Department of Human Resources 311 West Saratoga Street Baltimore MD 21201	FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION MEMO
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TO: **DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES**
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF

FROM: **ROSEMARY MALONE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIA**

RE: **MAIL-IN BENEFITS REVIEW FORM WEBINAR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

PROGRAM AFFECTED: **FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM**

ORIGINATING OFFICE: **FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION**

SUMMARY: Recently the Family Investment Administration conducted webinars explaining the new 6-month review process outlined in action transmittal 12-28 for Food Supplement Program (FSP) customers. The webinars discussed the new DHR/FIA 9712 (Mail-In Benefits Review form) and the notice (DHR/FIA 9712-A) customers will receive effective July 2012. This information memo provides answers to questions raised during the webinars or addressed to policy staff.

INQUIRIES: Please contact Rick McClendon for FSP questions at (410) 767-7307or rmcclend@dhr.state.md.us and Victoria Rideout for CARES questions at (410) 767-4037 or vrideout@dhr.state.md.us.

cc: DHR Executive Staff
FIA Management Staff
Constituent Services
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Mail-in Benefits Review Form Webinar Questions and Answers

1. Should we scan the 6-month review form once it is received by the agency?

   Answer: Yes, if your local department has scanning capability.

2. Is the 6-month review only going to the mail-in customer?

   Answer: Yes.

3. In cases where the forms are not received by the customer, will the LDSS have a supply of forms to give to the customer?

   Answer: Yes, we have forms available at the LDSS and on FIPNET. Action transmittal 12-18 has a hyperlink near the end of the document. Remember, whenever the Mail-In Benefits Review form (DHR/FIA 9712) is re-issued, write the customer's Client ID (CID) number on the form. Customers that did not receive the form by mail also did not receive the first page of the mailer that has their CID number on it.

4. Should we return the form to the customer if the customer has not signed it?

   Answer: Yes, make a copy and return the original form to the customer indicating a signature is required.

5. Why do we mail back all the forms?

   Answer: The notice has the customer's identifying information (CID) and the local department's address. This helps to identify where to send the form when the forms are not inserted as instructed.

6. You talked about the 6-month review and that at the 12-month redet we would look more in depth at the client's situation. How will we know if the CIF we have is the 6-month review or the 12-month review? Is there a different form, or will we know because it is not a mail-in and the customer must come in for their review?

   Answer: At the 6-month review, the customer receives the Mail-In Benefits Review form. It is a one page form. At the 12-month review, the customer receives the system generated CIF, which is a pre-filled multi-page form.

7. Can we send a mass notification to customers saying that a change is coming?

   Answer: FIA created campaign literature to be distributed by local departments, constituent services and our community partners. In addition, posters, flyers and videos were distributed to local departments to aid in the discussion of the new form.

8. Should we initiate a redet if we have to send the form back to the customer?

   Answer: Yes, initiate the redet.

9. When will we receive one-pagers for the AR?

   Answer: DHR delivered the one-pagers to the local departments in June.

10. Will the video be in Spanish?

    Answer: Yes.

11. Should we return the form if the customer skips a question?

    Answer: If the customer skips a question, you should try to reach them by telephone to get the information that you need. There is a line a t the bottom of the 9712 for the customer to list their current phone number. **Only** ask the customer about the skipped question. You do not have to review the entire form with the customer. When you cannot reach the customer, you must send a Request for Information to Verify Eligibility (DHR/FIA 1052).

12. If the customer answered "NO" to all of the questions on the form, you indicated we should not run clearances. What if we run clearances (because we are used to doing it) and find changes that were not reported by the customer. Should we ignore the changes?

    Answer: Clearances should not be run on customers that received the 6-month review form. The purpose of implementing the 6-month review form is to **eliminate** unnecessary steps in the eligibility process. Remember, during the 6-month review, customers in the simplified reporting group only have to answer the 6 questions.

13. How soon will the information be on the DHR Knowledge Base for self-learning?

    Answer: FIA will issue a broadcast message to the local departments when the information is available on the site.

14. Is there a place on the 9712 that shows the customer's current phone number?

    Answer: Yes, the customer's phone number is listed at the bottom of the form to the right of the signature.

