§ 273.25 Simplified Food Stamp Program.

(a) Definitions. For purposes of this section:

(1) Simplified Food Stamp Program (SFSP) means a program authorized under 7 U.S.C. 2035.

(2) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) means a State program of family assistance operated by an eligible State under its TANF plan as defined at 45 CFR 260.30.

(3) Pure-TANF household means a household in which all members receive assistance under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.).

(4) Mixed-TANF household means a household in which 1 or more members, but not all members, receive assistance under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.).

(5) Assistance under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) means “assistance” as defined in regulations at 45 CFR 260.31.

(b) Limit on benefit reduction for mixed-TANF households under the SFSP. If a State agency chooses to operate an SFSP and includes mixed-TANF households in its program, the following requirements apply in addition to the statutory requirements governing the SFSP.

(1) If a State’s SFSP reduces benefits for mixed-TANF households, then no more than 5 percent of these participating households can have benefits reduced by 10 percent of the amount they are eligible to receive under the regular FSP and no mixed-TANF household can have benefits reduced by 25 percent or more of the amount it is eligible to receive under the regular FSP. Reductions of $10 or less will be disregarded when applying this requirement.

(2) The State must include in its State SFSP plan an analysis showing the impact its program has on benefit levels for mixed-TANF households by comparing the allotment amount such households would receive using the rules and procedures of the State’s SFSP with the allotment amount these households would receive if certified under regular Food Stamp Program rules and showing the number of households whose allotment amount would be reduced by 9.99 percent or less, by 10 to 24.99 percent, and by 25 percent or more, excluding those households with reductions of $10 or less. In order for FNS to accurately evaluate the program’s impact, States must describe in detail the methodology used as the basis for this analysis.

(3) To ensure compliance with the benefit reduction requirement once an SFSP is operational, States must describe in their plan and have approved by FNS a methodology for measuring benefit reductions for mixed-TANF households on an on-going basis throughout the duration of the SFSP. In addition, States must report to FNS on a periodic basis the amount of benefit loss experienced by mixed-TANF households participating in the State’s SFSP. The frequency of such reports will be determined by FNS taking into
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consideration such factors as the number of mixed-TANF households participating in the SFSP and the amount of benefit loss attributed to these households through initial or on-going analyses.

(c) Application processing standards. Under statutory requirements, a household is not eligible to participate in an SFSP unless it is receiving TANF assistance. If a household is not receiving TANF assistance (payments have not been authorized) at the time of its application for the SFSP, the State agency must process the application using the regular Food Stamp Program requirements of § 273.2, including processing within the 30-day regular or 7-day expedited time frame, and screening for and provision of expedited service if eligible. The State agency must determine under regular food stamp rules the eligibility and benefits of any household that it has found ineligible for TANF assistance because of time limits, more restrictive resource standards, or other rules that do not apply to food stamps.

(d) Standards for shelter costs. Legislation governing the SFSP requires that State plans must address the needs of households with high shelter costs relative to their income. If a State chooses to standardize shelter costs under the SFSP, it must, therefore, use multiple standards that take into consideration households with high shelter costs versus those with low shelter costs. A State is prohibited from using a single standard based on average shelter costs for all households participating in an SFSP.

(e) Opportunity for public comment. States must provide an opportunity for public input on proposed SFSP plans (with special attention to changes in benefit amounts that are necessary in order to ensure that the overall proposal not increase Federal costs) through a public comment period, public hearings, or meetings with groups representing participants’ interests. Final approval will be given after the State informs the Department about the comments received from the public and submit its final SFSP plan for Departmental approval.

[Amdt. 388, 65 FR 70211, Nov. 21, 2000]

Subpart H—The Transitional Benefits Alternative

SOURCE: 75 FR 4953, Jan. 29, 2010, unless otherwise noted.

§ 273.26 General eligibility guidelines.

The State agency may elect to provide households leaving TANF with transitional food stamp benefits as provided in this section. A State agency that chooses to provide transitional benefits must state in its State plan of operation that it has selected this option and specify the categories of households eligible for such benefits, the maximum number of months for which transitional benefits will be provided and any other items required to be included under this subpart H. The State agency may choose to limit transitional benefits to households in which all members had been receiving TANF, or it may provide such benefits to any household in which at least one member had been receiving TANF.

The State agency may not provide transitional benefits to a household which is leaving TANF when:

(a) The household is leaving TANF due to a TANF sanction;
(b) The household is a member of a category of households designated by the State agency as ineligible for transitional benefits;
(c) All household members are ineligible to receive food stamps because they are:
(1) Disqualified for intentional program violation in accordance with §273.16;
(2) Ineligible for failure to comply with a work requirement in accordance with §273.7;
(3) Receiving SSI in a cash-out State in accordance with §273.20;
(4) Ineligible students in accordance with §273.5;
(5) Ineligible aliens in accordance with §273.4;
(6) Disqualified for failing to provide information necessary for making a determination of eligibility or for completing any subsequent review of its

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