

# **EXPEDITED SERVICE ENTITLEMENT AND APPLICATION PROCESSING FOR CALFRESH**

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# How to Listen In

- **This webinar will be held in “listen only mode.”**
- **Two ways to connect to audio – via phone or computer.**



# How to Ask Questions

- **Use the questions box to ask a question.**
- **At the end of the presentation, we will open the lines for more questions. “Raise your hand” to ask a question.**
- **If you are not connected by a phone or microphone, you will need to ask a question via the question box.**

# OUTLINE

- ❖ Background
- ❖ Identifying Applicants Who Needs ES
- ❖ Processing Applications for ES
- ❖ Scheduling Interviews for ES
- ❖ Verification Requirements for ES
- ❖ ES Timeliness Standards
- ❖ Reporting on ES

# BACKGROUND

Assembly Bill 2384 (Chapter 1293, Statutes of 1987) transmitted in All County Letter 88-54.

This bill required CWDs to:

- Orally inform applicants of the right to ES and how to initiate the process.
- Set the ES standard timeframe of three calendar days.
- Limited verification requirements to only applicant's identity.
- Collect and report data regarding ES processing.

# BACKGROUND

- Assembly Bill 1359 (Chapter 468, Statutes of 2012) transmitted in All County Letter 12-74, amended Welfare and Institutions Code Section 18914, required counties to screen **all** CalFresh applications for ES entitlement.
- All County Letter 16-14

# IDENTIFYING APPLICANTS WHO NEED SERVICES

## **Application Submission**

Counties responsibilities are:

- Encourage the household to provide as much information as possible on the application.
- Never discourage from submitting an application with a name, address, and signature.
- Stress the importance of providing a phone number and/or email address.

# IDENTIFYING APPLICANTS WHO NEEDS ES

## **Informing Applicants**

- Welfare and Institutions Code 18912 requires CWDs to orally inform each applicant household of the availability of ES.
- MPP Section 63-804.4 and 7 CFR 273.15(d) requires CWDs to inform each applicant household of their right to an agency conference if they disagree on the determination of non-entitlement of ES.



# IDENTIFYING APPLICANTS WHO NEEDS ES

## Screening for ES

- All applications submitted by applicant households or application assister online or in person, the county **must** date stamp the application and screen for ES.
- The county shall **not** limit ES screening to specific questions on the application.

# IDENTIFYING APPLICANTS WHO NEEDS ES

## Screening for ES

- The entire application should be reviewed for ES entitlement.
- Completion of the ES screening questions are **optional** and not a requirement for submitting the online application.

# IDENTIFYING APPLICANTS WHO NEEDS ES

## **Screening for ES**

### Screened ES Entitled

- The household does not lose entitlement, unless the household's circumstances change.

### Screened ES Non-Entitled

- Applications with minimum information shall be screened and routed for normal processing.

# PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR ES

## Determining ES Entitlement

1. Households are entitled for ES if they have **both**, less than \$150 in gross monthly income **and** liquid resources of \$100.
2. Households whose **combined** gross monthly income and liquid resources are less than the household's monthly rent or mortgage and utility costs, the mandatory standard utility allowance (SUA) **must** be applied.

# PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR ES

## **Determining ES Entitlement**

3. Households with migrant or seasonal farmworkers and who are destitute are entitled to ES if their liquid resources are \$100 or less.

# PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR ES

## **Agency Conference**

MPP Section 63-804.4 and 7 CFR 273.15(d) is a process that allows the household the right to request a face-to-face meeting with an eligibility supervisor to informally resolve any dispute as to whether the household meets ES criteria.

CWDs shall inform household by any or all of the following methods:

- Verbally inform
- Post signs in lobbies
- Attach an informational sheet on the application packet

# PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR ES

## Agency Conference

- The agency conference shall be scheduled within **two** working days of the request UNLESS;
  - The household requests that it be scheduled later, or
  - They do not wish to have an agency conference, or
- The CWD is unable to contact the household to schedule an agency conference, the application will continue under normal processing.

# PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR ES

## **Late Determinations**

ES entitlement is discovered at the subsequent interview or any time during the application process.



# EXAMPLE #1

On May 1, an application is submitted and screened for ES entitlement (day zero). The household is not entitled to ES therefore, the CWD schedules the household for a normal processing interview appointment on May 10. The household shows up for their interview and informs the eligibility worker that their circumstances have changed and provide sufficient information which makes them entitled to ES, along with proof of identity (This becomes date of discovery - day one). Applicant comes back the following day to pick up EBT card with benefits and PIN number (day two).

# PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR ES

## **Processing Applications Found Entitled for ES**

- Applicants determined entitled to ES shall receive a CalFresh eligibility determination and benefits available to be used on their EBT card no later than the third calendar day following the date of application.

# SCHEDULING INTERVIEWS FOR ES

Applicants methods of contact can include:

- A telephone number
- An email address
- Phone message
- A phone text
- By mail

The preferred method of contact is by telephone or electronic.

# SCHEDULING INTERVIEWS FOR ES

CWDs are encouraged to:

- Provide the household an appointment letter as a reminder.
- Provide households with interview options.
- Utilize existing technology to expand accessibility such as, telephonic signature, e-signature, online applications, e-notices, etc.

# SCHEDULING INTERVIEWS FOR ES

## **Acceptable Scripts**

When the household is not available by telephone, messages left for the applicant/recipient should contain information relative to the interview without compromising confidentiality.

Examples of acceptable scripts have been provided for CWDs to use when leaving a message.

