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**FOOD STAMP REGULATIONS  
APPLICATION PROCESS**

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**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS 63-300**

Section 63-300 applies to the application process for both the federal Food Stamp Program and the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP).

.1 General Process

The application process includes filing and completing an application, being interviewed, and having certain information verified. The CWD shall act promptly on all applications and provide food stamp benefits retroactive to the month of application to those households that have completed the application process and have been determined eligible. Expedited service shall be available to households that qualify under the provisions of Section 63-301.5. Specific responsibilities of the household and CWD are detailed below.

.2 Application Form and Form Deviation

Section 63-300.2(MR) shall become inoperative and Section 63-300.2(QR) shall become operative in a county on the date QR/PB becomes effective in that county, pursuant to the Director's QR/PB Declaration.

(MR) All applications for Food Stamp Program eligibility shall be made on the DFA 285-A1, DFA 285-A2, and DFA 285-A3. For households which apply for both AFDC and Food Stamps at the same time, the SAWS 1 CA1/DFA 285-A1, and BC JA 2 CA2/DFA 285-A2, and SAWS 2A CA2/DFA 285-A2/MC 210 shall be used. These forms also may be used for Food Stamp only cases. These joint application forms also may be used for food stamp and/or General Assistance (GA) cases.

(QR) All applications for Food Stamp Program eligibility shall be made on the DFA 285-A1, DFA 285-A2, and DFA 285-A3 QR. For households which apply for both CalWORKs and food stamps at the same time, the SAWS 1 CA1/DFA 285-A1, and BC JA 2 CA2/DFA 285-A2, and SAWS 2A QR/DFA 285-A2/MC 210 shall be used. These joint application forms also may be used for food stamp only cases and/or General Assistance (GA) cases.

.21 Screening

Applicants shall not be required to complete any CWD developed prescreening form.

.22 IEVS Interface

All applicants for, and recipients of food stamp benefits shall be notified in writing at the time of application, and at each recertification, that information available through IEVS will be requested, used, and may be verified through collateral contact when discrepancies are found by the CWD, and that such information may affect the household's eligibility and level of benefits.

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- .23 Privacy act statement. For all households applying or being recertified for food stamp benefits, the following applies:
  - .231 The collection of information, including the Social Security Number (SSN) of each household member, is authorized under the Food Stamp Act of 1997. This information will be used to determine if a household is eligible or continues to be eligible to participate in the food stamp program. The information will be verified through computer matching program and will also be used to monitor compliance with program regulations and for program management.
  - .232 The information may be disclosed to other federal and state agencies for official examination, and to law enforcement for apprehending persons fleeing to avoid the law.
  - .233 If a claim is made against a household, the information on the application, including all SSNs, may be referred to federal and state agencies and private claims collection agencies for claims collection action.
  - .234 Providing the requested information, including SSNs of each household member, is voluntary. However, failure to provide this information will result in denial of food stamp benefits to each individual failing to provide a SSN.
  
- .24 Section 63-300.24(MR) shall become inoperative and Section 63-300.24(QR) shall become operative in a county on the date QR/PB becomes effective in that county, pursuant to the Director's QR/PB Declaration.

(MR) Recertification of Monthly Reporting Households

Households subject to Food Stamp monthly reporting requirements shall have their Food Stamp eligibility redetermined by using the forms specified in Section 63-300.2 and the CA 7 for the budget month that corresponds to the first month of the new certification period.

(QR) Recertification of Quarterly Reporting Households

(QR) Households subject to food stamp QR requirements shall have their food stamp eligibility redetermined by using the forms specified in Section 63-300.2 and the QR 7 for the Data Month of the quarter corresponding to the last month of the certification period.

- .25 Section 63-300.25(MR) shall become inoperative and Section 63-300.25(QR) shall become operative in a county on the date QR/PB becomes effective in that county, pursuant to the Director's QR/PB Declaration.

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(MR) Recertification of Nonmonthly Reporting Households

(MR) Nonmonthly reporting households shall have their Food Stamp eligibility redetermined by using the forms specified in Section 63-300.2.

(QR) Recertification of Change Reporting Households

(QR) Change reporting households shall have their food stamp eligibility redetermined by using the forms specified in Section 63-300.2.

**.3 Filing, Notice of Right to File and Withdrawal**

Households must file food stamp applications by submitting the forms to the food stamp office either in person, or through an authorized representative, by mail, fax, through an electronic transmission, or through an on-line electronic application. The length of time to deliver benefits is calculated from the date the application is filed with the CWD. Applications signed through the use of electronic signature techniques or applications containing a handwritten signature and then transmitted by fax or other electronic transmission are acceptable.

.31 Each household shall be advised of their right to file an application, either paper or electronic, on the same day they contact the Food Stamp office during office hours.

.32 The household shall also be advised that it does not have to be interviewed before filing the application and may file an incomplete application form as long as the form contains the applicant's name and address, and is signed by a responsible member of the household or the household's authorized representative.

.321 Applications contain the penalty of perjury statement and must be signed by one adult household member or authorized representative or a responsible minor when the applicant household is composed entirely of minors and has no adult to act on its behalf.

.322 One adult household member or authorized representative shall attest, under penalty of perjury, that all eligible members of the Food Stamp household are either U.S. citizens, national or lawful alien residents.

.33 The CWD shall document the date the application was filed by recording on the application the date it was received by the food stamp office.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300****.34 Contacting the Food Stamp Office**

The CWD shall encourage households to file an application form the same day the household or its representative contacts the food stamp office in person or by telephone and expresses interest in obtaining food stamp assistance. If a household contacting the food stamp office by telephone does not wish to come to the appropriate office to file the application that same day and instead prefers receiving an application through the mail, an application form shall be mailed to the household on the same day the telephone request is received. An application shall also be mailed on the same day a written request for food assistance is received.

Where the CWD has designated certification offices to serve specific geographic areas, households may contact an office other than the one designated to service the area in which they reside. If a household contacts the wrong certification office within the county, either in person or by telephone, the certification office shall, in addition to meeting the above requirements, give the household the address and telephone number of the appropriate office. The certification office shall also offer to forward the household's application to the appropriate office on that same day if the household has completed enough information on the application to file. The household shall be informed that its application will not be considered filed and the processing standards shall not begin until the application is received by the appropriate office. If the household has mailed its application to the wrong office the certification office shall mail the application to the appropriate office on the same day as received. The filing date will be the day the appropriate office receives the application.

The CWD shall make application forms readily accessible to potentially eligible households. The application form shall be provided to anyone who requests the form.

**.35 Notice of Right to File**

The CWD shall post signs in the certification office which explain the application processing standards and the right to file an application on the day of initial contact.

**.36 Withdrawing Application**

The household may voluntarily withdraw its application at any time prior to the determination of eligibility. The CWD shall document in the case file the reason for withdrawal, if any was stated by the household, and that contact was made with the household to confirm the withdrawal. The household shall be advised of its right to reapply at any time subsequent to a withdrawal.

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.37 Written Statement of Verification Requirements

At the time of application and at recertification the CWD shall provide the household with the FS 8. The notice shall inform the household that the CWD will assist them in obtaining required verification, provided that the household is cooperating with the CWD as specified in Section 63-505.1.

.38 Beginning Date of Application When CWD is Closed on Normal Work Days

.381 In the event the CWD is closed during the regular eight hours of a working day as defined in Sections 11-601.214 and .215, and an application for Food Stamp benefits is deposited in a drop box, mail slot, or other reasonable accommodation in accordance with Section 11-601.311(b), the "date of application" shall be the date the application is deposited.

.382 In the event the CWD is closed during the regular eight hours of a working day as defined in Sections 11-601.214 and .215, and an applicant calls to make a request for emergency benefits in accordance with Section 11-601.313, the date of application shall be the date the telephone call is received.

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.383 Example: On Friday, when the CWD is closed, an applicant deposits an application for Food Stamp benefits in a mail slot designated for that purpose. The application will be date stamped with Friday's date or it will be otherwise indicated on the application that it was received on Friday, the date of application. Had the applicant made a request for Homeless Assistance, Food Stamp Expedited Services, Medi-Cal, or AFDC Immediate Need via the local telephone service on Friday, the date of application would be Friday and the application would have to be processed within established time frames.

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## .4 Interviews

All applicant households, including those submitting applications by mail, shall have face-to-face interviews in a food stamp office or other mutually acceptable location, including a household's residence, with a qualified eligibility worker prior to initial certification and all recertifications except when waived in accordance with Sections 63-300.42, .43, and .44. Interview requirements for PA and GA applicants are detailed in Section 63-301.6. Interviews conducted in the household's residence must be scheduled in advance with the household. The individual interviewed may be the head of household, spouse, any other responsible member of the household, or an authorized representative. The individual interviewed may bring any person he/she chooses to the interview. The interviewer shall not simply review the information that appears on the application, but shall explore and resolve with the household unclear and incomplete information and document any changes in household circumstances that have occurred between the time the application was filed and the time of the certification interview. Households shall be advised of their rights and responsibilities during the interview, including but not limited to, the appropriate application processing standard, the household's responsibility to report changes, that eligibility will be determined without discrimination, and the availability and amount of the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA). The interview is an official and confidential discussion of household circumstances with the applicant. The applicant shall be made to feel at ease during the interview and in all instances the household's right to privacy shall be respected. Facilities shall be adequate to preserve the privacy and confidentiality of the interview. The scope of the interview shall not extend beyond the examination of household circumstances which directly relate to the determination of household eligibility and basis of issuance.

.41 Sections 63-300.41 et seq.(MR) shall become inoperative and Sections 63-300.41 et seq.(QR) shall become operative in a county on the date QR/PB becomes effective in that county, pursuant to the Director's QR/PB Declaration.

(MR) The CWD at the time of the interview, shall determine which households shall be subject to monthly reporting and/or retrospective budgeting, as specified in Section 63-505.2. Households subject to monthly reporting and/or retrospective budgeting requirements shall be provided with the following at the certification and recertification interviews:

(MR) .411 Written and verbal explanations of monthly reporting/retrospective budgeting;

(MR) .412 A copy of the CA 7 report and an explanation of how the report shall be completed and submitted;

(MR) .413 An explanation of the monthly reporting verification requirements that the household is responsible for meeting;

(MR) .414 A telephone number (toll-free or a number where collect calls will be accepted from households living outside the local calling area) which the household may call to ask questions or to obtain help in completing the monthly report.

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(QR) The CWD at the time of the initial application interview shall determine which households shall be subject to QR/PB, as specified in Section 63-505.2. The CWD may require those households subject to QR/PB requirements to have a face-to-face interview during the recertification process. For those QR/PB households that are not required to have a face-to-face recertification interview, the CWD shall conduct an interview by telephone, in accordance with Section 63-300.45.

