or stops.
- Any child up to age 22 or any adult starts or stops school, college or training.
- You move in with someone else or anyone moves into or out of your home, including newborns, other children, spouses, absent parents, other relatives and non-relatives.
- Anyone moves to another address, plans to move, or gets a new mailing address. If you move to another County and you want to keep getting benefits, you must tell the County giving you aid and/or benefits AND ask for food stamps again in the new county.
- Anyone gets payments or allowances for job, training or school expenses, such as educational grants and loans, transportation to and from job or training, etc.
- Anyone is self-employed.
- Anyone has job, training or school costs, such as dependent care, transportation, tuition, books, etc.
- Anyone has expenses that are paid for in total or in part by someone else, such as housing, utilities, medical, dependent care, etc.
- Any change in the order for court ordered child support paid by a household member for a child not living in the home.
- Anyone gets, sells gives away or transfers real property, such as a house, buildings or land; or personal property, such as money, a bank account, a motor vehicle, a boat, a trust fund, etc.
- Anyone's citizenship/immigration status or documentation changes.
- Anyone reaches 60 years of age.

YOU MAY REPORT IF:

- Any household member, who is disabled or age 60 or over, has changes in medical expenses or any new medical expenses.
- Any household member begins to pay court ordered child support for a child not living in the home.

NONMONTHLY REPORTING

How You Must Report

You must report all changes within 10 days:

- by mail, telephone or in person at the County Food Stamp office OR
- on a DFA 377.5, Food Stamp Household Change Report OR
- on a Monthly Eligibility Report if you get AFDC.

Nonmonthly Reporting Requirements

YOU MUST REPORT IF:

- Your total monthly income starts, stops, or changes by more than \$25.
- Anyone's source of income changes.
- You move in with someone else or anyone moves into or out of your home, including newborns, other children, spouses, other relatives or non-relatives.
- Anyone moves to another address, plans to move, or gets a new mailing address.
- The total of your household's stocks, bonds, or other money is more than \$2000 (or \$3000 if you have a household member who is age 60 or over).
- If there is a change in the order of any court ordered child support paid by a member of the household for a child not living in the home.

YOU MAY REPORT IF:

- A household member is age 60 or older.
- Any household member, who is disabled or age 60 or over, has changes in medical expenses or any new medical expenses.
- Anyone in the household starts or stops a physical or mental illness.
- You have changes in your dependent care costs.
- Anyone's citizenship/immigration status or documentation changes.
- Any household member begins to pay court ordered child support for a child not living in the home.

Budgeting Rules--Monthly Reporting

The amount of food stamps you can get depends on your income and allowable expenses. What you report on the Monthly Eligibility Report will be used to figure the amount of food stamps you can get two months later. For example, your income and allowable expenses from January are used to figure the food stamp benefits you would get in March. This method is called retrospective budgeting.

WORK AND TRAINING RULES

You may need to take part in work or training activities. Your worker will look at your facts to see if the rules apply to you. Your worker will tell you what you need to do before and after your application is approved.

If you don't follow the work and training rules, and don't have a good reason, we may deny your application, change the amount of benefits you get, or disqualify a member or your household from getting food stamps for two months.

If someone joins your food stamp household who has been disqualified because they didn't follow the work rules, your food stamp household may be disqualified for up to two months.

VOLUNTARY QUIT

If you quit your job without a good reason, your household may be disqualified for three months. If someone else quits a job without a good reason or joins your household, your household may be disqualified for up to three months.

STANDARD UTILITY ALLOWANCE (SUA)

If you are billed for heating and/or cooling costs that are not included in your rent or mortgage payment, you may be eligible for the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA). The SUA is one deduction for all of your eligible utility costs. If your utility bills are more than the SUA, you may switch between actual and the SUA at recertification and one other time during each 12 month certification period. If you have other utility costs but your heating or cooling costs are included in your rent, your benefits will be figured on your actual utility costs. Ask the County to check your facts to see if you are eligible for the SUA.

PENALTY WARNING

If you don't report all facts or give wrong facts to get or keep getting benefits, you can be legally prosecuted with penalties of a fine and/or imprisonment. You may be found to have committed a felony if more than \$400 is wrongly paid out in food stamp benefits because you didn't report all of your facts or changes in income, property or family status.

If your household receives food stamps, it must follow these rules:

- Don't give wrong or incomplete facts to get or keep getting food stamps.
- Don't trade or sell food stamp Authorization Documents (ADs) or issuance cards.
- Don't alter ADs or issuance cards to get food stamps you are not entitled to get.
- Don't use food stamps to buy ineligible items such as alcoholic drinks or tobacco, paper or cleaning products.
- Don't use someone else's food stamps, ADs or issuance cards for your household.
- Don't trade food stamp coupons for firearms, ammunition, explosives or controlled substances.

