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Governor

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street • Boston MA 02111

William D. O'Leary
Secretary

Claire McIntire
Commissioner

Fax 97-121
Field Operations Memo 97- 52
August 19, 1997

To: Local Office Staff

From: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

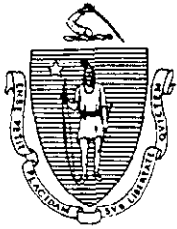
Re: Fax to Regional SSI Office Staff -- SSI/FS Noncitizens No Longer Eligible for Food Stamp Benefits May Be Eligible for State Supplemental Food Stamp Program Benefits

Background

The attached memo was faxed to the Regional SSI Offices earlier today. Please review the attached memo. If an SSI/FS recipient contacts the local office regarding the information contained in FAX 97-120, refer the recipient to the appropriate SSI/FS Office for assistance.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478. Systems questions should be directed to Customer Support Services at (617) 348-5290.



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To: Regional SSI/FS Office Staff

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Re: SSI/FS Noncitizens No Longer Eligible for Food Stamp Benefits May Be Eligible for State Supplemental Food Stamp Program Benefits

Background

The Federal Welfare Reform Act of 1996 made certain noncitizens ineligible for food stamp benefits and required that cases containing noncitizen(s) be reviewed on or before August 22, 1997.

Under the 1997 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act which President Clinton signed on June 12, 1997, states were given the option to issue state-funded food stamp benefits to certain individuals made ineligible by federal welfare reform. On July 11, 1997, Governor Weld signed into law a State Supplemental Food Stamp Program (SSFSP) for certain noncitizens.

The Department is in the process of drafting SSFSP regulations and procedures as well as analyzing the systems changes necessary to implement the new program.

In preparation for these systems changes, this memo provides interim instructions for coding certain noncitizens closed due to ineligible noncitizen status for food stamp (FS) benefits in accordance with 106 CMR 362.220. **Appropriate coding of these individuals/cases will enable the system to automatically convert these noncitizens for SSFSP benefits.**

**Noncitizens
Ineligible Due
to Federal
Welfare Reform
Provisions**

Noncitizens ineligible for FS benefits solely as a result of the food stamp noncitizen regulations at 106 CMR 362.220 may be eligible for SSFSP benefits.

Note: The only noncitizen statuses which will be ineligible for both FS *and* SSFSP benefits are nonimmigrants (current INA status of visitor, student or diplomat) and noncitizens illegally residing in the U.S.

With the exception of noncitizen status, SSFSP applicants and recipients must meet all other financial and nonfinancial eligibility requirements of the Food Stamp Program.

In addition, SSFSP applicants and recipients are subject to a 60-day residency requirement. Individuals (re)applying for FS benefits, after August 1, 1997 but not yet approved, who are determined ineligible for FS benefits due to noncitizen status but eligible for SSFSP must provide verification of having lived in Massachusetts 60 days prior to the (re)application. Acceptable verifications are found at 106 CMR 361.610(H).

Note: There is no durational residency requirement for the Food Stamp Program.

**Notice of
Possible
Ineligibility for
Food Stamp
Benefits to
Ongoing SSI/FS
Noncitizens**

To identify SSI/FS noncitizens who may be ineligible for FS benefits under the new noncitizen provisions, the Department matched our recipient masterfile against a Social Security Administration (SSA) list of SSI recipients potentially ineligible for FS benefits due to noncitizen status. A notice was sent to each of the matched recipients on the evening of August 19, 1997. *See Attachment A.* Each recipient was also sent the Citizen/Noncitizen Verification, FS/NC-1, form to complete and return by the date indicated on the notice. *See Attachment B.*

Report

A report entitled *List of Active Category 9, Program Code D Noncitizens Who Might be Affected by New Food Stamp Program Rules* will be sent to the SSI/FS offices on Tuesday, August 19, 1997. This report lists the SSI/FS recipients who were sent the Potential of Termination of Food Stamp Benefits card and the Citizen/Noncitizen Verification form. This report is sorted by CAN within TAO.