Households subject to QR/PB requirements shall be provided with the following during the certification and recertification process:

- (QR) .411 Written and verbal explanations of QR/PB;
- (QR) .412 A copy of the QR 7 report and an explanation of how the report shall be completed and submitted;
- (QR) .413 An explanation of the QR verification requirements that the household is responsible for meeting;
- (QR) .414 A telephone number (toll-free or a number where collect calls will be accepted from households living outside the local calling area) which the household may call to ask questions or to obtain help in completing the quarterly report.

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- .415 The CWD may provide the name of a worker to contact.

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.42 Waiving the Interview (CWD Screening Process)

The CWD shall screen applicants for the need to have face-to-face interviews as part of the application and recertification process. If mutually acceptable face-to-face interview accommodations between the county and applicant/recipient cannot be made, the county shall then evaluate whether the household qualifies for an exemption as specified in Sections 63-300.43 and .44.

.43 Waiving the Face-to-Face Interview (No Option)

The face-to-face interview shall be waived at initial certification and at recertification for any household in which all the household members are 60 years of age or older, or physically disabled. The face-to-face interview shall also be waived if requested by any household which is unable to appoint an authorized representative and lives in a location which is not served by a certification office. For those households that are not required to have a face-to-face interview, the CWD shall conduct an interview by telephone, in accordance with Section 63-300.45.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300****.44 Waiving the Face-to-Face Interview (Case-by-case)**

The CWD shall waive the face-to-face interview and instead allow a telephone interview on a case-by-case basis for any household which is unable to appoint an authorized representative and which has no household members able to come to the interview because of transportation difficulties or similar hardships which the CWD determines warrant a waiver of the interview. These hardship conditions include, but are not limited to: illness, care of a household member, prolonged severe weather, or work hours which preclude a face-to-face interview, lack of transportation, or living in a rural or remote area. The CWD shall determine if the transportation difficulty or hardship reported by a household warrants a waiver of the interview and shall document in the case file why a request for a waiver was granted or denied.

**.45 When the Interview is Waived or Not Required**

The CWD has the option of conducting a telephone interview or a home visit for those households for whom the face-to-face interview is waived or not required. Home visits shall be used only if the time of the visit is scheduled in advance with the household.

The CWD shall conduct a face-to-face interview at recertification in accordance with Section 63-300.4 when requested by the household or when the county determines it is necessary to verify conditions of eligibility.

When the face-to-face interview is waived or not required, it does not exempt the household from the verification requirements, although special procedures may be used to permit the household to provide verification and thus obtain its benefits in a timely manner, such as substituting a collateral contact in cases where documentary verification would normally be provided.

When the face-to-face interview is waived or not required, it shall not affect the length of the household's certification period.

There is no limit to how many times a household may be certified based on telephone interviews. However, the case file must be adequately documented each time the face-to-face interview is waived.

.451 The CWD shall attempt to complete all SFIS requirements not completed at time of certification, when the household member(s) is/are in the office for any reason. The CWD shall not require the household member to make a special trip into the office solely for the purpose of the SFIS compliance. However, a household that has not met SFIS requirements during the initial certification period must satisfy the SFIS requirements by the end of the household's initial certification period or prior to being recertified. If the household member does not comply with SFIS requirements, the CWD must take appropriate action as specified in Section 63-505.14.

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.46 Scheduling Initial Application Interviews

The CWD shall schedule all interviews as promptly as possible to ensure eligible households receive an opportunity to participate within 30 days after the application is filed. The special circumstances of the household, including households with working members, must be considered to the extent practicable, when interviews are scheduled. If a household misses its scheduled interview, the CWD shall send the household a Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI). The CWD shall reschedule if the household requests another interview within 30 days of the initial application filed.

.461 The CWD shall not deny a household's application prior to the 30<sup>th</sup> day after initial application if the household fails to appear for the first scheduled interview. A NOMI must be sent to the household reminding the household to reschedule their interview prior to the 30<sup>th</sup> day after application. Only after the NOMI is sent and the household fails to reschedule, can the CWD send a denial notice on the 30<sup>th</sup> day after application.

.462 If the household requests a second interview during the 30-day application-processing period and is determined eligible, the CWD must issue prorated benefits from the date of application.

.463 If the household fails to keep its second scheduled interview, a notice of denial must be issued no earlier than the 30<sup>th</sup> day after application.

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Example 1: The household applies on March 1 and is scheduled for an interview by the CWD on March 5. The household misses the first scheduled interview. The household is sent a NOMI and asked to reschedule their interview appointment. They reschedule within 30 days of the application date on March 10. The household keeps their March 10 appointment. The case is processed for eligibility. If eligible, the case is granted as soon as administratively possible and benefits are issued from the date of application. If the household is found to be ineligible for benefits, the case is denied on the 30th day after application.

Example 2: The household applies on April 5 and is scheduled for an interview by the CWD on April 6. The household fails to appear for the first scheduled interview. The CWD sends a NOMI as soon as administratively possible. The household reschedules a second interview within 30 days of the application date, but fails to appear. The CWD must deny the household on the 30th day following the date of application.

The NOMI process will not impact the recertification process.

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**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300****.464 Scheduling Recertification Interviews**

- (a) As part of the recertification process, the CWD must conduct a face-to-face interview with a member of the household or its authorized representative at least once every 12 months for households certified for 12 months or less. The requirement for a face-to-face interview once every 12 months may be waived in accordance with Sections 63-300.43 and .44 or not required in accordance with Section 63-300.41(QR).
- (b) If a household receives PA/GA and will be recertified for food stamps more than once in a 12-month period, the CWD may choose to conduct an in-office face-to-face interview with that household only once during that period. At any other recertification during that year period, the CWD may interview the household by telephone, conduct a home visit, or recertify the household by mail.
- (c) CWDs shall schedule interviews so that the household has at least 10 days after the interview in which to provide verification before the certification period expires.

**.465 In-office Interviews During the Certification Period**

CWDs may request households to report for an in-office interview during the certification period, but may not require it. If a mutually acceptable location outside the office cannot be agreed upon by the household and the CWD, the interview shall take place in the office.

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For example: the CWD may not require households to report en mass for an in-office interview during their certification period to review the household's case files or for any other reason during the certification period.

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- (a) Verification is the use of third-party information or documentation to establish the accuracy of statements on the application. Verification and documentation are tools for making this judgment and recording the decision-making process in the case file.
  - (1) Prior to determining eligibility for applicant households, sufficient information concerning the applicant's situation must be obtained in order for the EW to make an informed judgement as to the household's eligibility. The household shall be given at least 10 days from the date of request to provide required verification. If the household does not provide the needed information in the time allotted, the CWD shall issue an adverse notice of action by the 30<sup>th</sup> day following the application date.

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- (2) During the certification period, the CWD may obtain information about changes in a household's circumstances, other than information reported on the income report, through a third party or the household that the CWD cannot use to clearly determine eligibility and/or benefit amount. The CWD must pursue clarification using the following procedure:
  - (A) The CWD must issue a Request for Information (RFI) which advises the household of the verification it must provide or actions it must take to clarify the household's circumstances.
  - (B) The CWD must allow the household at least 10 days to respond or to clarify its circumstances either by telephone or by correspondence, as the CWD directs.
  - (C) If the household does provide sufficient information to clarify its circumstances, the CWD must issue a notice of adverse action to terminate the household after at least 10 days has been given to the household to respond.
  - (D) If the household responds to the RFI and provides sufficient information, the CWD must act on the new circumstances in accordance with noticing procedures for increases or decreases in benefits.
  
- (b) If the household's certification cannot be completed by the end of its current certification period due to the 10-day time period allowed for submitting verification, the CWD shall provide benefits within five working days after the verification is received. Benefits shall not be prorated from the date verification is received; the household shall receive a full month of benefits.
  
- (c) If obtaining verification of a deductible expense may delay the household's certification beyond the normal processing time frame, the CWD shall advise the household that its eligibility and benefit level may be determined without providing a deduction for the claimed, but unverified expense.
  
- (d) Section 63-300.5(d)(MR) shall become inoperative and Section 63-300.5(d)(QR) shall become operative in a county on the date QR/PB becomes effective in that county, pursuant to the Director's QR/PB Declaration.
  
- (MR) If the expense cannot be verified within 30 days of the date of application, the CWD shall determine the household's eligibility and benefit level without providing a deduction for the unverified expense. If the household subsequently provides the missing verification, the CWD shall redetermine the household's benefits, and provide increased benefits, if any, in accordance with the timeliness standards in Section 63-504.35 for monthly reporting households and Section 63-504.42 for nonmonthly reporting households.

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The household shall be entitled to the restoration retroactive to the month of application of benefits denied as a result of the disallowance of the expense, only if the expense could not be verified within the 30-day processing standard because the CWD failed to allow the household sufficient time, as defined in Section 63-301.4, to verify the expense. If the household would be ineligible unless the expense is allowed, the household's application shall be handled as provided in Section 63-301.4.

For verification requirements for the CA 7, refer to Sections 63-504.325, .326 and .341.

(QR) If the expense cannot be verified within 30 days of the date of application, the CWD shall determine the household's eligibility and benefit level without providing a deduction for the unverified expense. If the household subsequently provides the missing verification, the CWD shall redetermine the household's benefits, and provide increased benefits, if any, in accordance with the timeliness standards in Section 63-508.66 for QR households and Section 63-504.42 for change reporting households.

The household shall be entitled to the restoration retroactive to the month of application of benefits denied as a result of the disallowance of the expense, only if the expense could not be verified within the 30-day processing standard because the CWD failed to allow the household sufficient time, as defined in Section 63-301.4, to verify the expense. If the household would be ineligible unless the expense is allowed, the household's application shall be handled as provided in Section 63-301.4.

For verification requirements for the QR 7, refer to Sections 63-508.45 and 63-508.613.

(e) **Mandatory Verification**

The CWD shall verify the following information prior to certification for households initially applying:

(1) **Gross Nonexempt Income**

Gross nonexempt income shall be verified for all households prior to certification. However, where all attempts to verify the income have been unsuccessful because the person or organization providing the income has failed to cooperate with the household and the CWD and all other sources of verification are unavailable, the CWD shall determine an amount to be used for certification purposes based on the best available information. Best available information may include an applicant's affidavit.



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(2) Noncitizen Status

Based on the application, the CWD shall determine if members identified as noncitizens are eligible noncitizens, as specified in Sections 63-405.11 through .17, by requiring that the household present verification for each noncitizen member.

(A) If the proper INS documentation is not available, the noncitizen may state the reason and submit other conclusive verification. The CWD shall accept other forms of documentation or corroboration from INS.

