



FAMILY INDEPENDENCE ADMINISTRATION



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POLICY DIRECTIVE #10-19-OPE

(This Policy Directive Replaces PD #00-24RR and PB #01-12)

PROCESS FOR RETURNED MAIL

Date: May 18, 2010	Subtopic(s): Mail, Operations
AUDIENCE	This policy directive is for all staff in the Job Centers, Non Cash Assistance Food Stamp (NCA FS) Centers, the Office of Central Processing (OCP), Income Clearance Program (ICP), Computer Match Unit (CMU) and the Bureau of Reconciliation and Control (BORAC). These instructions are informational for all others.
BACKGROUND	Staff in each location must follow the same instructions when handling returned mail to ensure that every possible step is taken so that applicants/participants receive all correspondence from the Family Independence Administration (FIA).
REQUIRED ACTION	<p>Processing Returned Mail at OCP, ICP, and CMU</p> <p>When mail is returned to OCP, ICP, or CMU, Workers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the contents of the envelope for the case number, name, or Social Security Number (SSN). • Use the case number, name, or SSN to verify the address and to identify the center responsible for the case via the Individual Inquiry screen in the Welfare Management System (WMS). <p>When verifying the address in WMS, Workers must check the residence address, the mailing address, and the care of (c/o) designation.</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

- If the address on the returned mail is not the same address that is indicated in WMS, re-mail the letter/correspondence using the address in WMS.
- If the address on the returned mail matches the address in WMS, enter the appropriate Action Code (see below) in NYCWAY.

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>
823	Mail returned to OCP and forwarded to Job Center
823I	Mail returned to ICP and forwarded to Job Center
823M	Mail returned to CMU and forwarded to Job Center

The Action Codes listed above will place the case on the “Mail Worklist” in the appropriate Job Center for follow-up actions.

- Batch returned mail by location.
- Attach an identifying cover sheet.
- Forward the mail to the appropriate Job Center.

Processing Returned Mail at BORAC

BORAC receives correspondence requesting that rent or child care payments cease, notification that an addressee is deceased, notification that a tenant has been evicted, and/or change of landlord designation requests. BORAC also receives returned undeliverable direct vendor checks, restricted two-party rent checks, and vendor child care checks.

See [PD #08-14-OPE](#)

Returned shelter payments must be cancelled and forwarded along with supporting documents (including a copy of the returned shelter payment) to the Landlord Ombudsman Services Unit (LOSU) located at 180 Water Street, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10038.

When mail is returned or sent to BORAC and the case number is not included in the contents of the envelope, the designated worker must check for a name or SSN to identify the Job Center responsible for the case.

A Designated Worker verifies the Job Center responsible for the cases of all returned items through WMS. The Designated Worker must:

- Enter Action Code **823B** (Mail returned to BORAC and forwarded to Job Center) in NYCWAY. Action Code **823B** will place the case on the Mail Worklist in the appropriate Job Center for follow-up action.
- Print a copy of the Worklist for each Job Center for which he/she is forwarding returned mail.
- Batch the returned mail by center location; attach a copy of the Worklist and forward to the appropriate Regional Manager/Job Center Director.

Processing Returned Mail at Job Centers/Model Offices

All mail returned to the Job Center or Model Office is forwarded to the Center Director’s Designee. The Center Director’s Designee must:

- Sort the mail according to the location that forwarded the returned mail to the center.
- Enter the appropriate Action Code in the **Master Screen** in NYCWAY indicating where the mail was forwarded from using one of the following codes:

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>
824	Center received returned mail from OCP
824B	Center received returned mail from BORAC
824C	Center received returned mail from originating Center (mail returned back to the Center that sent it)
824I	Center received returned mail from ICP
824M	Center received returned mail from CMU

The above Action Codes are used to verify that returned mail has been received by the Center and stops any adverse action against the applicant/participant resulting from non-receipt of the letter/notice.

- Annotate the caseload from the **Activity Inquiry** screen on the returned mail envelope.
- If the returned mail is a Notice of Intent (NOI) or a conciliation letter, enter Action Code **821**.
- Print the Mail Worklist.
- Batch the returned mail by Unit and caseload and forward it with a copy of the Mail Worklist to the appropriate Supervisor for distribution to a JOS/Worker for follow-up action.

The assigned JOS/Worker must review the case address (residential and mailing) in the POS **Address Information** screen and the POS **Browser** to determine if the address in the POS file and WMS **Inquiry** information are the same as the returned mail address.