# SCHEDULING INTERVIEWS FOR ES

## Acceptable Scripts

### When leaving a message

*“Hello, my name is Anna Smith. This call is for Pat Jones. I am calling in regards to your recent application submitted on March 24. You have been scheduled for an interview on March 25, 2016 at 9:00am at the following address/location. Please make sure that you bring proof of your identity.”*

*“If you cannot make the scheduled appointment time, please call back at your earliest convenience at (999)999-9999 to reschedule your interview appointment. Thank you.”*

# SCHEDULING INTERVIEWS FOR ES

## Acceptable Scripts

### Leaving a message on a message phone

*“Hello, my name is Anna Smith. This call is for Pat Jones. I am calling in regards to his/her recent application that was submitted on March 24.*

*“He/she has been scheduled for an interview on March 25, 2016 at 9:00am at the following address/location. Please make sure he/she brings proof of identity.”*

*“If he/she cannot make the scheduled appointment, please have them call back at their earliest convenience at (999)999-9999 to reschedule their interview appointment. Thank you.”*

# SCHEDULING INTERVIEWS FOR ES

## Acceptable Scripts

### The CWD **must**:

- Document in the case file when the call was made to the household and what information was left, including the date and time of the scheduled interview.
- If the specific date and time is provided via message, the CWD **must** send the Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI) if the household misses their initial scheduled interview.



# SCHEDULING INTERVIEWS FOR ES

## **Conducting Interviews**

When conducting interactive interviews, either in person or over the phone:

- All information must be documented in the case file.
- CWD are highly encouraged to provide a copy of the application to the household, so the information can be kept for their records.

# SCHEDULING INTERVIEWS FOR ES

## **Notice of Missed Interview**

- If the household misses their initial scheduled interview, the NOMI is mailed to the household, the application is routed for normal processing.
- If the household misses the second scheduled interview and thirty days for normal processing has lapsed, the CWD must deny the application and the household must reapply.
- When the household shows up for a second scheduled interview and the household is ES entitled, the CWD must process the application under ES. The ES timeframe would begin as day one.

## EXAMPLE #2

An applicant files a completed CalFresh application and is screened ES entitled on Friday, September 1 (day zero). The county schedules an interview for September 4 (after the weekend which is counted as one day). The household misses the interview scheduled on September 4 (day two). The CWD sends the NOMI to the household. The household contacts the CWD two days later and schedules a second interview on September 10. On September 10, the household shows for their interview and complies with the requirements to complete the interview process (this becomes day one).

# VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ES

## **Verifications**

7 CFR 273.2(i)(4)(i)(A) – identity shall be verified through a collateral contact or readily available documentary evidence.

7 CFR 273.2(i)(4)(i)(B) – postponed verification of all other eligibility factors within the thirty day normal processing timeframe.

# VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ES

## **Verifications**

CWDs are encouraged to verify identity through various methods, such as:

- Medi-Cal Eligibility Data Systems (MEDS)
- Program case file
- Collateral contact
- Documentary evidence
- Home visit

# VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ES

## **Certification Periods for ES**

In an effort to promote program simplification, ACL 12-74, released on December 24, 2013, instructed CWDs to certify all ES households for the maximum certification allowable, in accordance with the household's circumstances.

- Households consisting of all adult members who are elderly/disabled – 24 months
- All other Households – 12 months

# VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ES

## **Certification Periods for ES**

### How Often to Certify Households with the ES Process

There is no limit to the number of times a household can be certified through ES procedures, as long as prior to each expedited finding, the household provided all the postponed verification from the previous request or has had received benefits under normal processing

# ES TIMELINESS STANDARDS

## **Opportunity to Participate**

CWDs **must** provide all participants with the opportunity to participate. This consists of providing households with an active EBT card and PIN number made available to access benefits that have been loaded onto the household's EBT account and made available for spending .



# ES TIMELINESS STANDARDS

## ES Timeliness Standards

CWDs **must** mail or have:

- EBT cards available for pick-up (and post benefits to the EBT account, issue a PIN number, and provide all the training) in time to ensure that the household can access his/her benefits before the three-day ES timeframe expires.
- Mailing time does not count towards the opportunity to participate and does not affect the ES three-day timeframe.

# ES TIMELINESS STANDARDS

## Timeliness Standards

### Federal Mandate for ES Timeframe is Seven days

- If the statutory required three-day timeframe has lapsed and the CWD is unable to process the application timely (State), CWDs shall continue the ES process to meet the seven-day (federal) ES timeframe for issuing benefits.
- Quality Control (QC) staff reviews to issuance of ES benefits within seven-days to Food and Nutrition Services (FNS).

## EXAMPLE #3

An applicant completes and files a partially completed application for CalFresh benefits (day zero). EW screens the application for ES and determined the applicant ES entitled. The applicant only provides a mailing address and no other means of contact. The EW schedules an appointment on the third day and sends an appointment letter to the household. The applicant misses their interview, a NOMI is sent and the application is routed for normal processing. The household contacts the CWD and schedules a second interview two weeks later. At this second appointment, the EW determines ES entitlement (day one). The next day the applicant picks up their EBT card and PIN number to access benefits that day (day two).

# REPORTING ON ES

## **CF 296 – CalFresh Monthly Caseload Movement Statistical Report Form**

- CDSS would like to remind CWDs that application processing data should be correctly reported for both non-ES and ES households on the CalFresh Monthly Caseload Movement Statistical Report form.
- ACL 16-39, new data report form and instructions (Discontinuance of the DFA 296/296X)

# QUESTIONS



# THANK YOU

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