fully documented as to facts and findings. If FNS determines from its review of the claim determination that a claim exists, the State agency shall make demand for restitution upon the entity liable immediately upon receipt of notice from the FNS Regional Office. Except as provided in paragraph (l)(4) of this section, if the State agency determines that a claim exists in favor of the State agency against an eligible recipient agency, warehouseman, carrier or any other entity and the value of the lost commodities does not exceed $2500, the State agency shall immediately proceed to collect the claim.

(4) No claim determination shall be required where the value of the lost commodities is $100 or less. However, no such claim shall be disregarded where:

(i) There is evidence of fraud or a violation of Federal, State or local criminal law; or

(ii) Program operations would be adversely affected.

(5) The State agency shall maintain records and substantiating documents, on all claims actions and adjustments including documentation of those cases in which no claim was asserted because of the minimal amount involved.

(6) In making final claim determinations for commodity losses incurred by eligible recipient agencies when there is no evidence of fraud or negligence, State agencies and FNS Regional Offices, as applicable, shall consider the special needs and circumstances of the eligible recipient agencies, and adjust the claim and/or conditions for claim collection as appropriate. These special needs and circumstances include but are not limited to the eligible recipient agency’s use of volunteers and limited financial resources and the effect of the claim on the organization’s ability to meet the food needs of low-income populations.

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(ii) If not in possession of such documentation, be automatically tax exempt as “organized or operated exclusively for religious purposes” under the IRC, or

(iv) If not in possession of such documentation, but required to file an application under the IRC to obtain tax-exempt status, have made application for recognition of such status and be moving toward compliance with the requirements for recognition of tax-exempt status. If the IRS denies a participating organization’s application for recognition of tax-exempt status, the organization must immediately notify the State agency or the eligible recipient agency, whichever is appropriate, of such denial, and that agency will terminate the organization’s agreement and participation immediately upon receipt of such notification. If documentation of IRS recognition of tax-exempt status has not been obtained and forwarded to the appropriate agency within 180 days of the effective date of the organization’s approval for participation in TEFAP, the State agency or eligible recipient agency must terminate the organization’s participation until such time as recognition of tax-exempt status is actually obtained, except that the State agency or eligible recipient agency may grant a single extension not to exceed 90 days if the organization can demonstrate, to the State agency’s or eligible recipient agency’s satisfaction, that its inability to obtain tax-exempt status within the 180 day period is due to circumstances beyond its control. It is the responsibility of the organization to document that it has complied with all IRS requirements and has provided all information requested by IRS in a timely manner.

(b) Criteria for determining recipient eligibility. Each State agency must establish uniform Statewide criteria for determining the eligibility of households to receive commodities provided under this part for home consumption. The criteria must:

(1) Enable the State agency to ensure that only households which are in need of food assistance because of inadequate household income receive TEFAP commodities;

(2) Include income-based standards and the methods by which households may demonstrate eligibility under such standards; and

(3) Include a requirement that the household reside in the geographic location served by the State agency at the time of applying for assistance, but length of residency shall not be used as an eligibility criterion.

(c) Delegation of authority. A State agency may delegate to one or more eligible recipient agencies with which the State agency enters into an agreement the responsibility for the distribution of commodities and administrative funds made available under this part. State agencies may also delegate the authority for selecting eligible recipient agencies and for determining the eligibility of such organizations to receive commodities and administrative funds. However, responsibility for establishing eligibility criteria for organizations in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section, and for establishing recipient eligibility criteria in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section, may not be delegated. In instances in which State agencies delegate authority to eligible recipient agencies to determine the eligibility of organizations to receive commodities and administrative funds, eligibility must be determined in accordance with the provisions contained in this part and the State plan. State agencies will remain responsible for ensuring that commodities and administrative funds are distributed in accordance with the provisions contained in this part.

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