

PART V		EXPEDITED SERVICES
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A. ENTITLEMENT TO EXPEDITED SERVICE (7 CFR 273.2(i)(1))

The following households are entitled to expedited services:

1. Households with less than \$150 in **countable** monthly gross income, provided their **countable** liquid resources (e.g. cash on hand, checking and savings accounts, savings certificates, and lump sum payments as described in Part IX.C) do not exceed \$100;
2. Migrant or seasonal farm worker households who are destitute, as defined in Part V.F, provided their liquid resources do not exceed \$100;
3. Households whose combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than the household's incurred monthly rent or mortgage, and utilities, regardless of how or if the household pays the expenses. If the household indicates it incurs separate heating or cooling costs or that it receives Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program benefits, the agency should use the utility standard, unless the household chooses to use actual costs.

Do not consider exempted resources or excluded income in making the expedited determination. The penalty PA income for noncompliance and income that has been averaged, such as self-employment, contract, etc., will count however.

Expedited services processing will apply at initial application, reapplication or for households that file recertification applications during the month after the certification period expires.

B. IDENTIFYING HOUSEHOLDS NEEDING EXPEDITED SERVICE

The local department of social services must design its application procedures to identify households eligible for expedited service once the household files an application. The local department must screen all applications except recertification applications that are filed timely. The local department must designate personnel to screen applicants as they contact the local department to request assistance or to review applications for entitlement if the applicant is not in the office to allow the screening. If the applicant is not in the office and the applicant failed to complete the application sufficiently for the local department to screen successfully, the local department must attempt to contact the household by telephone or e-mail if such contact information is on the application.

If the local department of social services discovers that a household is entitled to expedited service after the initial screening failed to identify entitlement, the local department must provide expedited service to the household within the processing standards described in Part V.C. The local department must document expedited screening results for all applications except recertification applications that are filed timely. Methods to document the screening include: the *Expedited Service Checklist*, case narrative comments screens, or the expedited section of the *Application for Benefits*.

C. PROCESSING STANDARDS (7 CFR 273.2(i)(3)(i))

For households entitled to expedited service, except those households entitled to a waiver of the office interview, the local department of social services must make SNAP benefits available to the household no later than seven calendar days after the application filing date. For residents of public institutions who apply for SSI and SNAP benefits before release from the institution, the SNAP application filing date is the date the applicant is released from the institution. Eligible households that apply after the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month must also receive benefits for the month following the month of application by the seventh day.

If the local department of social services discovers that a household is entitled to expedited service after the application date, the local department must determine eligibility and provide benefits within seven calendar days of the discovery date.

Eligible households that provide all information needed to process the expedited application within seven calendar days following the date of application are entitled to receive benefits within seven calendar days following the date of application. If the household provides the information after the seventh day following the date of application, the local department has seven calendar days to process the application, beginning with the date the household provides the information. If the household does not provide requested information by the 30th day, the local department must send the household a notice to extend the processing of the case for an additional 30 days. The local department of social services must inform the household of the normal verification standards that the household must now meet in order to determine eligibility. Procedures for verifying information used to determine eligibility are in Part V.D.

Out-of-Office Interviews (7 CFR 273.2(i)(3)(iii))

If the local department of social services arranges an out-of-office interview for a household that is entitled to expedited service, the agency must conduct the interview and complete the application process within the expedited service standards. Day one of the processing period is the calendar day following the application date. If the local department conducts a telephone interview and must mail the application to the household for signature, the expedited standards will not include any mailing time involved. Mailing time will only include the days the application is in the mail to and from the household and the days the application is in the household's possession pending signature and mailing.

D. VERIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR EXPEDITED SERVICE (7 CFR 273.2(i)  
(4)(i); 273.2(i)(4)(ii))

To expedite the certification process, the local department of social services must postpone all verifications required by Part III.A, except the identity of the applicant, if the local department is unable to obtain verifications within the allowable processing time. The local department may verify the identity of the applicant through a collateral contact or readily available documentary evidence.

