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the transitional period. The recertification requirements at §273.14 that would normally apply when the household's certification period ends must be postponed until the end of the new certification period. If the transitional period results in a shortening of the household's certification period, the State agency shall not issue a household a notice of adverse action under §273.10(f)(4) but shall specify in the transitional notice required under §273.29 that the household must be recertified when it reaches the end of the transitional benefit period or if it returns to TANF during the transitional period.

§ 273.28 Application for Food Stamp Program recertification.

At any time during the transitional period, the household may apply for recertification. If a household applies for recertification during its transitional period, the State agency shall observe the following procedures:

(a) The State agency must schedule an interview in accordance with §273.2(e);

(b) The State agency must provide the household with a notice of required verification in accordance with §273.2(c)(5) and provide the household a minimum of 10 days to provide the required verification in accordance with §273.2(f).

(c) Households that have met all of the required application procedures shall be notified of their eligibility or ineligibility as soon as possible, but no later than 30 calendar days following the date the application was filed.

(1) If the State agency does not determine a household's eligibility and provide an opportunity to participate within 30 days following the date the application was filed, the State agency shall continue processing the application while continuing the household's transitional benefits.

(2) If the application process cannot be completed due to State agency fault, the State agency must continue to process the application and provide a full month's allotment for the first month of the new certification period. The State agency shall determine cause for any delay in processing a re-

certification application in accordance with the provisions of §273.2(h)(1).

(d) If the application process cannot be completed because the household failed to take a required action, the State agency may deny the application at that time or at the end of the 30 days. If the household is determined to be ineligible for the program, the State agency will deny the household's application for recertification and continue the household's transitional benefits to the end of the transitional benefit period, at which time the State agency will either recertify the household or send a RFC in accordance with §273.31;

(e) If the household is determined eligible for the regular Food Stamp Program but is entitled to a benefit lower than its transitional benefit, the State agency shall encourage the household to withdraw its application for recertification and continue to receive transitional benefits. If the household chooses not to withdraw its application, the State agency has the option to deny the application and allow the transitional period to run its course, or complete the recertification process and issue the household the lower benefit amount beginning with the first month of the new certification period.

(f) If the household is determined eligible for the program, its new certification period will begin with the first day of the month following the month in which the household submitted the application for recertification. The State agency must issue the household full benefits for that month. For example, if the household applied for recertification on the 25th day of the third month of a 5-month transitional period, and the household is determined eligible for the regular Food Stamp Program, the State agency will begin the household's new certification period on the first day of what would have been the fourth month of the transitional period.

(g) If the household is eligible for the regular Food Stamp Program and entitled to benefits higher than its transitional benefits, and the State agency has already issued the household transitional benefits for the first month of its certification period, the State agency must issue the household a supplement.

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(h) Applications for recertification submitted in the final month of the transitional period must be processed in accordance with § 273.14.

§ 273.29 Transitional notice requirements.

The State agency must issue a transitional notice (TN) to the household that includes the following information:

(a) A statement informing the household that it will be receiving transitional benefits and the length of its transitional period;

(b) A statement informing the household that it has the option of applying for recertification at any time during the transitional period. The household must be informed that if it does not apply for recertification during the transitional period, the State agency must, at the end of the transitional period, either reevaluate the household's food stamp case or require the household to undergo a recertification;

(c) A statement that if the household returns to TANF during its transitional benefit period, the State agency will either reevaluate the household's food stamp case or require the household to undergo a recertification. However, if the household has been assigned a new certification period in accordance with § 273.27(c), the notice must inform the household that it must be recertified if it returns to TANF during its transitional period;

(d) A statement explaining any changes in the household's benefit amount due to the loss of TANF income and/or changes in household circumstances learned from another State or Federal means-tested assistance program;

(e) A statement informing the household that it is not required to report and provide verification for any changes in household circumstances until the deadline established in accordance with § 273.12(c)(3) or its recertification interview; and

(f) A statement informing the household that the State agency will not act on changes that the household reports during the transitional period prior to the deadline specified in § 273.29(e) and that if the household experiences a decrease in income or an increase in ex-

penses or household size prior to that deadline, the household should apply for recertification.

§ 273.30 Transitional benefit alternative change reporting requirements.

If the household does report changes in its circumstances during the transitional period, the State agency may make the change effective the month following the last month of the transitional period or invite the household to reapply and be certified to receive benefits. However, in order to prevent duplicate participation, the State agency must act to change the household's transitional benefit when a household member moves out of the household and either reapplies as a new household or is reported as a new member of another household. Moreover, the State agency must remove any income, resources and deductible expenses clearly attributable to the departing member.

§ 273.31 Closing the transitional period.

In the final month of the transitional benefit period, the State agency must do one of the following:

(a) Issue the RFC specified in § 273.12(c)(3) and act on any information it has about the household's new circumstances in accordance with § 273.12(c)(3). The State agency may extend the household's certification period in accordance with § 273.10(f)(5) unless the household's certification period has already been extended past the maximum period specified in § 273.10(f) in accordance with § 273.27(a); or

(b) Recertify the household in accordance with § 273.14. If the household has not reached the maximum number of months in its certification period during the transitional period, the State agency may shorten the household's prior certification period in order to recertify the household. When shortening the household's certification period pursuant to this section, the State agency must send the household a notice of expiration in accordance with § 273.14(b).