

GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
Center for Employment & Economic Supports

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TO: Commissioners, TA Directors, FS Directors, Staff Development Coordinators

FROM: Russell Sykes, Deputy Commissioner, Center for Employment & Economic Supports

SUBJECT: USDA Clarification on Action for Returned Mail for Simplified (Six Month) Reporters

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: FS Bureau 518-473-1469

Several local districts have recently inquired about the appropriate action to be taken when mail sent to Non-Temporary Assistance Food Stamp (NTA-FS) households is returned to the district as undeliverable with no forwarding address. The practice of sending a Request for Contact (RFC) form seemed to be a pointless exercise and at odds with simplified reporting requirements.

On June 1, 2009, USDA provided clarification on this issue, noting that when a RFC form is sent it also gets returned as undeliverable. USDA recognized that the processing of this additional mail increases the burden on workers without significantly improving either the integrity of the program or customer service.

USDA has re-examined their policy under simplified reporting rules and has determined that the mail returned by the Postal Service as undeliverable with no forwarding address *“cannot be considered ‘verified upon receipt’, since the impact to the household is unknown. Thus, under simplified (six-month) reporting rules, local districts would not send an RFC or act on the returned mail, but would follow up with the household at the next household contact or recertification.”* Prior to the issuance of this clarification, USDA had required states to request a waiver in order to secure permission to not send an RFC.

This provision for no RFC for undeliverable mail with no forwarding address must be applied uniformly statewide. Therefore, for households subject to either the simplified (six-month) or NYSNIP reporting rules, no RFC should be sent or other requirement made that the household report to the district why their mail has been returned with no forwarding address before the next agency contact, interim report (Periodic Report), or recertification. For TBA households no reporting requirement to verify a move may be placed upon the household until recertification at the end of the five-month TBA period.

Those households that still are subject to the “ten-day” reporting rules must report changes within the first ten days of the month following the month of the change, and are required to report a change in address. An RFC still must be sent to these household in response to mail returned as undeliverable with no forwarding address, requesting that the household report the change of address and new shelter circumstances before any negative action can be taken against the household. For these “ten-day” reporting households, failure to return or respond to such a RFC can result in the NTA-FS case being closed.