DISQUALIFICATION PENALTIES

Failing to follow these rules may result in a finding of a Food Stamp Intentional Program Violation (IPV). The penalties can result in fines up to \$250,000, imprisonment up to 20 years, and/or disqualification from the Food Stamp Program.

Disqualification means not being able to get food stamps for a period of time. The disqualification penalties are 6 months for the first violation, 12 months for the second violation, and permanent disqualification for the third violation. Additionally, if you are found guilty in any court of law for trading food stamp coupons for firearms, ammunition, or explosives, food stamps can be stopped forever for the first offense and if you are found guilty in any court of trading food stamp coupons for controlled substances, food stamps can be stopped for 12 months for the first violation and forever for the second violation. These penalties start after a State hearing or court of law finds that an individual committed an IPV. Also, anyone who is accused of committing an IPV may agree to be disqualified by signing either a Disqualification Consent Agreement or an Administrative Disqualification Hearing Waiver. Anyone who signs one of these documents accepts responsibility to repay any overissuance.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that I have received a copy of the "Important Facts for Food Stamp Applicants" (DFA 285-A3). I understand my rights and responsibilities. I agree to comply with my responsibilities. I also understand the penalties for giving wrong or incomplete facts and failing to report facts or situations which may affect my eligibility for food stamp benefits.

SIGNATURE (ADULT HOUSEHOLD MEMBER OR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE):

DATE:

WITNESS, IF YOU SIGNED WITH AN "X"

DATE:

I certify that I have informed the applicant/recipient of the above responsibilities and of the possibilities of criminal penalties for intentionally making false statements or failing to report information which affects food stamp eligibility.

SIGNATURE OF INTERVIEWING WORKER

DATE APPLICATION REVIEWED WITH CLIENT OR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT REQUIRED VERIFICATIONS IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

SAVE THIS NOTICE

Verifications are proof (such as identification cards, wage stubs, receipts, bills, etc.) that you need to show us. The following list has some of the most common examples you may need to give us so we can figure your eligibility and benefit amount. You must give us proof anytime you have a change or anytime what you tell us is questionable, out-of-date or incomplete. You may not need to give us all the items on the list; your eligibility worker will tell you what is needed. If you need help in getting any proof, the county will help you get the proof and/or tell you if there is some other way you can show proof. Please bring the proof that applies to you to your interview.

Proof of Identification

- Department of Motor Vehicles driver's license or identification (ID) card or any other ID card with your picture on it.
- Other ID for work, school, health benefits, or for another public assistance program.
- Social security number (SSN) card or other document with your SSN.
- Voter registration card, birth certificate or baptismal certificate, etc.

Proof of Application for Social Security Number

- SSN card OR proof of application for an SSN for each household member who doesn't already have an SSN.

Proof of Alien Status (one of the following)

- Alien Registration Card (green card), Refugee Information Form, Arrival-Departure Card.
- Citizenship papers.
- Other Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) papers that show your current status.

Proof of Property

- Statements/passbooks that verify current checking/savings account balances in banks, credit unions, savings and loan associations, etc.
- Motor vehicle registration papers or receipts for automobiles, boats, trailers, motorcycles, mobile homes, etc.
- Papers that show what the property is, its worth, who it belongs to, etc.

SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FORM FOR OTHER EXAMPLES.

Proof of Income

- Payroll check stubs that show name of employer and person who worked, gross amount of pay before deductions, dates of pay period, etc.
- Papers that show where the money came from, the amount, the person who got or will get the money or benefit, and what period of time it's for; such as copies of checks or award letters, loan papers, etc.

SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FORM FOR OTHER EXAMPLES.

Proof of Shelter Costs/Expenses (billed to you)

- Housing - bills/receipts for
 - rent, house/mortgage payments.
 - insurance and property taxes, if not part of your house payment.
- Actual Utility Costs - bills/receipts (if not included in your rent) for
 - gas, electricity, telephone, utility installation.
 - garbage and trash pickup, water, sewage, etc.
- Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) - bills/receipts
 - for heating or cooling costs that show you are billed separately from rent or mortgage payment.
 - or signed agreement showing that the amount you are charged is based upon a meter that shows how much gas or electricity you use each billing period.
 - for wood or other fuel used for heating or cooling.

SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FORM FOR WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY--

Actual Utility Costs And Standard Utility Allowance (SUA)

- Shared Housing or Utilities - bills/receipts
 - or other papers that show what was paid or owed, and which costs each person paid/owed.

