



**FOOD ASSISTANCE ACTION COMMITTEE**  
A Federal, State and County Partnership for policy interpretation  
and review, food stamp outreach, Quality Control and corrective  
action activities.

## MINUTES

**DATE: TUESDAY August 25th, 2009**

**TIME: 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**LOCATION: Riverside Dept of Public Social Services  
3950 Reynolds Rd.  
Riverside, California 92503**

1. **Welcome/Housekeeping**
2. **Review of Previous Minutes** - There were no changes to the minutes.
3. **RADEP Report - Kim Murdock**
  - The new analyst name element has been implemented on RADEP so it should be easier to track assignments.
  - Reminder to code cases as CORRECT at this time if the error amounts are \$26-\$50. Remember to answer "yes" to the comments question. 020-001 needs to have the dollar error amount included even though it is coded as correct.
  - Negative sample requires double zero ...00... on the stratum
  - Fresno asked if cases are coming back to the counties for errors of omission. Kim responded that she has created a spread sheet that will be sent to Richard Trujillo. FOB will send back cases to the counties to fix the problems. There are about 30 cases all together. Kim wants a case revision summary form sent to Kevin. Counties asked for a specific due date rather than a general "within two weeks" deadline.
  - 044-047 TANF changes are still pending for two counties and need to get the corrections in soon.

- There is a new business rule for 020-F001 coming out mid-September. When the reviewer puts in the correct allotment amount and the amount issued, RADEP will automatically put in the dollar error amount. FDRAB will send out rule notices to the counties when this is implemented.
- Kim indicated the next group of “clean ups” will be analyst ID clean up and error tolerance amount clean up.
- San Bernardino asked if E2Lite and RADEP are going off line on Fridays due to state furloughs. Kim indicated this will not happen until later in September. Yes, it will be down during the day so counties who are working will not have this available. Fresno stated it was essential that the Data Center know it must not be off line at transmission deadline.

#### **4. FS Program Policy Updates**

##### **Legislative Update**

AB 643 FS ICT bill is still alive. AB 719 Phase II of FC youth qualifications for food stamps will also cover transitional program for the project. AB 1057 is still alive. This bill would do away with quarterly reporting. The issues pending are what will be the mandatory reporting threshold amounts. This bill also covers CalWORKs.

##### **Court Litigation**

Heathcock - This suit involves OI budget determinations on NOA's. It is currently in Legal. There are no changes to the Sim Kitch or the Loaves and Fishes pending settlements.

##### **Policy Development**

A federal waiver has been requested by CDSS to allow California to keep the same deduction levels for the TUA and SUA. Also want no change to the FS benefit levels. LUA increases from \$83 to \$88.

CDSS has received approval for the Restoration of Benefits waiver that will allow auto approval of benefits if the reason for non receipt of the QR7 received was cured by the end of the month following termination. This will probably be effective in November.

State is also working towards full waiver approval for elimination of the face-to-face for all intake and re-certifications. The approval for the QR waiver expires next month and Policy is asking for a federal extension of these rules. The advocates want the feds to deny this waiver so California would have to go to semi annual reporting immediately. Policy is submitting reasons why California cannot go to this now. The reasons are specifically linked to CalWORKs and the IRT costs formulas.

**Questions and Answers**

Deduction disallowances – State form revisions

Counties asked about the results from the APHSA Conference input regarding the wording for deduction allowances on the application forms. FNS says that beginning with the June Review month, QC must disallow the deduction or not depending upon the actual form used by the client when either applying or re-certifying.

QC representatives indicated that the current situation could have a negative impact on the QC error rates. CDSS Policy would like to get the wording uniform on each of the Statements of Fact forms so that all staff processing casework will know whether or not to disallow or allow a deduction. Counties stated it is essential that the change message to counties needs to include correct processing instructions to prevent QC errors. Policy stated they will take the wording off the DFA forms and should be able to get the change s done within several weeks. Richard Trujillo will submit new language for the DFA forms that will basically say the language needs to be removed.

Expanded MCE

San Bernardino asked about the new expanded MCE. QC Policy FNS 310 1.3 definitions do not include MCE. Only CE is deified which does not require us to look at resources when determining whether or not an applicant is entitled to benefits. MCE is still subject to resource evaluation. How are QC staff to review to this when a HH is MCE? Hope Rios from FNS will discuss this issue with Mike Papin.

**5. FS Field Operations Bureau Quality Control Updates**

**Error Rates Actives/Negatives**

ACTIVE	4.13% through Mar '09 Review Month
NEGATIVE	14.7% through Mar '09 Review Month

The National Average through March is not available. Several counties are over the 6% threshold and will be contacted by FOB. All counties need to be below the threshold for California to be able to project/estimate being under the anticipated national average.

**QC Sample Completion Rates**

ACTIVE	83.1%
NEGATIVE	100%

**Federal Differences/Arbitrations** – No information provided.

**QC Policy Updates/Releases** - No information provided regarding QC Policies. See Program Policy for other information.

**QC Training Requests-**

Santa Clara County will be receiving training in September. Kern has requested training but has not yet been scheduled.