If the addresses do not match, the JOS/Worker must:

- Review the case record by accessing the POS **Activity Management Screen** and select the **Change Case Data** option;
- Enter the change of address in the POS **Address Information** screen. Upon the successful data entry, the change of address case action will generate Action Code **826** (address verified and changed) in NYCWAY.
- If the returned mail is a work activity appointment letter or a conciliation notice, forward the correct address to the Associate Job Opportunity Specialist I (AJOS I) via the in-center referral.

POS instructions to change address.

The AJOS I must:

- ensure that Action Code **105E** is entered in NYCWAY to generate a second letter/notice to the participant at the correct address.
- Enter Action Code **995** into NYCWAY to close out the returned mail closeout process on the Mail Worklist.
- If the returned mail is a Notice of Recertification Appointment (**W-908T**) with a recertification date that is less than 10 calendar days from the date that the mail is returned, process a change of address in POS and prepare a Notice of Rescheduled Appointment for Recertification Interview (**W-908CC**) in POS with a new 10-day recertification date and mail it to the correct address.

If the addresses match, the JOS/Worker must:

- Check WMS for possible infractions. If WMS indicates that there is a pending infraction, use the POS Undercare **TAD** to close the case on that issue.
- If there are no pending infractions and the address cannot be verified, initiate a case action to close the CA case using closing code **E60** (unable to locate). A manual separate FS determination is required for six-month reporters.
- Access the POS **Tools** menu and select **Case Comments** to make a detailed case entry.
- Make any required entries in NYCWAY.

- If the participant contacts the agency during the 10-day clock down period, inform him/her that a closing is pending on the case. Tell the participant he/she must submit current address verification to stop the closing. Settle the Case in Conference (SIC) if documentation is submitted.

If the address on the returned mail does not match the address in our files or the mail was sent to a different address than the one provided by the applicant/participant, re-mail the information contained in the returned mail to the correct mailing address.

If the applicant/participant is residing in temporary/transitional housing, or if the mail was sent to a general post office box, do not initiate a closing based on the returned mail. If a closing action has already started and it is too late to stop the closing, reopen the case and ensure that any missed benefits are provided.

If the returned mail for a participant residing in temporary/transitional housing is a recertification appointment and there has been no updated information provided on the current address/location, wait for the recertification appointment date. On the next participant contact, by phone or in person, inform the individual of the recertification date. If no contact has been made and/or the individual does not appear for the recertification appointment, the case must be closed for failure to recertify using CA closing code **G10**.

Returned mail must always be scanned into the electronic case record.

If an applicant/participant claims that he/she failed to keep an appointment due to non-receipt of mail and a case record review indicates that a reported address change was not processed or processed incorrectly, follow the instructions described on page 4 under “if the addresses do not match.”

Processing Returned Mail at the NCA FS Center

The Mail Application Referral Unit (MARU) was established to centralize the receipt of all mailed/faxed NCA FS applications. See [PD #09-26-ELI](#) for more information on mail sent out by/returned to MARU.

All mail returned to the NCA FS Center is forwarded to the Mail Processing Unit (MPU). MPU is responsible for the control and processing of all case actions resulting from information received by mail, including returned mail and inter-office mail.

See [PD #09-16-ELI](#) for detailed guidelines on the use of Form **LDSS-4753**.

In certain instances, when mail is returned to the Agency, a Request for Contact/Missed Interview Form (**LDSS-4753**) must be sent prior to taking any adverse action on the case. The [LDSS-4753](#) must be sent for:

- Applicants who filed their FS application by mail or facsimile (fax) and the appointment sent is returned undeliverable with no forwarding address. The MPU Worker must first attempt to contact the applicant using the telephone number listed on his/her application. If unable to contact the applicant via telephone, the Worker must send the applicant Form **LDSS-4753**. Applicants have 30 days from the application file date to contact the Center and schedule an eligibility interview.
- Participants who are subject to the 10-day reporting rule. NCA FS participants subject to 10-day reporting rules are required to report any changes (e.g. income, address, household size, etc) by the 10th day of the month following the month in which the change occurred. Failure to report changes, including address, by the 10th day of the month following the month of occurrence without good cause may result in a case closing or other adverse action.

See [PB #08-01-ELI](#) for 10-day reporting rules.

The **LDSS-4753** should not be sent when mail is sent to NCA FS participants who:

- are subject to six-month reporting rules.
- are receiving benefits under the Transitional Benefit Alternative (TBA) FS process.
- were sent a recertification appointment notice that is returned undeliverable. However, if the participant subsequently fails to keep his/her recertification interview appointment, the Worker must then send him/her Form **LDSS-4753** as a notification of missed interview.

A follow-up with the above participants to obtain the correct address must be done during the next contact, periodic report, or at recertification (whichever comes first).

