

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 445-9537



March 13, 1981

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-31-81

TO:

SUBJECT: PROPER DOCUMENTATION OF FOOD STAMP CASE RECORDS

REFERENCE:

The purpose of this letter is to emphasize the importance of adequate documentation in Food Stamp case records. Quality Control information for the period October 1979 through March 1980 identified "Insufficient Documentation" as the top Administrative Deficiency in both the Active and Negative case reviews. Although Administrative Deficiencies in themselves do not constitute dollar errors they can cause or contribute to dollar errors or denial and termination errors.

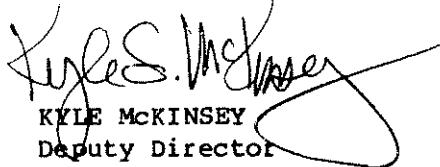
The Food Stamp Act and federal regulations provide for fiscal sanctions for high dollar error rates and incentives for improving and/or maintaining low error rates. The department's top priority for the Food Stamp Program is to decrease the dollar error rate. For this to be accomplished, county support is needed. Data from the Food Stamp Management Information System identifies "Insufficient Documentation" problems occurring to some degree in most counties. In addition, several counties have a major problem in this area.

Generally, documentation in case records identifies for Quality Control reviews the procedure or process used by the Eligibility Worker. Without documentation in the case record, Quality Control will use whatever method they choose to review the case. This leads to a higher possibility for an error to occur. For your use, attached are specific examples of how insufficient documentation can result in error citations.

State Food Stamp Regulations (Section 63-300.56) require and explain what documentation is necessary in case files to fully support eligibility, ineligibility, and benefit level determinations. The lack of documentation is often an underrated problem since it does not directly show as a dollar error. However, not only does insufficient documentation directly impact dollar errors, it can also impact a county's efficiency and effectiveness. Improperly documented cases can contribute to problems when more than one worker handles the case, either routinely, as a result of a case transfer, or when a case is reviewed internally.

Your cooperation in reinforcing the importance of full documentation is appreciated. Any questions you have should be directed to your Food Stamp Program Operations Consultant at (916) 322-5475 or ATSS 492-5475.

Sincerely,



Kyle McKinsey
Deputy Director

Attachment

cc: CWDA
County Food Stamp Coordinators
FNS/WRO

Attachment

If a case record is not properly documented, and case record information conflicts with Quality Control (QC) review findings from a client home visit and/or collateral contact, a dollar error or a wrongful denial or termination may be cited.

Examples

Active Cases

- I. The county is unable to verify Client A's income prior to certification because his employer would not cooperate. Therefore, the county determines an amount to be used for certification purposes based on the best available information. If the case record does not include documentation that Client A's employer failed to cooperate with the county, and QC verifies Client A's income with the employer, a variance would be cited which could result in a dollar error.

Since regulations require all income be verified prior to certification (63-300.511), income reported but not utilized in the eligibility determination would be used by QC. If an issuance error resulted, it would be an agency error for failure to act on reported information. With adequate documentation explaining how the employer failed to cooperate, QC would also exclude the unverified income from its comparative budget computation.

- II. The county appropriately uses the Standard Utility Allowance deduction (63-300.513) for determining eligibility of Client B, because even though Client B claims utility expenses of \$150 per month, he fails to provide necessary verification. If QC verifies the \$150 during the home visit, and the case record is not documented to explain why the Standard Utility Allowance was used, a variance would be cited which could result in a dollar error.

Negative Cases

- I. The county denies Client C's application because the applicant was unable to provide essential information to determine eligibility. If the case were not documented to reflect what specific, essential information was not provided, and QC receives information during the home visit to support eligibility, an error would be cited.
- II. The county terminates Client D from the program because his income exceeded the amount allowed for continued certification. If the case record were not documented to support the reason for termination, an error would be cited.