(B) If the noncitizen has no documentation at all of eligible noncitizen status, (not even an INS form I-94) the CWD shall inform the noncitizen that:

1. he/she is ineligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program without INS verification of noncitizen status,
2. he/she may contact INS or otherwise obtain the necessary documentation and
3. if he/she wishes, he/she may sign a form authorizing the CWD to request verification of the noncitizen's status.

(C) If an alien gives written consent for the CWD to contact INS to obtain verification of the alien's status, the CWD shall contact INS. However, the CWD shall not contact INS to obtain information about the alien's correct status without the alien's written consent.

(D) A noncitizen is ineligible until acceptable documentation is provided unless:

1. The CWD has submitted a copy of a document provided by the household to INS for verification. Pending such verification, the CWD cannot delay, deny, reduce or terminate the individual's benefits on the basis of the individual's immigration status; or
2. The applicant or CWD has submitted a request to a federal agency for verification of information that bears on the individual's eligible noncitizens status. The CWD shall certify the individual pending the results of the investigation for up to six months from the date of the original request for verification.

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(E) The CWD shall provide noncitizen applicants with a reasonable opportunity to submit acceptable documentation of their noncitizen status by the 30th day following the date of application. A reasonable opportunity must be at least 10 days from the date of the CWD's request for an acceptable document. When the CWD fails to provide a noncitizen applicant with a reasonable opportunity by the 30th day following the date of application, the CWD must provide the household with benefits no later than 30 days following the date of application, provided the household is otherwise eligible.

(F) If the noncitizen does not wish to contact INS or give permission for the CWD to contact INS, the household shall be given the option of withdrawing its application or participating without that member. The income and resources of a noncitizen who would be considered a household member if he/she were determined to be an eligible noncitizen, shall be treated as available to the household in accordance with Section 63-503.442.

(G) For households whose noncitizen members have not provided verification the CWD shall determine that the noncitizen is ineligible and an excluded member. The CWD shall determine the eligibility of the remaining household members in accordance with Section 63-503. The income and resources of the excluded member(s) shall be treated as available to the household in accordance with Section 63-503.442.

If the CWD subsequently receives verification of eligible status, the CWD shall act on the information as a reported change in household membership in accordance with the timeliness standards in Sections 63-504.35 or 63-504.42.

(H) If an all-noncitizen household is denied benefits because necessary noncitizen verification is missing, and the CWD subsequently receives the required verification, the CWD shall within 30 days following receipt of verification notify the household that verification of noncitizen status has been received and that the household may now be eligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program and that the household may now reapply.

(3) Identity

The identity of the person making the application shall be verified. When an authorized representative applies on behalf of a household, the identity of both the authorized representative and the head of household shall be verified. Identity may be verified through readily available documentary evidence, or if this is unavailable, through a collateral contact (see Section 63-300.5(h)(2)).

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Examples of acceptable documentary evidence which the applicant may provide include, but are not limited to:

- (A) a Social Security card or other document containing the Social Security number.
- (B) a driver's license,
- (C) a work or school ID,
- (D) an ID for health benefits or for another assistance program,
- (E) a voter registration card,
- (F) wage stubs, or
- (G) a birth certificate.

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Any documents which reasonably establish the applicant's or his/her authorized representative's identity shall be accepted, and no requirement for a specific type of document shall be imposed.

- (4) Social Security Numbers (See Section 63-404).
- (5) Residency

The residency requirements of Section 63-401 shall be verified except as provided in Sections 63-300.5(a) and 63-301.71. Verification of residency should be accomplished to the extent possible in conjunction with the verification of other information such as, but not limited to: rent or mortgage payments, utility expenses, and identity.

If verification cannot be accomplished in conjunction with the verification of other information, a collateral contact or other readily available documentary evidence shall be used. Any documents or collateral contact which reasonably establish the applicant's residency must be accepted and no requirement for a specific type of verification may be imposed.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300**

(A) In certain unusual cases, such as some migrant farm worker households, homeless households or households newly arrived in the community, verification of residency may be impossible to obtain or may not exist. In such instances, if the applicant, with the county's assistance, has made reasonable efforts to obtain verification and (1) verification cannot be obtained and (2) the applicant's statement regarding residency is not questionable as defined in Section 63-300.5(c), the county shall proceed with certification if the household is otherwise eligible. The determination that verification of residency cannot be obtained shall be documented in the case file, per Section 63-300.56. Verification of residency shall be provided by these households prior to their next certification except for homeless households.

(6) Utility Expenses

The CWD shall verify a household's utility expenses if the household wishes to claim its actual utility expense in excess of the standard utility allowance (SUA) and the expense would actually result in a deduction. If the household lives with and shares utility expenses with others and wishes to claim its actual utility expense, the CWD shall verify the actual utility expenses paid by the household. If the household's actual utility expenses cannot be verified before the 30 days allowed to process the application expire, the CWD shall use the SUA, provided the household is entitled to use the SUA as specified in Section 63-502.363. If the household wishes to claim expenses for an unoccupied home, the CWD shall verify the household's actual utility expenses for the unoccupied home in every case and shall not use the SUA. Verification of utility costs of an unoccupied home outside the county is the responsibility of the household (see Section 63-502.362(e)).

<b>63-300</b>	<b>APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)</b>	<b>63-300</b>
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| (7) Medical Expenses

The amount of any medical expenses deductible under Section 63-502.33 shall be verified prior to being allowed. Verification of other factors, such as the allowability of costs incurred or the eligibility for such a deduction of the person incurring the cost, shall be required if questionable. If obtaining verification of a medical expense may delay the household's certification, the EW shall advise the household that its eligibility and benefit level may be determined without providing a deduction for the claimed but unverified expense.

| (8) Sponsored Noncitizen Information

The sponsored noncitizen shall provide information in accordance with Section 63-405.7 except as specified in Sections 63-301.71 and .822. The deeming rules apply only to sponsored noncitizens whose sponsors have signed an Affidavit of Support (INS Form I-864 and/or I-864A).

The CWD shall obtain from the noncitizen the following information at the time of the household's initial application and at the time the household applies for recertification:

| (A) Affidavit of Support (INS Form I-864 and/or I-864A)

| (B) The income and resources of the noncitizen's sponsor.

| (C) The names or other identifying factors (such as a noncitizen registration number) of other noncitizens for whom the sponsor has signed an Affidavit of Support (INS Form I-864).

| (D) The provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act under which the noncitizen was admitted.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300**

- (E) The date of the sponsored alien's entry or admission as a lawful permanent resident as established by INS.
- (F) The alien's date of birth, place of birth, and alien registration number.
- (G) The number of dependents who are claimed or could be claimed as dependents by the sponsor or the sponsor's spouse for federal income tax purposes.
- (H) The name, address and phone number of the noncitizen's sponsor.
- (I) Verification is required for the information specified in Sections 63-403.341 and .342, except as specified in Section 63-301.71. The CWD shall verify all other information which they have determined to be questionable and which affects household eligibility and/or benefit level in accordance with Section 63-300.5(c). The CWD shall assist noncitizens in obtaining verification in accordance with Section 63-300.5(e).

(9) Disability

The CWD shall verify disability as defined in Section 63-102e.(1) as follows:

- (A) For an individual to be considered disabled under subsection (B) of the definition, the household must provide proof that the disabled individual is receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits under Title XVI, or Disability Insurance Program benefits under Title II of the Social Security Act.
- (B) For an individual to be considered disabled under subsection (G) of the definition, the household must provide a statement from the VA which indicates that the disabled individual is receiving VA disability benefits for a service - or nonservice-connected disability which is rated or paid at the total rate by VA.

<b>63-300</b>	<b>APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)</b>	<b>63-300</b>
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- (C) For an individual to be considered disabled under subsections (H) and (I) of the definition, proof by the household that the disabled individual is receiving VA disability benefits is sufficient verification of disability.
  
- (D) For an individual to be considered disabled under subsections (C) and (J) of the definition, the CWD shall use the Social Security Administration's (SSA) most current list of disabilities considered permanent under the Social Security Act for verifying disability.
  - 1. If it is obvious to the EW that the individual has one of the listed disabilities on SSA's most current list of permanent disabilities, the household shall be considered to have a verified disability.
  - 2. If the disability is not obvious to the EW, the household shall provide a statement from a physician or licensed/certified psychologist certifying that the individual has one of the nonobvious disabilities listed on the SSA listing of permanent disabilities.
  
- (E) For an individual to be considered disabled under subsection (K) of the definition, the household shall provide proof that the individual receives a Railroad Retirement disability annuity from the Railroad Retirement Board and has been determined to qualify for Medicare.
  
- (F) For disability determinations which must be made relevant to Section 63-402.16, the EW shall verify that an individual has a permanent disability by using the SSA listing of disabilities. However, only those individuals who suffer from one of the disabilities mentioned in the SSA list who are unable to purchase and prepare meals because of their disability shall be considered disabled for the purpose of this provision.
  - 1. If it is obvious to the EW that the individual is unable to purchase and prepare meals because he/she suffers from a severe physical or mental disability even if their disability is not mentioned on the SSA list of disabilities, he/she shall be considered disabled.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300**

2. If the disability is not obvious, the EW shall verify the disability by requiring a statement from a physician or licensed/certified psychologist certifying that the individual is unable to purchase and prepare meals because he/she suffers from: (1) a nonobvious disability mentioned in the SSA list; (2) some other severe, permanent physical or mental disease-related disability; or 3) a severe and permanent physical or mental nondisease related disability.
  3. The elderly and disabled individual or his/her authorized representative shall be responsible for obtaining the cooperation of the individuals with whom he/she resides in providing the necessary income information about the others to the CWD for purposes of this provision.
- (G) For individuals to be considered disabled under subsection (D) of the definition, the CWD shall verify through county records that the individual receives interim assistance benefits pending receipt of SSI. The CWD shall also verify that the benefits were conditioned on meeting disability or blindness criteria at least as stringent as those used under Title XVI (SSI) of the Social Security Act.
- (H) For individuals to be considered disabled under subsection (E) of the definition, the CWD shall verify through county records that the individual receives disability-related medical assistance under Title XIX (Medi-Cal) of the Social Security Act.
- (I) For individuals to be considered disabled under subsection (F) of the definition, the CWD shall verify through county records that the individual receives disability-based general assistance benefits. The CWD shall also verify that the benefits were conditioned on meeting disability or blindness criteria at least as stringent as those used under Title XVI (SSI) of the Social Security Act.



