

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



December 17, 1999

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-98-99

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: UTILIZATION OF THE 15 PERCENT ABAWD EXEMPTION

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 allows Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) to receive food stamps for only three months in a 36-month time period unless they work at least 20 hours a week; participate in an approved work or training program; or live in an area that has been granted a waiver from the time limit due to either an unemployment rate higher than 10 percent, or insufficient jobs. Additionally, a provision of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 permits states to exempt up to 15 percent of those ABAWDs who are at risk of losing their food stamps for not meeting the work requirement.

The purpose of this notice is to provide counties with their revised Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2000 federal allocation of the 15 percent ABAWD exemptions and to remind the County Food Stamp Coordinators of the availability of these exemptions and encourage their use, as needed. The Department received 9,741 ABAWD exemptions for FFY 2000 from the United States Department of Agriculture. The exemptions have been allotted to each county, based on its share of the statewide non-assistance food stamp caseload. Enclosed is a list of the allotted exemptions by county, the annual case months of exemptions available, and the county-specific exemptions that have been requested to date. Each county has the flexibility to determine the most efficient and effective manner for use of its exemptions. Counties should establish written procedures for the 15 percent exemption process to ensure uniform and equitable usage of ABAWD work exemptions.

Unused exemptions can be carried over from month to month. The number of a county's exemptions multiplied by 12 yields the total number of annual exemptions that are available to that county's ABAWD population. During months of seasonally, high unemployment, the county can vary the number of individuals who receive the exemption from month to month as needed. For example, a county that uses only 50 of their 100 allocated exemptions in month one, can use 150 exemptions in the following month or reserve these unused exemptions for later months where high unemployment is expected.

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Counties are reminded they have the discretion to use the ABAWD 15 percent exemptions to help their ABAWD residents who are in danger of losing their food stamps. Loss of food stamp benefits by ABAWDs may represent an increased demand in your county for food assistance from the local food banks and other local, non-profit feeding organizations and local church assistance programs. To minimize the impact of ABAWDs losing their Food Stamp Program benefits, counties are encouraged to carefully manage and utilize their 15 percent exemptions.

If there are any questions regarding the use of the 15 percent exemption, please call Tony Pyara at (916) 657-2630.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Maria Hernandez on 12/16/99
CHARR LEE METSKER, Chief
Employment and Eligibility Branch

Enclosure