The agency must make all reasonable efforts to verify the household's residence, income statement (including a statement that the household has no income) and all other mandatory verifications within the expedited processing standards. Verification may be obtained through collateral contacts or readily available documentary evidence before certification. The agency may not delay benefits beyond the expedited processing standards solely because these eligibility factors have not been verified however.

The local agency should attempt to obtain as much additional verification as possible but should not delay the certification of households entitled to expedited service if the local agency determines that it is unlikely that other verification can be obtained within the expedited period.

Once the household has supplied the name of an acceptable collateral contact or has asked the local agency for assistance in locating such a contact, the agency must promptly contact the collateral contact or otherwise assist the household in obtaining the necessary verification. If the household is unable to provide documentary evidence or the name of a collateral contact, the EW must assist the household in obtaining suitable verification.

Households entitled to expedited service must furnish a Social Security number for each person or apply for one for each person by the postponed verification deadline. Household members who are unable to provide the required Social Security number or who do not have one prior to the verification deadline may continue to participate only if they satisfy the good cause requirements specified in Part VII.G.4.

Once the applicant verifies identity, the agency must not delay benefits beyond the delivery standard defined in Part V.C.

#### E. CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR EXPEDITED SERVICE (7 CFR 273.2(i)(4)(iii))

Households that are certified on an expedited basis and that have provided all necessary verifications as required must have a normal certification period. The length of the certification period and benefit delivery date is determined by the application date.

1. If verification was postponed, and the application was filed on the 1st through the 15th of the month, the local agency may certify the household for the month of application only; or assign a normal certification period to those households whose circumstances would otherwise warrant a longer certification period. In either case, however, benefits may not continue past the month of application if verification continues to be postponed, even if the household is not entitled to an allotment for the month of application because benefits prorated to less than \$10.

If certified only for the month of application, the local agency must send the *Notice of Expiration* as required by Part IV.C. The household must reapply and complete the verification requirements that were postponed. If a certification period of longer than one month is assigned, the local agency must notify the household in writing that no further benefits will be issued until the postponed verification is completed. The notice must also include information that the household must provide the postponed verification by the 30th

day following the date of application or the household's case will be closed. Additionally, the notice must advise the household that if verification results in changes in the household's eligibility or level of benefits, the local agency will act on those changes without an advance notice.

In instances when the household is not entitled to an allotment for the month of application, a determination of ineligibility must be made and the denial notice sent within seven days of the application date. If an eligibility determination can be made for the month following the month of application, that determination must also be made within seven days. If eligible, benefits for the month following the month of application must be issued by the normal issuance cycle however. Verifications must be obtained before benefits may be issued.

**If the household fails to provide postponed verification by the 30<sup>th</sup> day, the agency must close the case on the 30<sup>th</sup> day following the application date. If the 30<sup>th</sup> day falls during a weekend or on a holiday, the agency must close the case on the next business day. No additional notice to the household is needed.**

2. The agency must certify a household that applies on or after the 16th day of the month for at least the month of application and the next month or assign a longer certification period, if circumstances warrant it. The agency must issue prorated benefits to the household for the month of application and the second month's full benefit within the expedited processing time if the household is eligible to receive benefits. The household must receive benefits for the second month at the time of certification regardless of whether verifications have been postponed.

The household must submit postponed verifications no later than the last day of the month following the month of application. The agency must notify the household in writing that the case will be closed if the household does not complete postponed verification by the end of the second month. The household must receive benefits for the third month by the first day of the month, or by the seventh working day, whichever is greater.

**If the household fails to provide postponed verification by the last day of the month after the month of application, the agency must close the case. The agency must close the case on the last day of the second month unless that day falls during a weekend or on a holiday. The closure must occur on the next business day. No additional notice to the household is needed.**

In instances when the household is not entitled to benefits for the month of application, the household must receive benefits for the month following the month of application, if eligible, within seven days of the application date.