**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300**

## (10) Child Support Obligation and Actual Payments

- (A) The household's legal obligation to pay child support, the amount of the obligation, and the monthly amount of child support the household actually pays, shall be verified. The household is responsible for providing verification.
- (B) Households that fail or refuse to cooperate by supplying the necessary verifications shall have their eligibility and benefit level determined without a child support deduction.
- (C) Once the verification is accomplished, the circumstances need not be reverified unless there is a change in the legal obligation or increase in the amount of the payment.

## (11) Conditions of Eligibility for Drug Felons

Individuals convicted in a state or federal court of a felony that has as an element the possession or use of a controlled substance (not a disqualifying felony specified in MPP Section 63-402.229) shall, as a condition of eligibility, provide proof of one of the following in (A) through (E) below. When such proof is not available, the CWD shall accept self-certification under penalty of perjury as proof.

- (A) Completion of a government-recognized drug treatment program.
- (B) Participation in a government-recognized drug treatment program.
- (C) Enrollment in a government-recognized drug treatment program.
- (D) Placement on a waiting list for a government-recognized drug treatment program.
- (E) Other evidence that the illegal use of controlled substances has ceased.

The applicant must state what the other evidence is and provide proof. The applicant must also certify under penalty of perjury that their illegal use of controlled substances has ceased. The CWD shall consider the evidence and must clearly document the reasons upon which denial or approval of benefits is made.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300**

## (12) Government-Recognized Drug Treatment Program

The term "government-recognized drug treatment program" is a program licensed, certified, or funded by a government entity, or a program in which a government or court entity has directed the applicant to participate. Sober Living Environment group living facilities emphasizing "Clean and Sober" living shall also be considered government-recognized programs. Living in a government-recognized drug treatment program shall be considered proof that an individual has ceased the illegal use of controlled substances.

## (f) Optional Verifications

The CWD may elect on a countywide basis to mandate verification of one or more of the items in Sections 63-300.5(f)(1), .5(f)(2), .5(f)(3), and .5(f)(4)(A) and (B). However, if the CWD does not choose to mandate verification of any particular item, that item must be verified if it is questionable, as defined in Section 63-300.5(g). For households subject to monthly reporting requirements, as specified in Section 63-505.2, only Sections 63-300.5(f)(2), .5(f)(3), and .5(f)(4)(A) and (B) shall remain optional. If the CWD elects to mandate verification of any or all of the items in Sections 63-300.5(f)(1), .5(f)(2), .523(f)(3), and .5(f)(4)(A) and (B), the CWD shall do so as specified in Section 63-504.31.

## (1) Dependent Care Costs

For those households not subject to monthly reporting requirements which are claiming dependent care costs, as specified in Section 63-502.34, the EW may verify the actual amount of cost incurred if allowing the expense could potentially result in a deduction. Once this verification has been accomplished, the EW shall not reverify this expense unless the provider has changed, the amount has changed and the change could potentially affect the amount of the deduction, or unless questionable as defined in Section 63-300.5(g).

## (2) Liquid Resources and Loans

The county welfare department may verify liquid resources and whether monies received by households are loans. When verifying whether income is exempt as a loan, a legally binding agreement is not required. A simple statement signed by both parties which indicates that the payment is a loan and must be repaid shall be sufficient verification. However, if the household receives payments on a recurrent or regular basis from the same source but claims the payments are loans, the county welfare department may also require that the provider of the loan sign an affidavit which states that repayments are being made or that payments will be made in accordance with an established repayment schedule.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300**

## (3) Household Size

The size of the household may be verified. All other factors involving household composition shall be verified only if questionable in accordance with Sections 63-300.5(g)(1) and 63-301.72. Verification of household size shall be accomplished through a collateral contact or readily available documentary evidence. Examples of acceptable documentary evidence include, but are not limited to:

- school records
- census records,
- marriage records, or
- any documents which establish identity such as those examples listed in Section 63-300.51(c).

Any documents which reasonably establish household size must be accepted and no requirement for a specific type of document may be imposed.

## (4) Shelter Costs

- (A) CWD may elect to verify shelter costs at application, with the exception of actual utility expenses, which shall be verified as specified in Section 63-300.5(e)(6).
- (B) CWD may elect to verify any change of shelter costs during the certification period and at recertification.

## (g) Verification of Questionable Information

With the exception of those items contained in Sections 63-300.5(f)(1), 63-300.5(f)(2), and .5(f)(3) which the CWD has opted to verify, the county welfare department shall verify all other factors of eligibility prior to certification only if they are questionable as defined in this section and affect a household's eligibility or benefit level. If the CWD has not mandated verification of those items in Sections 63-300.5(f)(1), and .5(f)(2) those items shall also be verified only if questionable. To be considered questionable, the information on the application must be inconsistent with statements made by the applicant, inconsistent with other information on the application or previous applications, or inconsistent with information received by the county welfare department. When determining if information is questionable, the county welfare department shall base the decision on the household's individual circumstances. A household's report of expenses which exceed its income prior to deductions may be grounds for a determination that further verification is required. In some instances, a household's report of no income prior to deductions, while still managing its financial affairs could also justify the need for additional verification.

## 63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)

63-300

However, these circumstances shall not, in and of themselves, be grounds for a denial. The eligibility worker shall instead explore with the household how it is managing its finances, whether the household receives excluded income or has resources, and how long the household has managed under these circumstances. Procedures described below shall apply when information concerning one of the following eligibility requirements is questionable:

## (1) Household Composition

The eligibility worker shall verify any factors affecting the composition of a household if questionable.

(A) Individuals who claim to be a separate household from those with whom they reside shall be responsible for proving that they are a separate household.

(B) Individuals described in Section 63-402.15, who claim to be a separate household from those with whom they reside based on the various age and disability factors for determining separateness shall be handled as specified in Section 63-300.5(e)(9)(F).

## (2) Citizenship

(A) When a household's statement is questionable that one or more of its members are U.S. citizens, the household shall be asked to provide acceptable verification. Acceptable forms of verification include birth certificates, religious records, certificates of citizenship or naturalization provided by INS, such as the INS I-179 or the INS 551 or U.S. passports. Participation in the AFDC program shall also be considered acceptable verification if verification of citizenship was obtained for that member(s). If the above forms of verification cannot be obtained, the CWD shall accept a signed statement from someone who is a U.S. citizen which declares, under penalty of perjury, that the member in question is a U.S. citizen. The signed statement shall contain a warning of the penalties for helping someone commit intentional Program violation.

(B) The member whose citizenship is in question shall be ineligible to participate until proof of U.S. citizenship is obtained. The member whose citizenship is in question shall have his/her income and resources treated as available to the household in accordance with Section 63-503.442.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300**

## (3) Work Registration

- (A) If a household member's work registration exemption due to participation in the GAIN or California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Program is questionable, the CWD shall be responsible for verifying that the household member is subject to and participating in the GAIN or CalWORKs Program under Title IV of the Social Security Act.
- (B) If a household's work registration exemption due to receipt of or application for unemployment compensation is questionable, the CWD shall be responsible for verifying either that the household member is receiving unemployment compensation or that the household member has applied for unemployment compensation and that this household member was required to register for work with EDD as a part of unemployment compensation application process. The CWD shall verify the household member's work registration exemption with the appropriate office of EDD.
- (C) If a household member's claim of good cause for voluntary quit or reduction of work effort defined in Section 63-408.4 is questionable, the CWD shall request verification to support the good cause claim.
1. To the extent that the information given by the household is questionable, as defined in Section 63-300.5(g), CWDs shall request verification of the household's statements. The primary responsibility for providing the good cause verification as provided in Section 63-300.5(i) rests with the household. If it is difficult or impossible for the household to obtain documentary evidence in a timely manner the CWD shall offer assistance to the household to obtain the needed verification. Acceptable sources of verification include, but are not limited to:
    - the previous employer,
    - employee associations,
    - union representatives,
    - grievance committees or organizations.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300**

Whenever documentary evidence cannot be obtained, the CWD shall substitute a collateral contact. The CWD is responsible for obtaining verification from acceptable collateral contacts provided by the household.

2. If the household and CWD are unable to obtain requested verification from these or other sources because the cause for the quit resulted from circumstances that for good reason cannot be verified, such as a resignation from employment due to discrimination practices or unreasonable demands by an employer or because the employer cannot be located, the household will not be denied access to the program.

(4) Multiple Household Expenses

When a food stamp household's statement regarding the sharing of utility expenses with other individuals and/or households living in the same residence is questionable, no deduction shall be allowed until verification of the sharing relationship is obtained.

(h) Sources of Verification

(1) Documentary Evidence

The EW shall use documentary evidence as the primary source of verification for all items except residency and household size. These two items may be verified through readily available documentary evidence or through a collateral contact, without a requirement being imposed that documentary evidence must be the primary source of verification. Documentary evidence consists of a written confirmation of a household's circumstances. Examples of documentary evidence include current wage stubs, rent receipts, medical and utility bills. Statements must be in sufficient detail so that a reviewer would be able to determine the reasonableness of the determination.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300****EXAMPLE**

When income is verified by the presentation of pay stubs or wage statements, the EW should record in or photocopy for the casefile the following information:

The date of each pay stub or wage statement used.

The name and address of the payer.

The gross amount of income on each stub or statement.

The frequency of receipt of income (i.e., weekly, bimonthly, monthly, etc.).

The specific items and amount of allowable deductions and exclusions.

Although documentary evidence shall be the primary source of verification, acceptable verification shall not be limited to any single type of document and may be obtained through the household or other source. Whenever documentary evidence is insufficient to make a determination of eligibility or benefit level, the EW may either continue the attempt to obtain sufficient documentary evidence or require a collateral contact or home visit. Whenever documentary evidence cannot be obtained, the EW shall require a collateral contact or a home visit. For example, documentary evidence may be considered insufficient when the household presents pay stubs which do not represent an accurate picture of the household's income (such as outdated pay stubs) or identification papers that appear to be falsified.

(2) Collateral Contacts

A collateral contact is a verbal confirmation of a household's circumstances by a person outside the household. The collateral contact may be made either in person or over the telephone. The acceptability of a collateral contact shall not be restricted to a particular individual but may be anyone that can be expected to provide an accurate third-party verification of the household's statements. Examples of acceptable collateral contacts are employers, landlords, social services agencies, migrant service agencies and neighbors of the household.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300**

Data sources such as those used in IEVS (see Section 20-006.1) to which the Department of Social Services or the CWD has routine access are not considered collateral contacts and, therefore, need not be designated by the household.

(3) Home Visits

Home visits may be used as verification when documentary evidence is insufficient to make a determination of eligibility or benefit level or cannot be obtained and the visit is scheduled in advance with the household.

(4) Discrepancies

Where unverified information from a source other than the household contradicts statements made by the household, the household shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to resolve the discrepancy prior to a determination of eligibility or benefits. If the unverified information is received through IEVS, the CWD shall obtain verification in accordance with Section 20-006.543.

