

**GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM**  
**DIVISION: Employment & Transitional Supports**

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**TO:** Local District Commissioners; FS Directors; TA Directors

**FROM:** Russell Sykes, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Employment and Transitional Supports

**SUBJECT:** Food Stamp Policy Reminder: Authorized Reps are Chosen at HH Discretion

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Immediately

**CONTACT PERSON:** Food Stamp Bureau (518) 473-1469

The purpose of this notice is to remind social services districts (SSDs) that, except for certain group living arrangements, authorized representatives are to be chosen at the discretion of the food stamp household at certification. The local district may not at any time compel the household to appoint an authorized representative under any circumstance. SSDs are required to provide assistance to those applicants who need or request help in completing and filing their application. SSDs may **encourage** designation of an authorized representative when the head of household or other responsible adult member of the household cannot apply.

Also, per federal regulations and 01-ADM-8 agencies **must** waive the in-office interview for any household whose adult members are all either elderly or disabled, who have no earned income and who request a waiver of the in-office interview. Such households may be made aware of and encouraged to make use of the opportunity to designate an authorized representative, but under no circumstances may they be compelled to do so.

SSDs also must waive the in-office interview in favor of a telephone interview or scheduled home visit in hardship cases. SSDs may determine what constitutes hardship. According to federal regulation [7 CFR 273.2(e)(2)] these hardship conditions include, but are not limited to: illness, transportation difficulties, care of a household member, hardships due to residency in a rural area, prolonged severe weather, or work or training hours which prevent the household from participating in an in-office interview. SSDs are reminded that the worker must document in the case records reasons for waiving the in-person interview.

**Please note the following modifications in the Food Stamp Source Book Section 4: Application Processing – Page 25 Applicant Interview, OTDA Revised 4/30/05:**

- a. The household **either is unable to designate or chooses not to designate** an authorized representative, and has no adult members able to come to the office because all members are elderly or disabled. For elderly or disabled definition see **FSSB Section 5**.

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- b. On a case by case basis, the household **either is unable to designate or chooses not to designate** an authorized representative, and no household member is able to get to the local district because of transportation difficulties or hardship conditions such as, but not limited to, residing in a rural or remote area, illness, care of a household member, prolonged severe weather, or work hours which preclude in-office interviews.