MPU Clerk

The MPU Clerk is responsible for opening, sorting and distributing all incoming mail. The MPU Clerk must:

- Open and date stamp mail.
- Utilize WMS **Inquiry** to ascertain the case number and annotate the information on the envelope.

- Forward mail that indicates a case action(s) is required to the MPU Supervisor for review and annotation.
- Upon receipt of annotated mail returned by the MPU Supervisor, control the action to be taken by listing the case on a Control of Assignments and Referrals ([W-708](#)) card, including the due date for the completion of all paperwork.
- Distribute the annotated mail to the assigned worker.

MPU Supervisor

The MPU Supervisor reviews the mail received from the Clerk to determine the required follow-up case action(s). If a case action is necessary, the MPU Supervisor must:

- Annotate the source of the mail (i.e., returned mail), the action required (closing/change of address), and the name of the MPU Worker receiving the assignment.
- Forward the mail back to the MPU Clerk for control and distribution to the assigned worker.
- Review all case actions and responses prepared by the MPU Worker for sign-off.
- Prepare a weekly report of the unit's activity.

MPU Worker

Upon receipt of returned mail, the MPU Worker initiates a case action in accordance with the instructions annotated on the returned mail by the MPU Supervisor. The MPU Worker must review the case address (residential and mailing) in the POS **Address Information** screen and the POS **Browser** to determine if the address in the POS file and WMS **Inquiry** information are the same as the returned mail address.

- If the addresses match, the MPU Worker must:
 - Check WMS for possible infractions. If WMS indicates that there is a pending infraction, use the POS Undercare **TAD** to close the case on that issue.
 - If there are no pending infractions and the address cannot be verified through case review, complete and send the **LDSS-4753**. Request that the participant verify his/her address and current shelter information in the "Request for Contact" section of the form.
 - If the participant fails to respond to the **LDSS-4753** and there are still no other pending infractions, initiate a case action to close the case using closing code **M20** (failed to provide requested information within certification period).
 - Access the POS **Tools** menu and select **Case Comments** to make a detailed case entry.
 - Make any required entries in NYCWAY.

- If the participant responds to the notice with current address verification within 10 days, resolve the issue and settle the case in conference (SIC).
- If the addresses do not match, the MPU Worker must:
 - Review the case record by accessing the POS **Activity Management Screen** and select the **Change Case Data** option.
 - Enter the change of address in the POS **Address Information** screen.
 - If the address change was not processed in WMS:
 - Correct the **TAD** to ensure that the individual’s current residence address information or mailing address information is updated.
 - Re-mail the letter/notice using the correct address.
 - If the participant moved and failed to report address change:

Households subject to the 10-day reporting rule:

- If there are no pending infractions, complete and send the **LDSS-4753**. In the “Request for Contact” section of the form, request that the participant provide his/her change of address information, current shelter expense, and household composition within 10 calendar days.
- If the participant fails to respond to the **LDSS-4753** within 10 calendar days and there are no other pending infractions, close the case using code **M20**.

Households subject to the six-month reporting rule or receiving Transitional FS benefits:

- Pend the information until the next required six-month contact (Periodic Report or recertification). If the returned mail itself was a recertification appointment notice, no action is to be taken until the recertification date. If the individual fails to report to the recertification appointment, the **LDSS-4753** must then be sent as per current recertification procedure.

The MPU Worker must check to determine if the applicant/participant receives mail via a general post office box or resides in a hotel, shelter or other temporary housing.

In these instances, if the address on the returned mail does not match the address in our files or the mail was sent to a residential address different from what was provided by the applicant/participant, re-mail the information contained in the returned mail to the correct mailing address.

If the applicant/participant is residing in temporary/transitional housing, or the mail was sent to general post office box, do not initiate a closing. If a closing action has already started and it is too late to stop the closing, reopen the case and ensure that any missed benefits are provided.

In all instances, have the returned mail scanned into the electronic case record. The MPU Worker must enter a case comment regarding the action taken on the returned mail and forward it to the MPU Supervisor for review and sign-off.

Preventive Action in Job and NCA FS Centers

To ensure that mail gets to the intended destination, it is imperative that all address changes be processed immediately.

POS should be used to update all address changes. However, if POS is unavailable, Workers must process the address change manually. To manually process a change of residence address, Workers must:

- Enter the house number in element **041** of the **TAD**
- Enter the street name in element **042** of the **TAD**
- Enter the apartment number in element **043** of the **TAD**
- Enter the city or town in element **045** of the **TAD**
- Enter the state in element **046** of the **TAD**
- Enter the zip code in element **047** of the **TAD**
- Enter the phone number in element **049** of the **TAD**

To manually add or change a mailing address, Workers must:

- Enter the mailing address in element **051** of the **TAD**
- Enter the apartment number in element **052** of the **TAD**
- Enter the city or town in element **055** of the **TAD**
- Enter the state in element **056** of the **TAD**
- Enter the zip code in element **057** of the **TAD**
- Prepare the appropriate notice(s). (In the Job Centers a notice must be sent to both the participant and the landlord).
- Submit the case record with all completed actions to the Supervisor/AJOS I for review/sign-off.