(i) Responsibility for Obtaining Verification

The household has primary responsibility for providing documentary evidence to support its income statements and to resolve any questionable information, except as provided in Sections 63-300.5(g)(3)(A) and (B). Households may supply documentary evidence in person, through the mail, or through an authorized representative. The EW shall accept any reasonable documentary evidence provided by the household and shall be primarily concerned with how adequately the verification proves the statements on the application. If it would be difficult or impossible for the household to obtain the documentary evidence in a timely manner, or the household has presented insufficient documentation, the EW shall either offer assistance to the household in obtaining the documentary evidence, except as otherwise stated in this section, or shall use a collateral contact or home visit. The EW shall not require the household to present verification in person at the food stamp office.



**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300**

Whenever documentary evidence is insufficient to make a determination of eligibility or benefit level or cannot be obtained the EW may require either a collateral contact or home visit. The EW shall rely on the household to provide the name of any collateral contact with the exception of verifying IEVS-obtained information as specified in Section 20-006.5. The household may request assistance in designating a collateral contact. The EW is not required to use a collateral contact designated by the household if the collateral contact cannot be expected to provide an accurate third-party verification. When the collateral contact designated by the household is unacceptable, the EW shall either ask the household to designate another collateral contact or substitute a home visit. The county welfare department is responsible for obtaining verification from acceptable collateral contacts. [Refer to Section 63-300.5(h)(2)].

(j) Documentation

Case files must be documented to support eligibility, ineligibility, and benefit level determinations. Documentation shall be in sufficient detail to permit a reviewer to determine the reasonableness and accuracy of the determination. For public assistance cases, public assistance verification rules and documentation shall be acceptable for eligibility factors which must be verified to determine both public assistance and food stamp eligibility. For counties keeping separate PA and FS files, the FS case file must contain a notation that documentation of eligibility factors has been obtained and is contained in the PA case file. The household shall not be required to provide duplicate documentation to the CWD. Where verification was required to resolve questionable information, the EW shall document why the information was considered questionable, or at a minimum indicate where in the case file the inconsistency exists, and what documentation was used to resolve the questionable information. The EW shall document (except where a collateral contact is used to verify residency or household size) the reason why an alternate source of verification, such as a collateral contact or home visits, was needed, and the reason a collateral contact was rejected and an alternate requested.

(k) BENDEX

Reserved.

(l) State Data Exchange (SDX)

Reserved.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300**

## (m) Verification of Eligibility Through IEVS

- (1) Income and eligibility information shall be requested through IEVS and shall be used, to the extent possible, in the determination of eligibility in accordance with the procedures specified in Sections 20-006.2 and 20-006.4. However, the county shall not delay the determination of eligibility pending receipt of IEVS information if other information establishes the individual's eligibility.
- (2) The county shall verify the eligibility and benefit level for each applicant for and recipient of aid through IEVS by:
  - (A) Submitting applicant information to IEVS as specified in Sections 20-006.211 and .212.
  - (B) Requesting on a quarterly basis income and eligibility information through IEVS for recipients in accordance with Section 20-006.22; and
  - (C) Including, for the purposes of (a) and (b) of this section, any other individuals whose income and resources are considered in determining the amount of assistance to the extent that the county collects the SSN of such individuals.

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**HANDBOOK BEGINS HERE**

1. For instance, if the county obtains the SSN of an ineligible alien parent living with the household, the number must be submitted to IEVS. However, if the number is not available for submission to IEVS, the household unit's eligibility shall not be affected.

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**HANDBOOK ENDS HERE**

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- (3) The county shall act on all information received through IEVS in accordance with the procedures specified in Sections 20-006.4 and .5.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300****.6 Receipt of Verification/Documentation**

Upon request, CWDs shall provide a written receipt to any applicant or recipient who hand delivers documents that have been requested by the CWD. Receipts shall only be provided for documents which have been delivered in person to a CWD employee other than the applicant's or recipient's regularly assigned caseworker and to the location in which or through which the caseworker and to the location in which or through which the caseworker conducts his or her business. (Only one receipt is required for monthly income reports and their supporting documents.)

**.61 Notice of Right to a Receipt**

CWDs shall post a notice of the applicant's or recipient's right to a receipt in a prominent location and in an area where documents are regularly received.

**.62 Exemptions from Receipt Requirements**

.621 A CWD which maintains a system of logging hand delivered documents shall be exempt from the requirement to provide a receipt or post notice of right to a receipt.

.622 A CWD which provides receipts for all hand delivered documents without a request by an applicant or recipient shall be exempt from the notice posting requirement.

.623 Section 63-300.623(MR) shall become inoperative and Section 63-300.623(QR) shall become operative in a county on the date QR/PB becomes effective in that county, pursuant to the Director's QR/PB Declaration.

(MR) A CWD which receives monthly income reports and other requested documents which have been mailed by the applicant or recipient shall not be subject to the requirements in this section.

(QR) A CWD which receives quarterly income/eligibility reports and other requested documents which have been mailed by the applicant or recipient shall not be subject to the requirements in this section.

**63-300 APPLICATION PROCESS (Continued)****63-300**

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 10554, 11265.1, .2 and .3, 18904, and 18910, Welfare and Institutions Code. Reference: Sections 10554, 11023.5, 11265.1, .2, and .3, 11348.5, 18901.10, 18904, 18910, and 18932, Welfare and Institutions Code; 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 271.2, 273.2(b)(ii), (c)(2)(i) and (ii), (c)(3), (c)(5), (e)(1), (e)(2), (e)(3), (f)(1)(i)(C), (ii)(B)(1), (2), (3), and (C), and (iii)(h)(1)(i)(D), and proposed (f)(1)(xii) as published in the Federal Register, Vol. 59, No. 235 on December 8, 1994, (f)(3), (f)(3)(ii), (f)(8), (h), (h)(1)(i)(D), and (j)(1); 7 CFR 273.4(a)(2) and (10) and (c)(2); 7 CFR 273.7(i)(4) and (j)(1); 7 CFR 273.12(c) and (c)(3); 7 CFR 273.14(b)(3)(i), (iii) and (b)(4) and (e); 7 CFR 273.21(h)(2)(iv), (i), and (j)(3)(iii)(B); USDA Food and Nutrition Service Service (FNS) Office, Western Region, Administrative Notice 84-56, Indexed Policy Memo 84-23; FNS Quarterly Reporting/Prospective Budgeting waiver dated April 1, 2003; USDA, FNS Waiver # 2070014; 7 U.S.C.A. 2020(e)(2); Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Public Law (P.L.) 101-336, 1990; U.S.D.A., Food and Consumer Services, Administrative Notice No. 94-22, dated January 7, 1994; Chapter 306, Statutes of 1988, and AB 1371, Chapter 306, Statutes of 1995; Blanco v. Anderson Court Order, United States District Court, Eastern District of California, No. CIV-S-93-859 WBS, JFM, dated January 3, 1995, and Federal Register, Vol. 66, No. 229, dated November 28, 2001.

**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS 63-301**

.1 Normal Processing Standard

The CWD shall provide eligible households that complete the initial application process an opportunity to participate as soon as possible, but not later than 30 calendar days following the date the application was filed. See Table I. An application is filed the day the appropriate food stamp office receives an application containing the applicant's name and address, which is signed by either a responsible member of the household or the household's authorized representative. Households entitled to expedited processing are specified in Section 63-301.5.

.2 Opportunity to Participate

An opportunity to participate consists of providing households with coupons, an authorization document, or an access device and having an issuance facility open and available for the household to obtain its allotment. If the coupons, authorization document or access device are mailed, the CWD shall assure that the benefits can be transacted or the coupons are available for use after receipt but before the 30-day standard expires (see Section 63-102c.(5)). A household has not been provided an opportunity to participate if the coupons, authorization document or access device are mailed on the 29th or 30th day. Nor has an opportunity to participate been provided if the authorization document or access device is mailed on the 28th day but no issuance facility is open on the 30th day.

.3 Denying the Application

Households determined to be ineligible shall be sent a notice of action denying their application as soon as possible but not later than 30 days following the date the application was filed.

.31 The CWD shall not deny eligibility to a household due to failure to cooperate when the person(s) who fails to cooperate is outside of the household.

.311 Excluded household members specified in Section 63-402.22 shall not be considered outside of the household for the purposes of Section 63-301.31.

.32 If the household has failed to appear for one scheduled interview and has made no subsequent contact with the CWD to express interest in pursuing the application, the CWD shall send a NOMI as soon as possible. The CWD shall reschedule if the household requests another interview within 30 days of the initial application date. The CWD must not deny a household's application prior to the 30<sup>th</sup> day as described in Section 63-300.45(a). The CWD must pro-rate benefits from the date of application if the household schedules a second interview within 30 days of the application date and is found eligible as described in Section 63-300.45(b).

<b>63-301</b>	<b>APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued)</b>	<b>63-301</b>
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.33 In cases where the CWD was able to conduct an interview and request all of the necessary verification on the same day the application was filed, and no subsequent requests for verification have been made, the application may be denied if the CWD provided assistance to the household in obtaining verification when required as specified in Section 63-300.55 but the household failed to provide the requested verification. The CWD may send a notice of action denying the application on or before the 30th day following the date the application was filed, to be effective the 30th day following the date the application was filed.

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**HANDBOOK BEGINS HERE**

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**NORMAL PROCESSING AND DENYING THE APPLICATION**

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Filing of Application Starts 30 day process	Action	Action in Second 30 Day Period	Original Month of Application Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o HH completed application, was interviewed, supplied necessary verification, registered for work as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Determine eligibility for month of application and ongoing</p> <p>If eligible certify and issue benefits by 28th day.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>One/two month certs, issue NEC/approval.</p>	<p>Eligibility continues</p> <p>.....</p> <p>(One/two month certs have reapplied timely and were processed.)</p>	<p>Yes, if eligible</p>

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**HANDBOOK CONTINUES**

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**HANDBOOK CONTINUES**

o	HH fails to show for first scheduled interview and does not contact agency to reschedule within 30 days of app.	NOMI must be sent to HH. If HH does not reschedule, denial notice must be sent on 30th day.	HH must reapply.	No.
o	HH schedules 2nd interview within 30 days of app. and is determined eligible.	Issue prorated benefits from date of application.	Issue benefits.	Yes.
o	HH fails to show for 2nd interview.	Denial notice when administratively possible, but not before the 30th day of application.	Case is reopened without a new application if action taken within 30 days of denial. HH loses entitlement to benefits for 1st 30 days.	No.
o	Request for verification on day application is filed, HH does not provide verification. Verification not received within 10 days of request.	Send denial notice on or before 30th day to be effective 30th day after application.	Case reopened without new application if required action taken within 60 days of date of application.	No.

