



OFFICE OF POLICY, PROCEDURES, AND TRAINING

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POLICY BULLETIN #20-15-ELI

CASE PROCESSING CHANGES DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

| Date: April 3, 2020 | Subtopic(s): Cash Assistance, SNAP |
|------------------------|---|
| | <p>The purpose of this policy bulletin is to inform Job Center, Non-Cash Assistance (NCA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Center staff, and HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) of processing changes due to the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19).</p> <p><u>Loss of Income/Employment (CA/SNAP and NCA SNAP)</u></p> <p>Many places of business are closed and without any mechanism for individuals to verify that they are no longer employed or have had a loss in wages. Because of this situation, for both Cash Assistance (CA)/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Non-Cash Assistance SNAP (NCA SNAP) when an applicant or participant reports a decrease in wages and/or loss of employment, the case <u>must</u> not be deferred for verification that the individual is no longer working or has had a decrease in income. Staff must process the cases using the individual's statement during the interview or indicated on a request for a budget change to process the case.</p> <p>If all other eligibility factors have been verified, staff <u>must</u> not defer the case. Staff must enter a case comment indicating that due to the COVID-19 emergency, no additional verification for loss of employment/income was requested. For example, if during the initial eligibility interview an individual reports that they were working as a bartender but the establishment closed, no additional verification is required and the case should be processed without any income.</p> |

HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE?
Call 718-557-1313 then press 3 at the prompt followed by 1 or
send an e-mail to *FIA Call Center Fax* or fax to: (917) 639-0298

Unemployment Insurance Benefits (CA/SNAP and NCA SNAP)

As an unprecedented number of New Yorkers will be filing for or receiving Unemployment Insurance Benefits (UIB) staff must be mindful that verification of UIB is not limited to paper benefit statements. Applicants/recipients may submit screenshots of their UIB statements and staff must not defer or deny a case if this is the verification submitted. As long as the information is current and can accurately be attributed to the individual, the submitted verification must be accepted and benefits budgeted accordingly.

Note: For Cash Assistance cases, individuals must still apply for Unemployment Insurance Benefits (UIB) and provide proof of application. Similar to with verification of benefit receipt, applicants/participants may submit screenshots as proof of their application for benefits.

Duty to Assist

Refer to [PB #16-04-ELI](#)

Staff are reminded of their duty to assist individuals, especially in terms of obtaining verification. As it may be difficult for applicants to obtain verification of certain information, staff must attempt to assist individuals through other means such as available data matches and collateral contacts and not delay benefits pending verification when individuals have made good faith efforts and collateral contacts have proven unsuccessful.

Recertification Periods

Recertification periods for Cash Assistance (CA) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) cases with CA and/or SNAP authorization periods expiring at the end of March, April and May 2020 will be automatically extended in the Welfare Management System (WMS) for three months. When these households come back up for recertification, notices will be sent to them letting them know they must recertify.

SNAP Periodic Reports / CA Six-Month Mailers

No negative case actions are being taken against households that fail to submit either their Periodic Report or their Six-Month Mailer. If individuals submit their SNAP Periodic Report, Mailer and Match Action Program (MMAP) staff will process the periodic report and send the participants the Notice of Documentation Required – Change in Household Circumstances (**W-132S**) requesting any missing necessary documentation.

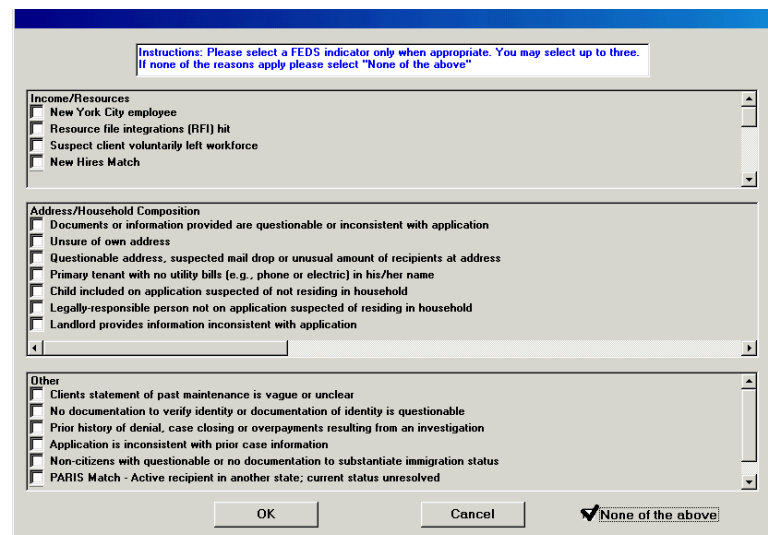
For the Six-Month Mailer, ICP staff will process the mailer. If additional documentation or information is needed, ICP staff must not post any Action Codes in the New York City Work Accountability and You (NYCWAY) system. Staff will outreach to the participants and let them know what documentation is missing. They will advise them to take pictures of their documents and upload through the ACCESS HRA mobile app.

Additional Changes for CA Cases

Bureau of Eligibility Verification (BEV)

Based on guidance issued by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) no Bureau of Eligibility Verification (BEV) referrals for Cash Assistance (CA) applicants will be made.

When conducting a CA application interview in POS, staff must not select any FEDS indicators instead staff must select “**None of the above**” in the **BEV Ref Reasons (Fed Codes)** window in POS (as shown below).



Rejecting CA Applications – Failure to Keep Interview

For CA applications where attempts to contact the applicant have proven unsuccessful by the 7th day from application, staff must reject the application using WMS reason code **E10** (Failure to Keep/Complete Initial Eligibility Interview: No Scheduled Appointment) which will send the applicant a Client Notice System (CNS) generated notice.

Note: Staff must ensure that the M3E indicator is blank to ensure a CNS notice goes out.

Rejecting CA Applications – No changes

For CA applications that need to be rejected for other reasons, such as failure to provide verification (**V21**), excess income (**E30**, **E35**), excess resources (**U40**), staff must reject the case using the appropriate code and ensure that a CNS notice is generated.

Note: For cases that are placed in Single Issue (**SI**) status, staff must use the appropriate CLOSING code to close the case.

Effective Immediately

References:

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|-------------|---|
| 20TA/DC019 | LDSS-5165 (Rev. 3/20): “Notice to All Recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and/or Temporary Assistance Cash Benefits (TA w/Medicaid) MA |
| 20TA/DC016 | COVID-19 |
| 20 TAWMS004 | March 2020 Periodic Report Mailing Delay NYC only |
| 20TA/WMS003 | Front End Detection & Eligibility Verification Review Investigations |

Related Items:

[PB #20-13-ELI](#)

[PB #16-04-ELI](#)