

Food and Nutrition Service, USDA

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offices may issue coupons in emergency situations or to meet the requirements of expedited service but do not routinely issue coupons to households under standard certifications. In these and similar situations, the sub-unit would be classified based upon its primary function exclusively. However, when any sub-unit is selected, all program requirements specified in §275.8 which the sub-unit has responsibility for, shall be reviewed.

(d) *Itinerant issuance and certification points.* Units which certify households and/or issue coupons as satellites of a central sub-unit shall not be classified as independent sub-units. Units may be identified as itinerant when they do not operate on a regular basis, retain certification records, store coupons, transmit information directly to the DMU and/or develop FNS-250 reports independently. Examples of such units include mobile units, short term or seasonal operations, and units which may operate on a regular basis but do not meet the criteria for a sub-unit described in paragraph (a) of this section. However, when a sub-unit is selected for review which acts as a parent unit for itinerant service points, at least one itinerant point per sub-unit shall be reviewed if operational at the time of the review.

(e) *Selection of Sub-units for Review.* State agencies shall select a representative number of sub-units of each category for on-site review in order to determine a project area's compliance with program standards.

[Amdt. 160, 45 FR 15900, Mar. 11, 1980; 45 FR 23638, Apr. 8, 1980; 45 FR 46784, July 11, 1980, as amended by Amdt. 266, 52 FR 3408, Feb. 4, 1987]

§ 275.8 Review coverage.

(a) During each review period, State agencies shall review the national target areas of program operation specified by FNS. FNS will notify State agencies of the minimum program areas to be reviewed at least 90 days before the beginning of each annual review period, which is the Federal fiscal year. FNS may add additional areas during the review period if deemed necessary. The FNS headquarters office will add national target areas during the review period only for deficiencies

of national scope. State agencies have 60 days in which to establish a plan schedule for such reviews.

(b) State agencies shall be responsible for reviewing each national target area or other program requirement based upon the provisions of the regulations governing the Food Stamp Program and the FNS-approved Plan of Operation. If FNS approves a State agency's request for a waiver from a program requirement, any different policy approved by FNS would also be reviewed. When, in the course of a review, a project area is found to be out of compliance with a given program requirement, the State agency shall identify the specifics of the problem including: the extent of the deficiency, the cause of the deficiency, and, as applicable, the specific procedural requirements the project area is misapplying.

[Amdt. 266, 52 FR 3408, Feb. 4, 1987, as amended by Amdt. 356, 59 FR 29713, June 9, 1994]

§ 275.9 Review process.

(a) *Review procedures.* State agencies shall review the program requirements specified for review in §275.8 of this part using procedures that are adequate to identify problems and the causes of those problems. As each project area's operational structure will differ, State agencies shall review each program requirement applicable to the project area in a manner which will best measure the project area's compliance with each program requirement.

(b) *ME review plan.* (1) State agencies shall develop a review plan prior to each ME review. This review plan shall specify whether each project area is large, medium, or small and shall contain:

(i) Identification of the project area to be reviewed, program areas to be reviewed, the dates the review will be conducted, and the period of time that the review will cover;

(ii) Information secured from the project area regarding its caseload and organization;

(iii) Identification of the certification offices, issuance offices, bulk storage points, reporting points, and data management units selected for review and the techniques used to select them;

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(iv) Identification of whether the State agency is using the ME review to monitor coupon issuers and bulk storage points as discussed § 274.1(c)(2). At State agency option it may also indicate whether the State agency is using the ME review process to perform non-discrimination reviews; and

(v) A description of the review method(s) the State agency plans to use for each program area being reviewed.

(2) ME review plans shall be maintained in an orderly fashion and be made available to FNS upon request.

(c) *Review methods.* (1) State agencies shall determine the method of reviewing the program requirements associated with each program area. For some areas of program operation it may be necessary to use more than one method of review to determine if the project area is in compliance with program requirements. The procedures used shall be adequate to identify any problems and the causes of those problems.

(2) State agencies shall ensure that the method used to review a program requirement does not bias the review findings. Bias can be introduced through leading questions, incomplete reviews, incorrect sampling techniques, etc.

(d) *Review worksheet.* (1) State agencies shall use a review worksheet to record all review findings. For each sub-unit reviewed the State agency shall, on the worksheet, identify:

- (i) The sub-unit being reviewed;
- (ii) Each program requirement reviewed in the sub-unit;
- (iii) The method used to review each program requirement;
- (iv) A description of any deficiency detected;
- (v) The cause(s) of any deficiency detected, if known;
- (vi) The number of casefiles and/or program records selected and examined within the sub-unit, identification of those selected (record case number, household name, etc.), the proportion which were not subject to review, as well as the method used to select the sample;

(vii) Where applicable, the numerical extent of any deficiency detected through examination of program records; and

(viii) Any pertinent comments concerning the sub-unit's operation.

(2) State agencies shall promptly forward review findings to the appropriate State office for analysis, evaluation, and corrective action planning. Review worksheets shall be retained in an orderly fashion and made available to FNS upon request.

[Amdt. 160, 45 FR 15900, Mar. 11, 1980; 45 FR 25375, Apr. 15, 1980, as amended by Amdt. 266, 52 FR 3409, Feb. 4, 1987; Amdt. 356, 59 FR 29713, June 9, 1994]

Subpart C—Quality Control (QC) Reviews

§ 275.10 Scope and purpose.

(a) As part of the Performance Reporting System, each State agency is responsible for conducting quality control reviews. For food stamp quality control reviews, a sample of households shall be selected from two different categories: Households which are participating in the Food Stamp Program (called active cases) and households for which participation was denied, suspended or terminated (called negative cases). Reviews shall be conducted on active cases to determine if households are eligible and receiving the correct allotment of food stamps. The determination of whether the household received the correct allotment will be made by comparing the eligibility data gathered during the review against the amount authorized on the master issuance file. Reviews of negative cases shall be conducted to determine whether the State agency's decision to deny, suspend or terminate the household, as of the review date, was correct. Quality control reviews measure the validity of food stamp cases at a given time (the review date) by reviewing against the Food Stamp Program standards established in the Food Stamp Act and the Regulations, taking into account any FNS authorized waivers to deviate from specific regulatory provisions. FNS and the State agency shall analyze findings of the reviews to determine the incidence and dollar amounts of errors, which will determine the State agency's liability for payment errors and eligibility for enhanced funding in accordance with the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, and to