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.4 Delayed Actions

If the county welfare department does not determine a household's eligibility and provide an opportunity to participate within 30 days of the date the application was filed, the county welfare department shall take the following action:

.41 Determining Cause

The CWD shall first determine the cause of the delay using the following criteria:

- .411 A delay shall be considered the fault of the household if the household has failed to complete the application process even though the CWD has taken all the action it is required to take to assist the household. The CWD must have taken the following actions before a delay can be considered the fault of the household:
  - (a) For households that have failed to complete the application form, the CWD must have offered, or attempted to offer, assistance in its completion.
  - (b) In cases where verification is incomplete, the CWD must have provided the household with the FS 8; assistance when required, as specified in Section 63-300.55; and sufficient time to provide the missing verification. Sufficient time shall be at least 10 days from the date of the initial request for the particular verification that was missing.



**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued) 63-301**

(c) For households that have failed to appear for an interview, the CWD must have attempted to reschedule the initial interview within 30 days of the date the application was filed. However, if the household has failed to appear for the first interview and a subsequent interview is postponed at the household's request or cannot otherwise be rescheduled until after the 20th day, but before the 30th day following the date the application was filed, the household must appear for the interview, bring verification, and register members for work by the 30th day; otherwise the delay shall be the fault of the household. If the household has failed to appear for the first interview and a subsequent interview is postponed at the household's request until after the 30th day following the date the application was filed, the delay shall be the fault of the household. If the household has missed both scheduled interviews and requests another interview, any delay shall be the fault of the household.

.412 Delays that are the fault of the CWD include, but are not limited to, those cases where the CWD failed to take the action described above in Sections 63-301.411 (a through c).

.42 Delays Caused by the Household

If by the 30th day of the application processing period, the CWD cannot take further action on the application due to the fault of the household, the household shall lose its entitlement to benefits for the month of application. The CWD has the option either to deny or pend the application and to notify the household of the action taken by sending the household a notice of action either denying or pending the application. The option chosen by the CWD shall apply to all households within the county. If the application is to be denied, the CWD must send a notice of denial on the 30th day after application for missed interview, or by the 30<sup>th</sup> day if verification has not been received, to be effective on the 30th day. If the application is held pending, the CWD shall send the household a notice of pending status on the 30th day after application.

.421 If the application is denied, the CWD shall notify the household of the action it must take to reactivate its application; that the case will be reopened without a new application if the required action is taken within 30 days of the date the denial notice of action denying the application becomes effective (30 days after the date of application); and that if the household does not take the required action within the second 30-day period (60 days of the date of application), a new application must be submitted in order to participate in the Food Stamp Program.

(a) If the household fails to take the required action within 60 days following the date the application was filed, no further notice shall be provided by the CWD.

**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued)****63-301**

- .422 If the application is held pending, the CWD shall notify the household of the action it must take to complete the application process, and that if the household does not take the required action within 60 days of the date the application was filed, its application shall be denied and a new application must be submitted if the household wishes to participate in the Food Stamp Program.
- (a) If verification has not been provided, the CWD has the option of pending the application for only 30 days following the date of the initial request for the particular verification that is missing.
  - (b) If the household fails to take the required action by the date specified on the notice of action, the CWD shall deny the application without providing further notice to the household.
- .423 If the household responds and is determined eligible during the second 30-day period, the CWD shall provide benefits only from the date the CWD received verification that the household completed the required action.
- .424 If the household responds and is determined ineligible during the second 30-day processing period, the CWD shall deny the application and provide the household with a notice of action informing them of the denial.
- .43 Delays Caused By the CWD
- .431 Whenever a delay in the initial 30-day application processing period is the fault of the CWD, the CWD shall take immediate corrective action. The CWD shall not deny the application but instead shall continue to process the application and send the household a notice of action informing them of the pending status of their application by the 30th day following the date the application was filed.
- (a) If the case file is not complete enough to determine eligibility, the pending status notice of action shall indicate any action necessary by the household to complete the application process.

**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued) 63-301**

- (b) If the household fails to respond, the CWD shall take action on the application during the second 30-day processing period as provided in Sections 63-301.422(a) and (b).
- .432 If the household is determined eligible during the second 30-day period, the CWD shall provide benefits retroactive to the date of the application. If the household is determined ineligible during the second 30-day processing period the application shall be denied and the CWD shall provide the household with a notice of action denying their application.
- .44 Delays Beyond 60 Days
  - .441 If the CWD is at fault for not completing the application process by the end of the second 30-day period, and the case file is otherwise complete, the CWD shall continue to process the original application and any supplemental information provided by the household until an eligibility determination is made.
    - (a) If the household is determined eligible, the CWD shall provide benefits to the household as follows:
      - (1) If the CWD was at fault for the delay in the initial 30-day period, the household shall receive benefits retroactive to the date of application.
      - (2) If the initial delay was the household's fault, the household shall receive benefits retroactive only to the date the CWD received verification that the household completed the required action.
    - (b) If the household is determined ineligible, the CWD shall deny the application and provide the household with a notice of action denying their application.

(c)

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**DELAYED ACTIONS**

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30 Days After Filing of Application	Action on 30th Day	Action in Second 30 Day Period	Month of Application Benefits?
HH has not completed app OR HH has not registered for work OR HH has not supplied verification OR HH missed 1st interview and did schedule 2nd interview a. past 20th day and did not supply verification/register by 30th day b. past 30th day	Denial or pending notice (option must apply to all households in county)	HH takes necessary action: reopen application  HH takes no action: no action by CWD	No  No
Verification requested on 2nd thru 20th day; HH does not supply verification	Option to pend 30 days from request for verification	HH takes necessary action: reopen application  HH takes no action: no action by CWD	No  No
CWD did not offer assistance; CWD did not give HH at least 10 days to supply verification, requested.* HH did schedule 2 <sup>nd</sup> interview within 30 days of application, but CWD did not follow through.	Pending Notice  If verification is lacking, option to pend 30 days from day of request for verification.	CWD must take action to complete certification HH must supply verification	Yes, if eligible

\* Note: 10 days is minimum not maximum period; CWD can deny by the 30<sup>th</sup> day after application was filed if the applicant did not provide requested verification within 10 days from the date it was requested.

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**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued)****63-301**

- .442 If the CWD is at fault for not completing the application process by the end of the second 30-day period, but the case file is not complete enough to determine eligibility, the CWD shall continue to process the original application and send the household a notice of action informing them that the application is being held pending. The household shall be advised of the action necessary to complete the application process and of the possible entitlement to retroactive benefits as a result of the CWD's failure to process the application in the second 30-day period.
- (a) The CWD shall allow the household at least 10 days to take the required action specified on the notice of action informing them of the pending status of their application. However, if the CWD has chosen the option of holding the application pending only until 30 days following the date of the initial request for the particular verification that was missing, and verification is not received by that 30th day, the CWD may deny the application without further notice to the household.
- (b) If the household fails to take the required action specified on the notice of action informing them of the pending status of their application, the CWD shall deny the application without further notice to the household.
- .443 If the household is at fault for not completing the application process by the end of the second 30-day period, the CWD shall deny the application and require the household to file a new application if it wishes to participate. If however, the CWD has chosen the option of holding the application pending only until 30 days following the date of the initial request for the particular verification that was missing, and verification is not received by that 30th day, the CWD may immediately deny the application. The household shall not be entitled to any lost benefits, even if the delay in the initial 30 days was the fault of the CWD.

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.5 Expedited Service

.51 Entitlement to Expedited Service

The following households, if otherwise eligible, are entitled to expedited service:

- .511 Households with less than \$150 in monthly gross income as defined in Section 63-502.1 provided their liquid resources as defined in Section 63-501.11 do not exceed \$100;
- .512 Migrant or seasonal farmworker households who are destitute as defined in Section 63-503.43 provided their liquid resources as defined in Section 63-501.11 do not exceed \$100; or
- .513 Households whose combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than the household's monthly rent or mortgage, and utilities.

.52 Identifying Households Needing Expedited Service

The CWD's application procedures shall be designed to identify households eligible for expedited service at the time the household files an application.

- .521 A CWD employee or volunteer shall inform potential applicants orally of the right to expedited service for eligible households and how to initiate the process, the availability of assistance in filling out the application and shall be responsible for screening applications as they are filed. The CWD also shall advise individuals who inquire about the Food Stamp Program by telephone of the expedited service processing standards for eligible households. The CWD shall assist an applicant, upon request, in filling out forms and completing the application process.
- .522 The screening shall consist of a review of the DFA 285-A1 or the SAWS 1 CA1/DFA 285-A1 if the applicant elected to complete the expedited service section. The CWD shall immediately forward the application for processing when it is determined that the applicant is entitled to expedited service.

**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued) 63-301**

.523 Households being recertified or reapplying after less than a one-month break in certification shall be entitled to expedited service if determined eligible as specified in Section 63-301.51.

.53 Processing Standards

All households receiving expedited services, except those receiving expedited services during months in which allotments are suspended or cancelled shall have the case processed in accordance with the following regulations. Those households receiving expedited services during a suspension or cancellation shall have their cases processed in accordance with Sections 63-107.862 and .863.

.531 Expedited Service Households

- (a) For households entitled to expedited service at initial application, the CWD shall make the authorization document, access device or coupons available to the recipient either by mail or for pickup at the household's request, no later than the third calendar day following the date the application was filed. For purposes of this section, a weekend (Saturday and Sunday) shall be considered one calendar day. However, if the third calendar day is a nonworking day when coupons cannot be issued, the CWD shall make coupons available on or before the working day immediately preceding the nonworking day. Whatever system a CWD uses to ensure meeting this delivery standard shall be designed to allow a reasonable opportunity for redemption of an authorization document or use of an access device no later than the third calendar day following the day the application was filed.

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- (1) For example, if the application is filed on Thursday, coupons must be made available to the households on Monday. However, if Monday is a holiday, coupons must be made available on Friday or Saturday if coupons are issued on that day.

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**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued)****63-301**

- (b) For households that are being recertified or applying after less than a one-month break in certification and which are entitled to expedited service, the CWD shall make the authorization document, access device or coupons available to the recipient either by mail or for pick up at the household's request, no later than the third calendar day following the date the application is filed or by the household's normal issuance cycle in the new certification period, whichever is later. The third calendar day shall be determined in accordance with Section 63-301.531(a).

