

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



October 5, 1999

ALL-COUNTY LETTER NO. 99-81

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
 Federal Law or Regulation Change
 Court Order or Settlement Agreement
 Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
 Initiated by CDSS

SUBJECT: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY

Recently issued policy from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service expanded the application of Food Stamp Program categorical eligibility (CE). The purpose of this letter is to provide implementation instructions regarding the expanded policy. Certain households are already entitled to mandatory CE for food stamps, while other households may later be determined to be CE for food stamps at the state's option. The federal policy requires us to act immediately regarding households which are already entitled to mandatory CE.

A household is mandatorily CE for food stamps only if:

1. All members of the federally eligible food stamp household are receiving or are authorized to receive benefits from a state Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, and
2. Those benefits are means-tested, and
3. Those benefits are primarily (over 50%) TANF-funded, or
4. Those benefits are primarily (over 50%) TANF maintenance-of-effort (MOE) expenditures.

Currently CalWORKs households receiving or authorized to receive TANF benefits are CE. They will continue to be CE. Based on federal policy, effective October 1, 1999, households receiving benefits which are means-tested and primarily TANF MOE-funded are now also CE. To date we have identified only the CalWORKs assistance units aided under the separate state program for two-parent families as recipients of TANF MOE which meet this definition. The department is revising regulations to conform to this. In the meantime counties should follow the federal policy.

Households with any member(s) receiving or authorized to receive state-funded CFAP benefits are not mandatorily CE because CE status cannot be conferred upon federal food stamp ineligible noncitizens.

Page Two

We are conferring with a work group of county representatives to identify a variety of populations with potential to be considered optionally CE for food stamps in California, evaluating the administrative feasibility of their optional categorical eligibility, and drafting any necessary regulatory revisions. We intend to issue a subsequent All County Letter by December 31, 1999 to inform you of the resolution of these issues.

If you have any questions, please contact Cindy MacDonald of the Food Stamp Bureau at 916-654-1898.

Sincerely,

**Original document signed
By Bruce Wagstaff on 10/5/99**

BRUCE WAGSTAFF
Deputy Director
Welfare to Work Division