**Counties concerns**

**Regular and ES - Timeliness of applications processing**

This item will be a standing agenda item from now on. Timely processing has become a big concern and affects California's ability to receive federal bonuses. In addition, the welfare rights organizations have reviewed the DFA 296X reports on the CDSS website and brought legal action against some counties who are out of state compliance with timeliness requirements. FNS looks at this information also and uses this information along with the QC results to determine bonuses. It is essential that we have 90% of the ES applications processed within the federal 7 day time frames. If below that percent, California will need to do a federal Corrective Action Plan. Richard Trujillo asked that participants please share the state reports (provided with the agenda last week) with county management as this is now a federal issue. The reports are the 296X ES Application Processing and 296 Applications Processing Summary Reports. It was noted that the C-IV counties have excellent statistics in this area. Richard stated that we are also subject to the Steffins vs. McMahon Court case that requires 98% of all applications to be processed within certain time frames. He wants all counties to concentrate their efforts in improving these rates. Ventura asked for written state instructions on why counties need to do this.

**Deduction disallowances - State form revisions** Discussed in Policy Section.

**6. FS Field Operations Bureau Management Evaluation Updates**

- **2009 Schedule of Reviews** Jerry Parker went over the list of pending ME reviews and the counties affected. He stated that all will have been completed by mid-September. After that, the ME Team will meet with FNS to develop the 2010 schedule.
- **Corrective Action Issues** – Jerry indicates that his team will be doing a state corrective action plan for Negatives.

- **SEP Funds** - Richard reported that CDSS allotted \$18,000 for the annual FS Conferences to be held in the North and the South. This allows for more attendees from the counties. There is plenty of money for both venues as is currently planned. Counties will be able to invoice the conference to the state. At first, he stated that counties would only be able to claim for the number of participants listed on the state letter. Daphne stated that counties should be volunteered to track the numbers to ensure we did not go over the total allocation. Therefore, if your registration is accepted, county participants can all claim the SEP funds.

Counties were encouraged to submit SEP proposals for the upcoming year projects.

## 7. **USDA FNS Federal Updates**

- **Operations** – Hope Rios indicated that QC Reviewers need to measure for high performance on timeliness processing. FNS requires the application process include screening for ES. If not done the feds will cite the findings as invalid. If the line eligibility worker discovers later in the application process that the applicant qualified for ES, It must be processed at that time. Federal QC will cite errors for the incorrect/invalid negative action if ES was not done.

Hope stressed the importance of completing the SEP funds request timely and said it is important to get the requests recorded as soon as possible to ensure that any extra SEP funds not used can be re-allocated.

FNS approved the demonstration project for Census 2010 Income. FNS is getting state requests for decreases in the SUA limits from a number of states and will approved those waivers as long as the state can prove decreased costs for the SUA calculation.

The standard deduction will change from 144 to 141.

Waiver of the Face to Face vs. Telephone Interviews. A household who requests a telephone interview may or may not meet the F to F waiver requirements depending upon the household. Care should be taken when granting this type of interview.

California received \$10,907,248 for ARRA funds.

High Performance Bonuses – None went to California this year. Hope provided a verbal list of some of the states and bonuses received.

- **Quality Control - Dawn Baker**

At the NAPIPM Conference, FNS Headquarters brought up coding issues on the race codes. California had 190 blank slots on RADEP for the race codes. Although the current federal edit allows a blank, RADEP is being changed to require that an entry be made.

New Pages are being added to the FNS 310 and a new manual is coming out.

FNS 310 Appendix D on Negatives – California has no findings for Code 76 (Expedited Services Determination) This coding is very important and affects the federal funding. There was a lengthy discussion on what should be recorded on the NOA's provided to the client when they withdraw their application from FS when they know they are ineligible. Counties need to ensure that the correct reason for denial is listed on the NOA. San Joaquin asked if the counties need to verify the actual reason to take the action. An example of excess resources was given. Rose asked how the denial NOA should be worded. Dawn answered it should be worded to apply to the actual circumstances. Example: If the applicant said I want to withdraw my application because I have too many resources, you could not deny for that reason without knowing the actual resources. The worker would need to continue the application process. If the client simply said, I want to withdraw my application, and no other information is provided, the NOA could read application denied as per clients withdrawal of the application.

Jerry Parker asked if the application was taken and the benefits were issued within 7 days, would FNS audit to the Federal ES? Answer : NO. FNS only reviews to the actual processing of the application.

San Bernardino asked if there would ever be a reason to deny correctly if the client was eligible to ES. Answer: NO Even if the information needed for ES was not available to the county, the worker must then also deny the ES for insufficient information to determine after client failed to provide.

Dawn stated it is up to the state to ensure that processes meet federal requirements to determine ES eligibility.

## **8. Annual Food Stamp Conference - Committee Update**

Daphne reported very few registrations have been received at this point and there was little information about the Northern venue or caterer. Counties were encouraged to have the registrations in as quickly as possible. The registration deadline was extended to August 31<sup>st</sup> 2009.

**9. IMAGING Project**

FOB indicated there have been some issues getting documents imaged and then access to opening the documents. Chris has sent out a Q and A memo to all the QC counties for resolution of the issues.

**10. County Reports**

Alameda County asked if secondary samples are correct for their county. The federal statistician is reviewing California's process for sampling. Clay and FOB will discuss this issue and ensure that the sample universe is correct. Cases cannot be subject to sampling twice in one review month.

**ADJOURN: Next Meeting in Sacramento**

Respectfully Submitted:

*Daphne Criswell*

Regional Manager  
Riverside County DPSS