**.532 Out-of-Office Interviews**

If a household mails an application and it contains sufficient information to indicate that the household is entitled to expedited service and out of office certification, the CWD shall conduct the interview (unless the household cannot be reached), and complete the application process within the expedited service standards, as specified in Section 63-301.5. The first day of the count is the first calendar day following the filing of the application. If the application is not complete, and the CWD conducts a telephone interview of the applicant, the CWD shall mail the application to the household for signature. The mailing time involved shall not be calculated in the expedited service standards. Mailing time shall only include the days the application is in the mail to and from the household and the days the application is in the household's possession pending signature and return mailing.

**.533 Late Determinations**

If the prescreening required in Section 63-301.52 fails to identify a household as being entitled to expedited service and the CWD subsequently discovers that the household is entitled to expedited service, the CWD shall provide expedited service to the households within the processing standards described in 63-301.531, except that the processing standards shall be calculated from the date the CWD discovers the household is entitled to expedited service and not the date the application was filed.

**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued)****63-301****.54 Special Procedures for Expediting Service**

.541 The CWD shall use the following procedures when expediting certification and issuance:

- (a) In all cases, the identity of the individual making application shall be verified through a collateral contact or readily available documentary evidence as specified in Section 63-300.51(c).
- (b) All reasonable efforts shall be made to verify within the expedited processing standards, the household's residency, as specified in Section 63-300.515, income statement (including a statement that the household has no income), liquid resources, and all other factors required by Section 63-300.51 through collateral contacts or readily available documentary evidence. However, benefits shall not be delayed beyond the delivery standards prescribed in 63-301.53 solely because these eligibility factors have not been verified. Verification of these eligibility factors shall be postponed if unobtainable within the expedited processing standards.
  - (1) If a household eligible for expedited services reapplies after 95 days from the end of the annual review period in which the household had refused to cooperate with a nonfederal QC reviewer or reapplies after seven months from the end of the annual review period in which the household had refused to cooperate with a federal QC reviewer, the CWD shall issue one month's benefits in accordance with the processing standards and procedures in Section 63-301.53. Before a second month's benefits are issued, the household shall provide verification of all household circumstances that could affect eligibility as specified in Section 63-505.11.
- (c) Households entitled to expedited service shall be subject to the social security number provisions of Section 63-404.2.

**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued)****63-301**

- (d) The applicant and all other household members shall be registered for work prior to certification unless exempt from this requirement per Section 63-407.2. The CWD shall attempt to verify questionable work registration exemptions, but shall postpone these efforts if they cannot be accomplished within expedited service time frames.
- .542 Once the household has supplied the name of a collateral contact or has asked the CWD for assistance in locating a collateral contact, the CWD shall promptly contact the collateral contact or otherwise assist the household in obtaining the necessary verification.
- .543 Households that are certified on an expedited basis and have provided all necessary verification required by Section 63-300.5 within the expedited services time frame as specified in Section 63-301.531 shall be assigned a normal certification period.
- (a) Households which apply for benefits after the 15th day of the month and have been determined eligible to receive benefits for the initial month and the subsequent month shall receive both allotments at the same time, in accordance with Section 63-503.16.
- .544 Households that are certified on an expedited basis and whose verification is postponed shall be assigned certification periods as follows:
- (a) One-Month Certification
- Section 63-301.544(a)(MR) shall become inoperative and Section 63-301.544(a)(QR) shall become operative in a county on the date QR/PB becomes effective in that county, pursuant to the Director's QR/PB Declaration.
- (MR) Nonmonthly reporting households that apply on or before the 15th day of the calendar or fiscal month shall be certified for one month only.
- (1) Benefits for the initial month shall be prorated from the date the application was filed to the end of that calendar or fiscal month.
- (2) Households shall reapply and complete the verification which was postponed, unless they have been certified under normal processing standards since the last expedited certification.
- (QR) Change reporting households that apply on or before the 15th day of the calendar or fiscal month shall be certified for one month only.

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(b) Longer Than One-Month Certification

(1) Section 63-301.544(b)(1)(MR) shall become inoperative and Section 63-301.544(b)(1)(QR) shall become operative in a county on the date QR/PB becomes effective in that county, pursuant to the Director's QR/PB Declaration.

(MR) Nonmonthly reporting households applying after the 15th day of the calendar or fiscal month shall be certified only for the month of application, and the subsequent month.

(QR) Change reporting households applying after the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the calendar or fiscal month shall be certified only for the month of application, and the subsequent month.

(2) Section 63-301.544(b)(2)(MR) shall become inoperative and Section 63-301.544(b)(2)(QR) shall become operative in a county on the date QR/PB becomes effective in that county, pursuant to the Director's QR/PB Declaration.

(MR) Monthly reporting households shall be assigned a normal certification period as specified in Section 63-504.1.

(QR) QR households shall be assigned a normal certification period as specified in Section 63-504.1.

.545 When a certification period of longer than one month is assigned, the CWD shall notify the household, in writing that:

(a) No further benefits will be issued until the postponed verification, except as specified in Section 63-301.545(a)(2), is completed and the household's participation shall be terminated if the verification for income, resources, residency (except for homeless households), or any deduction, except for unverified child support, is not completed within 30 days following the date the application was filed.

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**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued)****63-301**

- (1) Migrant households shall receive the second months benefits if the only missing verification is from an out-of-state source. However, the out-of-state verification shall be completed within 60 days following the date the application was filed or if not the household's participation shall be terminated.
  - (2) A household with an unverified child support obligation and/or amount of child support paid shall not be terminated, but instead have its eligibility and benefit level determined without a child support deduction as specified in Section 63-300.51(j).
- (b) The individual household member's participation shall be terminated if proof of alien or student status has not been provided or if a SSN or proof that one has been applied for has not been provided within 30 days following the date the application was filed. Benefits to the remaining household members shall be recalculated and issued as otherwise eligible.
- (1) Migrant household members shall be treated as specified in Section 63-301.545(a)(1), if the missing verification is from an out-of-state source.
- (c) If verification results in changes in the household's eligibility or level of benefits, the CWD shall act on those changes without advance notice.

**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued)****63-301**

- .546 Households which apply for benefits after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month and have been determined eligible to receive benefits for the initial month and the subsequent month but have had their verification postponed shall receive both allotments at the same time, in accordance with Section 63-503.16.

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- (a) When a household has provided the required postponed verification, the CWD shall issue the third month's benefits within five working days from receipt of the verification or by the first day of the third month, whichever is later. For staggered issuance this shall be the first working day of the third month. If verification is not provided before the end of the third month, the CWD shall terminate the household's participation and shall issue no further benefits. This shall also apply to migrant farmworker households needing out-of-state verification as outlined in Section 63-301.545(a)(1).

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- .547 Migrant farmworker households shall be entitled to postpone out-of-state verification only once each migrant farm season.
- (a) The CWD shall grant a postponement of the out-of-state verification for only the initial month, if a migrant farmworker household requesting expedited service has already received this exception during the current migrant farm season.
- (b) For purposes of this section, a migrant farm season is defined as having a clear beginning point and ending point between which migrant farmworkers travel. When they are not migrating to work they are residing at one location which they regard as home. In this case, the season would be the period during which the migrants are traveling to work. If a migrant farmworker travels constantly with no break period, the season shall be considered the calendar year.
- .548 There is no limit to the number of times a household can be certified under expedited service procedures, as long as prior to each expedited certification, the household either completes the verification requirements that were postponed at the last expedited certification or was certified under normal processing standards since the last expedited certification.
- .549 Households requesting, but not entitled to expedited service shall have their applications processed according to normal standards.



**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued)****63-301****.6 PA Households**

Households in which all members are applying for public assistance (PA) shall be informed that they may apply for food stamp benefits at the same time and shall be required to complete only a single application for both programs. The food stamp eligibility and benefit levels for these households shall be based solely on food stamp eligibility criteria, except as specified in Section 63-301.7. Households, whether jointly processed and/or eligible because of their PA status, shall be certified in accordance with the notice, procedural and timeliness requirements of the food stamp regulations.

**.61 Single Interview**

The CWD shall conduct a single interview at initial application for both public assistance and food stamp purposes, except as provided in Section 63-301.611. PA households shall not be required to see a different eligibility worker or otherwise be subjected to two interview requirements to obtain the benefits of both programs. Following the single interview, the application may be processed by separate workers to determine eligibility and benefit levels for food stamps and public assistance. A household's eligibility for food stamp out-of-office interview provisions in 63-300.42 and .43 does not relieve the household of any responsibility for a face-to-face interview to be certified for PA.

.611 The CWD may hold a separate food stamp interview if necessary to prevent any delay in the processing of expedited service.

**.62 Verification Procedures**

For households applying for both public assistance and food stamps, the verification procedures described in Section 63-300.5 shall be followed for those factors of eligibility which are needed solely for purposes of determining the household's eligibility for food stamps. For those factors of eligibility which are needed to determine both PA eligibility and food stamp eligibility the CWD may use the PA verification rules. However, the CWD shall not delay the household's food stamp benefits if, at the end of 30 days following the date the application was filed, the CWD has sufficient verification to meet the verification requirements of Section 63-300.5 but does not have sufficient verification to meet the PA verification rules.

**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued)****63-301****.63 Application Processing Standards and Procedures**

When all members of a household apply for both Food Stamps and PA, the application shall be made on the SAWS 1 CA1/DFA 285-A1 and BC JA 2 CA 2/DFA 285-A2. PA applicant households not applying for Food Stamps shall enter a signed statement to this effect on the SAWS 1 CA1/DFA 285-A1 or check the appropriate box on the BC JA 2 CA 2/DFA 285-A2. If a PA applicant household does not check the box marked Food Stamps or specifically indicate that they do not wish Food Stamps, the household's application shall be considered a request for both PA and Food Stamps unless it is determined otherwise during the interview.

.631 In order to determine if a household will be eligible due to its status as a recipient PA household, the CWD shall be permitted to postpone the food stamp eligibility determination within the 30-day processing standard if the household is not entitled to expedited service and appears to be categorically eligible.

(a) If the PA determination is made within the 30-day processing standard and the household is considered categorically eligible as specified in Section 63-301.7, the CWD shall provide food stamp benefits for the initial month from the date of the food stamp application.

(1) Benefits shall not be provided for any month in which a household is determined ineligible for receipt of PA benefits, unless the household is eligible to participate as a nonassistance (NA) case.

(b) If the PA determination of eligibility is not made by the 30th day, the CWD shall process the application as a NA case using all food stamp eligibility and benefit criteria. However, the CWD shall not deny a potentially categorically eligible household until the 30th day.