Verification of Noncitizen Status

SSI/FS recipients must verify their noncitizen status on or before September 2, 1997. The SSI/FS workers must review the verification information submitted by each recipient to determine whether the case remains eligible for FS benefits in accordance with 106 CMR 362.220 and take appropriate action by September 5, 1997.

Ongoing SSI/FS Households Containing Noncitizens

If *eligible* for FS benefits, no further action is necessary at this time *unless* the case is being recertified according to current procedures.

If *no longer eligible for* FS benefits, the worker must:

- ◆ **On Day 1** enter the number of noncitizens eligible for the SSFSP in the Filing Unit Block in the FIW1 section of the category 9 *Worksheet*. *The two-digit entry in the Filing Unit Block will identify cases which contain SSFSP-eligible members; and*
- ◆ **On Day 2** close the case using AR 44.

If the recipient *fails to respond* by the date indicated on the notice, the case must be closed using AR 40 (*failure to provide required verifications*).

**Future
Recertification
of SSI/FS
Households
Containing
Noncitizens**

Since the SSA match may not identify all potential noncitizens, the Citizen/Noncitizen Verification form will be sent to current recipients along with the SSI Short Form as part of the recertification process.

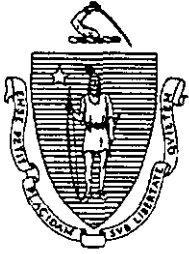
If the verification of noncitizen status indicates that the case continues *to be eligible* for FS benefits, the worker must recertify the case as usual.

If the verification of noncitizen status indicates that the case is *no longer eligible* for FS benefits, the worker must:

- ◆ **On Day 1** enter the number of noncitizens eligible for the SSFSP in the Filing Unit Block in the FIW1 section of the Worksheet. *The two-digit entry in the Filing Unit Block will identify cases which contain SSFSP-eligible members; and*
- ◆ **On Day 2** close the case using AR 44.

Questions

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Transitional Assistance

Notice of Potential Termination of Food Stamp Program Benefits

The Social Security Administration has identified you as a noncitizen who may no longer be eligible for Food Stamp Program benefits due to an ineligible noncitizen status.

Due to the new noncitizen rules, you must verify your citizen/noncitizen status. Please complete the enclosed Citizen/Noncitizen Verification Form and return it to your SSI Unit by September 2, 1997. Be sure to include copies of the verification of your citizen or noncitizen status.

Your SSI Unit will determine whether you can continue to receive food stamp benefits. You will receive a separate notice if your Food Stamp Program benefits will stop.

If you are found ineligible for the Food Stamp Program based on your noncitizen status, you may be eligible for the new State Supplemental Food Stamp Program. You will receive a separate notice if you are approved for the State Supplemental Food Stamp Program.

If you do not respond, your Food Stamp Program benefits will stop.



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Transitional Assistance

Citizen/Noncitizen Verification Form

Due to a change in Food Stamp Program rules, your citizen/noncitizen status must be verified. Please answer the following questions and provide the required verifications. If you wish to continue receiving food stamp benefits, you must complete this form and return it by the date on the enclosed notice. Return the completed form with copies of verifications in the envelope which we provided you.

IF YOU DO NOT RESPOND, YOUR FOOD STAMP BENEFITS WILL STOP.

Complete the following questions.

Are you a U.S. citizen? **yes** **no**

If yes, provide a copy of one of the following verifications:

Birth certificate;

Baptismal record; or

Naturalization certificate

Are you a noncitizen? **yes** **no**

If yes, provide a copy of one of the following verifications:

Alien Registration Card INS-I-151;

Alien Registration Card INS-I-551;

Alien Registration Card INS-I-94; or

Official written documentation

Return the completed form with copies of verifications in the envelope which we provided you.