15. Will the customer still get the CIF for the 12-month redet?

    Answer: Yes, once you complete the redet, the **M** on the MISC screen (Redet Method field) will revert to **F**. This field notifies CARES of which form to mail to the customer at the 12-month period.

16. Will the 9712 be available on SAIL for customers who cannot come in to get it?

    Answer: No, they will need to contact their case manager who will verify the customer should receive the Mail-In Benefits Review form. The form will be mailed to the customer if they are unable to come into the local office.

17. We have to explain the form to the customer. Why do we have to explain it if the customer is getting instructions in the letter?

    Answer: The agency launched a media campaign distributing materials to local departments, constituent services, call centers and community partners. This will undoubtedly lead to customer inquiries, telephone calls or visits to the local departments. Keeping our customers informed is good customer service.

18. Is it possible to have an automated phone message that tells the customer to remember to make sure their address is showing through the window? Can these mailings instructions become a part of a voice mail greeting?

    Answer: No, not all customers have access to a telephone.

19. Is the form available in Spanish?

    Answer: Yes, the form is available in Spanish. When the primary language field on the ADDR screen has an "S", that customer receives a Spanish mailing.

20. If they check all No's and they really have income, do we still recoup?

    Answer: Yes, if it is determined the information the customer provided was inaccurate.

21. Do we **hav**e to verify the customer's address?

    Answer: Verification of address is not a mandatory requirement. See A.T. 10-38, page 6 and Section 408 of the FSP manual.

22. Are shelter expenses i.e. rent, mortgage, (sometimes mortgages include property taxes and home owners insurance) declaratory?

    Answer: Yes, shelter expenses are declaratory, See A.T. 10-38, page 6.

23. Should we align the certification periods?

    Answer: Yes, align the certification periods so the customer will receive the CIF at the 12-month review.

24. When we align the TCA, should we request verification or just update the case?

    Answer: No, the customer is only required to answer the 6 questions.

25. If the customer checks "No" on the form, should we run clearances to see if they are truthful?

    Answer: No, you do not have to run clearances. Update the case based on information provided.

26. If the customer checks "No" to indicate no change in earnings (and it is questionable to the case manager only because I don't believe the customer), should we run the Work Number or MABS to see if he/she is telling the truth?

    Answer: No. Remember, **<u>do not</u>** over verify. The customer only has to answer the 6 questions.

27. If the customer mails in the 9712 timely, but they send it in the month following the month the case closed, should we require a new application or use the 9712 to re-pend the case?

    Answer: Yes, use the 9712 Mail-In Benefits Review form.

28. I understand from the Webinar MBF's (9712) will be available at the local office front desk. If the customer does not submit the 9712, for whatever reason and the FSP case closes, can/should the customer be given a Mail-In Benefits Review form? If the FSP case closed within the past 30 days, can the customer submit the form to complete the recon, or should they complete a new application (9701)?

    Answer: Yes, the customer can be given the Mail-In Benefits Review form.

29. When does the change take affect?

    Answer: Customers with a certification period ending September 30, 2012 will receive the Mail-In Benefits Review form in July.

30. Are they going to stagger the 6-month reviews?

    Answer: No, beginning in July, FSP customers scheduled to receive a mail-in application for their 6-month review will receive the Mail-In Benefits Review form.

31. Are the TCA customers getting a face-to-face when we get the 6-month Mail-In Benefits Review form?

    Answer: No.

32. Is it true the only change to be verified is a change in income?

    Answer: Yes, the customer is required to attach proof for Questions 3 and 4.

33. If the client does not report that they have a change in income, we are not required to check MABS/SVES at all?

    Answer: True.

34. Self employed workers have lots of changes in income. How can we verify the change, the form is not clear on this topic?

    Answer: Verification of income at the 6-month review period is only required if the customer reports a change (Question 3 and 4) and does not attach the required proof.

35. Is the customer's last day of work (LDW) declaratory? What if we later find they did not lose a job?

    Answer: Yes, LDW is declaratory-see A.T. 10-38. If you later find that the customer did not lose a job, follow procedures in FSP manual Section 420 (Reporting Changes), 420.9. Remember, customers in the simplified reporting group are not required to report changes in income unless their income exceeds 130% of the poverty level for their household size.