Proof of Allowable Dependent Care Costs - bills/receipts

- that show the name of the person who gave the care, name of the person(s) cared for, cost of the care, and the name of the person who paid for the care.

SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FORM FOR WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY--

Allowable Dependent Care

Proof of Allowable Court Ordered Child Support Paid

- copies of the court order that requires a member of the household to pay child support for a child not living with the household.

SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FORM FOR WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY--

Allowable Court Ordered Child Support.

SEE OTHER SIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION

After your eligibility interview the county will tell you what to show if you need to show other proof for such things as, but not limited to, proof of:

Residency

Citizenship

Household Composition

Eligible Educational or Training Costs

Inability to work due to mental or physical unfitness for employment

Severe Disability

Medical Expenses (If elderly, age 60 or over, or disabled)

Cooperation with Work and Training Requirements (some households will need proof of going to work assignments or training, to job contacts, or on job searches.)

Income - money you get from any source, such as, but not limited to the following:

- Employment, such as full-time, part-time and self-employment (including hobbies).
- Training, such as Work Study, JTPA, GAIN, or other program that may include a training allowance.
- Student grants and loans.
- Welfare, such as AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), RCA (Refugees), or GA/GR (General Assistance).
- State benefits such as UIB (unemployment insurance) and DIB/SDI (disability insurance benefits/state disability insurance).
- Workers compensation.
- Child or spousal support and alimony.
- Social Security Administration, such as supplemental security income/state supplementary program (SSI/SSP); other disability or retirement or survivors benefits.
- Veterans Administration, such as disability or GI Bill
- Military allotment of pension.
- Railroad disability or retirement.
- Other disability, retirement or pension from a private or federal, state, or local government agency.
- Roomers and boarders.
- Loans, gifts, and contributions.
- Income from rental property.

Actual Utility Costs - actual costs for your utilities (up to the maximum allowable deduction).

Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) - a monthly amount for all your utilities if you are billed for heating or cooling costs apart from your rent or mortgage payment. AND if you are billed for gas or electricity, your charges must be based upon a meter that shows the amount of gas or electricity used.

Allowable Dependent Care Costs - actual monthly costs of the care of a child or other dependent, if working, looking for work or going to school to prepare for work (up to the current maximum).

Court Ordered Child Support Allowance - actual court ordered child support paid monthly by a household member for a child not living in the home. This can include payment for current and past months support amounts, if paid in the current month.

WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY:

Property - cash or other items belonging to you and to anyone living with you that can be changed to cash, such as, but not limited to the following:

- Cash on hand or cash kept elsewhere, and investments, stocks, and bonds.
- Checking accounts, savings accounts in banks, credit unions, savings and loan associations, etc.
- Real estate, other than the home where you live.
- Income tax refunds.
- Winnings from bingo, lottery, prizes, etc.
- Trust funds, stocks, bonds, and certificates.
- Notes, mortgages, deeds, sales contracts.
- Oil, mining, or mineral rights.
- Retirement funds that you can get if you stop work.
- Other retirement funds, such as IRAs or Keogh Plans, etc.
- List of safety deposit box contents.
- Life insurance and burial policies that show the cash surrender value.

FOOD STAMPS

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

IF YOU HAVE A DISABILITY AND NEED HELP APPLYING FOR OR CONTINUING TO RECEIVE FOOD STAMP BENEFITS AND SERVICES, TELL THE COUNTY.

The law says that all applicants/recipients for aid, benefits, or services are to be treated fairly.
If you think you have been discriminated against, contact your county's civil rights coordinator.

WHAT IS THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM?

It's a program that helps low-income households get more and better food than they could buy with just their money. The food stamps come from the Federal government. The Food Stamp Program rules come from Federal law and regulations. The County Welfare Department uses these rules to run the program.

HOW DO I ASK FOR FOOD STAMPS?

You ask for food stamps by filling out an application form at the closest County Welfare Department office in the County where you live. The application will be for everyone in your food stamp household. In most cases, your food stamp household will be all the people who live with you. Sometimes, people who live with you buy and fix their own food. If they do, they may be able to be in their own food stamp household. They would have to fill out their own application form if they want food stamps.

You can also ask for medical benefits and most types of cash aid at the same time by using the same form. If you are asking for your County's local cash aid (i.e., General Relief or General Assistance), you will need to use a different application form. After you turn in your application form, the County will set up a time for you to talk to a worker. Most of the time, you will be able to talk to the same worker about cash aid.

If you need food stamps right away because you do not have much money or a place to live, you may get "Expedited Service." If you meet the rules for Expedited Service, you can get food stamps within three (3) days from the date you turned in your application form.