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- (1) If the NA case is denied, the notice of action shall inform the household to notify the CWD if its PA benefits are approved.
  - (2) The CWD shall ensure that the denied application of a potentially categorically eligible household is easily retrievable in the event that PA benefits are subsequently approved.
- .632 If any potentially categorically eligible household is denied and later determined eligible to receive PA benefits, the CWD shall provide food stamp benefits using the original application and any other pertinent information occurring subsequent to that application.
- (a) The CWD shall not reinterview the household but shall:
    - (1) Use any available information to update the application; and
    - (2) Contact the household or its authorized representative by mail or telephone to explain and confirm changes made by the CWD and to determine if any other changes in circumstances have occurred.
  - (b) If any information obtained from the household differs from that which the CWD obtained from available information or the household provided additional changes in information, the CWD shall arrange for the household or its authorized representative to:
    - (1) Initial all changes;
    - (2) Re-sign and date the updated application; and
    - (3) Provide necessary verification.

**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued)****63-301**

- (c) Benefits for the initial month shall be prorated from the date the PA benefits are effective, or the date of the original food stamp application, whichever is later.
  - (d) The CWD shall act on reevaluating the original application either at the household's request, or when it becomes otherwise aware of the household's PA eligibility. For example, the CWD normally becomes aware when the PA benefits are approved.
- .633 For all households, the CWD shall anticipate with reasonable certainty the amount and date of receipt of the initial PA payments. Initial PA payments include the first month's basic grant and any immediate need or other PA payments that were issued prior to the authorization of the first month's basic grant.
- (a) If a PA payment will not be received until a subsequent month, the CWD shall vary the household's benefit level according to the anticipated receipt of the payment and send the household a notice of action.
  - (b) If the amount or date of receipt of the initial PA payment cannot be anticipated with reasonable certainty at the time of the Food Stamp eligibility determination, the PA payment shall be handled as a change in circumstances. However, the CWD is not required to send a notice of action if the receipt of the PA grant reduces, suspends or terminates the household's Food Stamp benefits, provided the household is notified in advance that this may occur when the grant is received. Termination of the case shall be permitted if the household is not categorically eligible.

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- (c) See Handbook Section 63-503.212(a)(1)(A) for an example.

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- .634 For all households, portions of initial PA payments intended to retroactively cover a previous month shall be disregarded as lump sum payments as specified in Section 63-502.2.

.7 Categorically Eligible PA Households

Any household, except those specified in Section 63-301.73, in which all food stamp eligible members receive or are authorized to receive PA benefits, shall be considered eligible for food stamps because of their status as PA recipients [Section 63-102(p)]. The following shall also be considered categorically eligible:

- .71 Section 63-301.71(MR) shall become inoperative and Section 63-301.71(QR) shall become operative in a county on the date QR/PB becomes effective in that county, pursuant to the Director's QR/PB Declaration.

(MR) Households subject to retrospective budgeting that have been suspended for PA purposes or that receive zero benefits.

(QR) Households subject to QR that receive zero benefits.

- .72 The eligibility factors which shall be accepted for food stamp eligibility without verification are the resource, gross and net income limits; social security number information; sponsored alien information; and residency.

- .73 When determining whether a household is to be considered PA categorically eligible, the CWD shall verify the following factors, only when questionable, as specified in Section 63-300.53.

- .731 The household shall contain only food stamp eligible members that are PA recipients as defined in Section 63-102(p).

- .732 The household shall meet the definition of a household as specified in Sections 63-102(h) and 63-402.

**63-301 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS (Continued) 63-301**

- .733 The household shall include all persons who purchase and prepare food together in one food stamp household regardless of whether or not they are separate units for PA purposes.
- .734 The household has not been disqualified or does not include persons who have been disqualified as specified in Section 63-301.73.
- .74 The following households shall not be considered categorically eligible and are subject to all food stamp eligibility and benefits provisions if:
- .741 Any household member is disqualified for an intentional Program violation as specified in Section 63-805;
- .742 Section 63-301.742(MR) shall become inoperative and Section 63-301.742(QR) shall become operative in a county on the date QR/PB becomes effective in that county, pursuant to the Director's QR/PB Declaration.
- (MR) The household fails to comply with the monthly reporting requirements specified in Section 63-504.32, and Sections 63-505.2, .3, and .4;
- (QR) The household fails to comply with the QR requirements specified in Sections 63-508.4 and .613;
- .75 The following persons shall not affect the eligibility of an otherwise categorically eligible PA household:
- .751 Ineligible non-citizens as defined in Section 63-403.1;
- .752 Ineligible students as defined in Section 63-406;
- .753 SSI recipients as defined in Section 63-102(s);
- .754 SSN-disqualified persons as defined in Section 63-102(s);
- .755 Persons institutionalized in an unauthorized facility as defined in Section 63-402.4;
- .756 Household members who are disqualified for failure to comply with work requirements as specified in Section 63-407.4; or
- .757 GA recipients who receive benefits from a GA program appropriate for categorical eligibility.

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.76 For purposes of work registration, the exemptions specified in Section 63-407.2 shall apply to individuals in PA categorically eligible households. Any individual who is not exempt from work registration is subject to the work requirements specified in Section 63-407.

.8 GA Households

.81 CWDs shall advise all GA applicant households of their potential categorical eligibility for Food Stamp benefits and provide these households with a DFA 285-A1 and DFA 285-A2 or the joint application forms. GA households shall not be considered categorically eligible for Food Stamp benefits unless they receive, or are authorized to receive, benefits from a GA program appropriate for categorical eligibility as specified in Section 63-301.82.

.811 CWDs shall allow households in which all members are applying for GA benefits to leave a signed Food Stamp application, which contains, at a minimum, the household's name, address, and signature, at the GA office. The GA office shall forward the application that same day to the appropriate Food Stamp office for processing.

.812 The procedural and timeliness requirements that apply to the non-PA application process shall begin when the Food Stamp office receives the application. Since there may be a delay involved in the transferring of applications from GA offices to food stamp offices, households shall be advised that they may receive faster service if they take the application directly to the Food Stamp office.

.82 Categorically Eligible GA Households

.821 Any household, except those specified in Section 63-301.824, in which all food stamp eligible members receive or are authorized to receive GA benefits from a GA program which meets the following criteria, shall be considered eligible for food stamps because of their status as GA recipients.

- (a) The GA program must have income criteria equal to, or more restrictive than, the food stamp gross income test; and
- (b) The GA program must provide benefits as defined in Section 63-102g.(1)(A) and must not provide only one-time emergency payments; and
- (c) A signed certification that the county's GA program is appropriate for categorical eligibility is on file with the CDSS; or

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- (d) The GA program has been certified by FNS as an appropriate program.
- .822 The eligibility factors which shall be accepted for food stamp eligibility without verification are the resource (except resource transfers); gross and net income limits, sponsored noncitizen information; and residency.

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**HANDBOOK BEGINS HERE**

- (a) Sponsored noncitizens shall continue to cooperate in providing sponsor information, as specified in Section 63-405.7, for use in determining benefit level.

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**HANDBOOK ENDS HERE**

- .823 When determining whether a household is to be considered GA categorically eligible, the CWD shall verify that the household contains only food stamp eligible members who are receiving, or are authorized to receive, GA from a GA program appropriate for categorical eligibility.
- (a) Where household composition is questionable, the CWD shall determine that the household meets the definition of household as specified in Section 63-402 and contains no individuals disqualified as specified in Section 63-301.825.
- .824 A household shall not be considered categorically eligible and is subject to all food stamp eligibility and benefit provisions if:
- (a) The household refuses to cooperate in providing information to the CWD that is necessary for making an eligibility determination or for completing any subsequent review of eligibility;
- (b) The household is disqualified because the head of household fails to comply with a work requirement as specified in Section 63-407.1;
- (c) The household is ineligible under the striker provisions as specified in Section 63-402.8; or
- (d) The household is ineligible because they knowingly transferred resources for the purpose of qualifying or attempting to qualify for the program as specified in Section 63-501.6.



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.825 The following individuals shall not be included as a member of an otherwise categorically eligible household if that person:

- (a) Is disqualified for intentional Program violation;
- (b) Is not the head of household and disqualified for failure to comply with the work requirements specified in Section 63-407.1;
- (c) Fails to provide or apply for a social security number;
- (d) Is an ineligible alien;
- (e) Is an ineligible student;
- (f) Is an SSI recipient; or
- (g) Is institutionalized in a nonexempt facility as specified in Section 63-402.4.

.9 Mixed Food Stamp Households

Mixed food stamp (FS) households are FS applicant households in which some, but not all, members are in the PA assistance unit (AU).

.91 CWDs may use the joint application processing procedures in Section 63-301.6 for mixed FS households. This decision shall not be made on a case-by-case basis, but shall be applied uniformly to all households of this type in the county.

.92 Mixed FS households shall not be considered categorically eligible for food stamp benefits.

.93 CWDs shall exclude any resource of FS household members receiving PA. If a resource is jointly held by a Food Stamp household member who is receiving PA and a Food Stamp household member who is not receiving PA, then exclude the amount that was counted in determining the PA eligibility.

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.94 Mixed FS households must meet the food stamp gross and net income standards of eligibility.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 10554, 11265.1, .2, and .3, 18904, and 18910, Welfare and Institutions Code. Reference: Sections 10554, 11265.1, .2, and .3, 18901, 18904, and 18910, Welfare and Institutions Code; Section 11349.1, Government Code; 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 271.2; 7 CFR 272.3(c)(1)(ii); 7 CFR 273.2(d)(1), (e)(3), (h)(1)(C), (h)(1)(i)(B) and (D), (h)(2)(i)(A), (i)(4)(iii)(B), (C) and (D),(j), (j)(1), (j)(1)(iv), (j)(2)(iii) and (iv), (j)(3), (j)(4), and (j)(4)(vi); 7 CFR 273.4; 7 CFR 273.7 and .7(g)(1)(i); 7 CFR 273.8(e)(17); 7 CFR 273.9(d)(7) as published in the Federal Register, Vol. 59, No. 235 on December 8, 1994; 7 CFR 273.10(c)(1) and (g)(1)(ii); 7 CFR 274.2; (Court Order re Final Partial Settlement Agreement in Jones v. Yeutter (C.D. Cal. Feb. 1, 1990) [Dock. No. CV-89-0768].); Public Law (P.L.) 102-237, Sections 902 and 905, as specified in Federal Administrative Notice 92-12, dated January 9, 1992; USDA, Food and Consumer Service, Administrative Notice 97-105, dated August 21, 1997; and P.L. 104-193, Sections 815 and 838 (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996); Food and Consumer Service Waiver dated May 24, 1996; Food and Nutrition Service Quarterly Reporting/Prospective Budgeting waiver dated April 1, 2003; Federal Food Stamp Policy Memos 82-9 dated December 8, 1981, and 88-4 dated November 13, 1987, and Federal Register, Vol. 66, No. 229, dated November 28, 2001.