3. There is no limit to the number of times a household can be certified under expedited procedures, as long as, prior to each expedited certification, the household either completes the verification requirements that were postponed at the last expedited certification; or, was certified under normal processing standards since the last expedited certification.

A household must reapply if the agency closes the case because of the household's failure to provide postponed verifications within the 30 days allowed. If the agency is aware that this is a second expedited application, the household will have seven days following the application date to provide the postponed verifications from the prior application regardless of how long it has been since the prior application. If the household does not provide verifications within the seven days, then the agency must process the reapplication under normal processing guidelines.

The second application must have the same case name as the first expedited application for which the verifications were postponed. If the second application is filed in another locality, then the household may provide the postponed verification to either locality.

A household that requests expedited service but is not entitled to it must have the application processed under normal processing guidelines.

F. DESTITUTE MIGRANT OR SEASONAL FARMWORKER HOUSEHOLDS (7 CFR 273.10(e)(3))

Migrant or seasonal farmworker households may have little or no income at the time of application and may be in need of immediate food assistance, even though they receive income at some other time during the month of application. The local agency must use the following procedures to determine when households in these circumstances may be considered destitute and, therefore, entitled to expedited service and special income calculation procedures:

1. Households will be considered destitute and must be provided expedited service when the only income for the month of application was:
  - a. received prior to the date of application; and,
  - b. was from a terminated source.

For migrant workers, the grower, corporation or company is considered the source of income. The crew leader is not considered the source of income. A migrant who moves from one grower, corporation or company is considered to have moved from a terminated income source to a new source. A change of crops, unless it involves a change in growers, is not considered a new source of income.

If income is received on a monthly or more frequent basis, it is considered as coming from a terminated source if it will not be received again from the same source during the balance of the month of application or during the following month.

If income is normally received less often than monthly, however, the nonreceipt of income from the same source in the balance of the month of application or in the following month is inappropriate to use as a guideline to determine whether or not the income is terminated. For households that normally receive income less often than monthly, the income is considered as coming from a terminated source if it will not be received in the month in which the next payment would normally be received.

2. Households whose only income for the month of application is from a new source are considered destitute and must be provided expedited service if income of more than \$25 from the new source will not be received by the 10th calendar day after the date of application. These households may expect to start receiving income from a new job.

Income which is normally received on a monthly or more frequent basis is considered to be from a new source if income of more than \$25 has not been received from that source within 30 days prior to the date the application was filed.

If income is normally received less often than monthly, however, it is considered to be from a new source if income of more than \$25 was not received within the last normal interval between payments.

3. Households may receive both income from a terminated source prior to the date of application, and income from a new source after the date of application. They will still be destitute if:
  - a. they receive no other income in the month of application; and,
  - b. income of more than \$25 from the new source will not be received by the 10th day after the date of application.

4. Destitute migrant or seasonal farmworker households must have their eligibility and level of benefits calculated for the month of application by considering only income which is received between the first of the month and the date of application. Any income from a new source that is anticipated after the day of application must be disregarded.

5. Some employers provide travel advances to cover the travel costs of new employees who must journey to the location of their new employment. To the extent that these payments are excluded as reimbursements, receipt of travel advances will not affect the determination of when a household is destitute. However, if the travel advance is, by written contract, an advance on wages that will be subtracted from wages later earned by the employee, rather than a reimbursement, the wage advance will count as income. Nevertheless, the receipt of a wage advance for the travel costs of a new employee will not affect the determination of whether subsequent payments from the employer are from a new source of income, nor whether a household shall be considered destitute.

#### Example

A household applies on May 10 and received \$50 as a wage advance for travel from the new employer on May 1. There is a written contract that this is an advance on wages. Other wages from the employer will not start until May 30. The household is considered destitute. The May 30 payment must be disregarded, but the wage advance received prior to the date of application will count as income.

6. A household's source of income is its employer. The source of income is considered to be the grower for whom the migrant is working at a particular point in time, not the crew chief. A migrant who travels with the same crew chief but moves from one grower to another grower has moved from a terminated source of income to a new source of income.