WHAT WILL THE COUNTY ASK ME TO DO?

Your worker will need to know certain facts to find out if you meet all of the rules. You will need to give your worker proof of some of these facts. You will need to give to your worker new proof anytime the facts change and proof of your earnings each month. Your worker will tell you which facts need proof. If you don't give your worker the facts or proof, your worker may have no choice but to deny or stop your food stamps until you do all that you can to get them.

If you need help in getting the proof, your worker will help you get it or tell you if there is another way you can show proof.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RULES THAT I HAVE TO MEET TO GET FOOD STAMPS?

Here are some of the rules that everyone has to meet to get food stamps. There are others, but your worker will tell you about them. How many of the other rules apply to you will depend on your situation.

- **Social Security Number (SSN):** Everyone, even babies, must have an SSN. If someone in your household doesn't have one, you must do all you can to help that person get one.
- **Live In the County:** You must live in the County where you are asking for food stamps. If you move to a different County and still want food stamps, you will have to ask for them again in the new County.
- **Citizenship:** To get food stamps, you must be either a U.S. citizen or be in this country under an approved immigrant status. If you are not a U.S. citizen, you will need to give your worker proof of your alien status.
- **Register for Work:** Most household members between the ages of 18 and 60 who are able to, but are not working, must register for work. A single parent with children under six does not have to register. Some 16 and 17 year old household members may need to register. The entire household could have their food stamps stopped if someone who has to register doesn't do it.
- **Monthly Report:** Most households getting food stamps must send in a report to the County each month. This report is called the "Monthly Eligibility Report" (CA 7) or "Monthly Eligibility/Status Report" (SAWS 7). It must be all filled in and turned in on time or your food stamps could be lowered or stopped. If your household does not have to turn in a CA 7 or SAWS 7, you still have to report within 10 days any changes in your situation or any change of \$25.00 or more in income. These changes can be reported by either calling or writing to your worker or by completing a Food Stamp Household Change Report (DFA 377.5). If all of these changes are not reported, your food stamps can be stopped.
- **Property Limit:** There is a \$2,000.00 limit on the amount of property (e.g., bank accounts, stocks, etc.) that your household can have and still get food stamps. If someone in your household is at least 60 years old, the limit goes up to \$3,000.00. Your house and furniture are not part of the limit as long as you live in your home. If you have only one car and it has a value of less than a certain amount, it will not be counted as part of the limit. The individual vehicle value limit does change and your worker will be able to tell you what it is.

SEE OTHER SIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION

RULES (Cont.)

- **Amount of Food Stamps:** Federal law sets a limit on the amount of food stamps a household can get each month. This amount depends on the size of your household. If your household has income, the amount of that income left after giving certain deductions will be used to figure out the amount of food stamps you can get. A household cannot get food stamps if it has income that is more than the limit set for its size.

If you ever get too many food stamps, you may have to pay back the extra amount that you should not have gotten. This is called an "overissuance." Overissuances may have to be paid back, even if it wasn't your fault that it happened. In most cases, you will have some food stamps taken away each month until the overissuance is all paid back, unless it was the county's fault that you got too many food stamps. If it was the county's fault, your monthly benefits cannot be changed unless you agree to have them changed.

- **College or Junior College Students:** Only students who are working, are parents of young children, are getting cash aid or are over the age of 50 can get food stamps.

There are other rules which your worker will tell you about. If you do not understand a rule, ask your worker to explain it to you. It is important that you understand all of the rules so that you can get all of the food stamps your household should be getting.

HOW DO I GET THE FOOD STAMPS?

Some Counties mail the food stamp coupon books to you. Other Counties will send you a "plastic issuance card" or an "authorization form" to be used with an identification card to get the food stamp coupon books from an issuance outlet. Your worker will tell you which method is used and how you will be able to get your food stamp coupon books. If your authorization form or food stamp coupon books are lost, stolen or destroyed, call your worker right away. You may be able to get them replaced.

HOW DO I USE THE FOOD STAMPS AFTER I GET THEM?

Sign the food stamp coupon books when you get them. This will make it easier to trace if they are lost and turned in. Keep the food stamps in the books until you are ready to pay for your food. Stores will not take \$5 or \$10 food stamps if they are not together with the food stamp coupon book that has the same serial number that is on the food stamps. Stores will take loose \$1 food stamps.

You can use food stamps to buy almost all foods, even seeds or plants to grow your own food. Sales tax will not be added to the price of any item you buy with food stamps.

You cannot use food stamps to buy alcohol or tobacco products, pet food, some already cooked food, or non-food items (like toothpaste, soap, or paper towels).