

As you may know Quality Control reviews not only active food stamp AU cases but also closings and denials to ensure that AU Managers provide food stamp benefits to households entitled to them and to ensure that AU Managers use correct procedures. In September 2003, *Transitions* discussed two types of incorrect denial found by QC. These involved AUs being denied prior to 30 days under the following circumstances: 1) when the applicant has not appeared for an appointment or 2) when the applicant has failed to provide a requested verification. This month we will review two recent incorrect denials and four incorrect closings.

Denials

There has been considerable improvement in both of these areas. Among cash AUs, however, there is a problem with AUs being incorrectly denied before the 30th day for failure to keep appointments. FS AUs cannot be denied until the 30th day for failure to keep appointments.

Here are two examples of incorrect denials:

1. What happens if the AU Manager requests verification of shelter costs, but the applicant does not return them? After I assist the applicant to obtain any verifications, can I deny the AU for failure to provide verification of shelter costs.

No. When the AU fails to verify shelter expenses, the AU must be certified without the specific deduction, assuming they meet all eligibility criteria.

2. I denied a PA-FS AU for excess money in the bank and Quality Control found the action invalid. Why?

AUs that are categorically eligible (SSI, EAEDC and TAFDC, see 106 CMR 365.180) cannot be ineligible based on assets. Remember, any AU that includes a child under 19 is categorically eligible. Assets are not countable for a categorically eligible AU.

Closings:

Here are some examples of incorrect closing when a PA AU is being terminated.

1. An EAEDC AU has started to receive SSI income. The AU Manager records the SSI income in addition to the EAEDC income and the FS AU incorrectly closes. A similar situation occurred recently when the client started receiving OASDI: both the SSI which the client was no longer receiving and OASDI were added together, making the AU ineligible when it was in fact still eligible. Remember, when new income is received, the terminated income must be 'zeroed' out.
2. In several recently reviewed AUs the reason for the termination was not documented and QC was unable to find a valid closing reason. Without documentation, QC cannot determine the accuracy of the closing.
3. Mail was returned as undeliverable, but included a new forwarding address on the envelope. The AU Manager should send a letter to the new address requesting verification. If none is received, the AU could be closed for failure to verify. If this letter is returned, the AU should be closed for whereabouts unknown.
4. An AU Manager closed the FS AU when the applicant did not provide the requested verification that was only needed for TAFDC, such as a birth record. Since this verification is not required for food stamp benefits, the AU Manager cannot close the FS AU for that reason. Unless the household is also ineligible for a food stamps-related reason, the AU Manager cannot close the food stamp AU.

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