Changing a participant’s address may also involve authorizing a new budget if the shelter amounts differ. This is especially critical in the Job Centers on direct vendor cases where there may be a change in the landlord’s name and/or address as well.

PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

Paperless Office System (POS) Implications

POS implications are covered in this directive.

Food Stamp Implications

A manual separate FS determination must be done when a CA case is closed with closing code **E60** (unable to locate) for households subject to the FS six-month reporting rules.

Medicaid Implications

Use of closing code **E60** (unable to locate) to close the Cash Assistance case will close the Medicaid case for the same reason.

LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY (LESA) AND HEARING-IMPAIRED IMPLICATIONS

For Limited English Speaking Ability (LESA) and hearing-impaired applicants/participants, make sure to obtain appropriate interpreter services in accordance with [PD #10-12-OPE](#) and [PD #08-20-OPE](#).

FAIR HEARING IMPLICATIONS

Avoidance/Resolution

To avoid inappropriate adverse actions, process all changes of address and address corrections immediately. Ensure that the address is complete including any “in care of” designation and the apartment number. Prior to initiating a case closing for inability to locate, review the case record documentation. Remember that CA closing code **E60** should be used only if there are no pending infractions. If there is a pending infraction, the case must be closed on that issue.

Conferences at Job Centers

An applicant can request and receive a conference with a Fair Hearing and Conference (FH&C) AJOS/Supervisor I at any time. If an applicant comes to the Job Center requesting a conference, the Receptionist must alert the FH&C Unit that the applicant is waiting to be seen. In Model Centers, the Receptionist at Main Reception will issue an FH&C ticket to the applicant to route him/her to the FH&C Unit and does not need to verbally alert the FH&C Unit staff.

The FH&C AJOS/Supervisor I will listen to and evaluate any material presented by the applicant, review the case file and explain the reason for the Agency's action(s) to the applicant.

If the determination is that the applicant has presented good cause for the infraction or that the outstanding Notice of Intent needs to be withdrawn for other reasons, the FH&C AJOS/Supervisor I will Settle in Conference (SIC), enter detailed case notes in the New York City Work, Accountability and You (NYCWAY) system and forward all verifying documentation submitted by the applicant to the appropriate JOS/Worker for corrective action to be taken. The AJOS/Supervisor I must complete a Conference Report ([M-186a](#)) form.

If the determination is that the applicant has not shown good cause for the infraction or that the Agency's action(s) should stand, the AJOS/Supervisor I will explain to the applicant why he/she cannot SIC. The AJOS/Supervisor I must complete form [M-186a](#).

Conferences at Food Stamp Centers

If an applicant comes to the Food Stamp Center and requests a conference, the Receptionist must alert the Center Manager's designee that the applicant is to be seen. If the applicant contacts the Eligibility Specialist directly, advise the applicant to call the Center Manager's designee. In Model Centers, the Receptionist at Main Reception will issue a FS Conf/Appt/Problem ticket to the applicant to route him/her to the Non Cash Assistance (NCA) Reception area and does not need to verbally alert the Center Manager. The NCA Receptionist will alert the Center Manager once the applicant is called to the NCA Reception desk.

The Center Manager's designee will listen to and evaluate the applicant's complaint regarding the case denial/closing. The applicant must provide current verification of address to resolve the issue. After reviewing the documentation, case record and discussing the issue with the Group Supervisor/Eligibility Specialist, the Center Manager's designee will make a decision. The Center Manager's designee will decide to resolve or defend the case based on all factors and on whether the case was closed correctly.

The Center Manager's designee is responsible for ensuring that further appeal by the applicant through a Fair Hearing request is properly controlled and that appropriate follow-up action is taken in all phases of the Fair Hearing process.

Evidence Packets All Evidence Packets must contain a detailed history, copies of relevant WMS screen printouts, other documentation relevant to any action taken and copies of NYCWAY "Case Notes" screens.

REFERENCE: [GIS 09 TA/DC019](#)
[01 INF 21](#)

RELATED ITEMS [PB #08-01-ELI](#)
[PB #10-48-OPE](#)
[PD #08-14-OPE](#)
[PD #09-16-ELI](#)
[PD #09-26-OPE](#)
[PD #09-28-ELI](#)