36. Changes in Child Care expenses are not mentioned on the form. Should we call the customer to ask if there are changes?

    Answer: No, only address the 6 questions on the form.

37. You indicated not to run clearances on the FSP, should we run clearances if there is an associated MA case?

    Answer: No.

38. You mentioned Action transmittal 10-38. What other A.T. is useful?

    Answer: A.T 12-28 this discusses the 6-month Mail-In Benefits Review form.

39. The "N" is sometimes coded in the voter registration field because the customer is not a U.S. citizen and cannot vote. Do I have to mail the voter registration form?

    Answer: No, narrate why you did not mail the form. You can leave the coding as is and narrate to show that you did acknowledge the voter registration field.

40. Will the Mail-In Benefits Review form be translated into additional languages (other than Spanish)?

    Answer: Currently the form is only available in English and Spanish. FIA is looking into FNS requirements for translating forms based on the number of speakers of other languages there are in Maryland.

41. Is negative income addressed during the 6-month review?

    Answer: The customer is only required to answer the 6 questions on the Mail-In Benefits Review Form.

42. If someone is paying child care, how is it reported?

    Answer: The customer can write on the form or attach additional information. If a change is reported, we must act on the change.

43. There is nothing on this CIF about daycare expenses. What if the client recently began paying for daycare?

    Answer: If a change is reported, we must act on that change.

44. Will the PIRAMID review process be adjusted for this new change?

    Answer: Yes, questions on the Mail-In Benefits Review form will be added to PIRAMID.

45. Will QC call it an error if we don't ask the customer about paying child care or if we have not run the screens?

    Answer: QC is only reviewing for the 6 questions on the form. If the customer checked "No", you do not have to run clearances. If the customer checked "Yes" and did not provide proof, you should run the clearances to see if you can find the information. If you cannot find the information, you must contact the customer to obtain the information. Contact the customer at the number listed on the form. If you cannot reach the customer, send a 1052. If you do not receive a response, the customer is not entitled to the deduction. <u>Do not</u> close the case.

46. When we do an associated MA, should we change the information such as FS medical expenses?

    Answer: If the customer reports a change in the source or the amount has changed by $25 or more, update the FSME if verification is provided. If the verification is not provided, the deduction is not allowed.

47. If a customer sends a medical bill for the FSME screen, is it correct that we still have to put this information in at the 6-month period?

    Answer: Yes, if the customer reports a change in total recurring medical expenses which have changed by more than $25, or the source has changed or previously unreported medical expenses are reported and verification is provided, update the FSME. When verification is not provided, the deduction is not allowed.

48. Should we approve the 6-month review for a year or 6 months?

    Answer: The case is approved for 6 months. This allows the customer to receive the CIF at the 12-month review period.

49. What about blocking schedules that we use to do on CARES for so many years?

    Answer: Follow your local department procedures for updating your schedules. Customers receiving the Mail-In Benefits Review form will not appear on your appointment schedule.

50. Should the FSP customer who is an alien with a sponsor be added to the case during the 6-month benefit review?

    Answer: Question 2 asks, “Has anyone moved in or out of your household in the last 6 months?” If the customer reports a change (someone moved in or out of the household), you must act on the change. Review Section 121 of the FSP manual for treatment of immigrants with sponsors.

51. Is it true that only a complete check of the customer’s information will be at application and the 12-month review?

    Answer: Yes.

52. Do I understand correctly that income is to be verified only if there is a change in the income?

    Answer: Yes, the customer must provide verification if they answer “Yes” to Questions 3 and 4.

53. Should we put a “T” on the MISC screen to get the telephone interview instead of the face-to-face interview?

    Answer: Yes.

54. What happens if the customer sends a CIF and does not do the interview at the 12-month point?

    Answer: CARES will close the case automatically for failure to complete the recertification process.

55. If the customer pays child care for a child outside of the FSP household, should we verify the amount?

    Answer: No, child care expenses are declaratory. See A.T. 10-38, page 9.

56. Can the 6-month mail-in benefits review be revised to include the pre-filled Client Identification Number (CID)?

    Answer: Due to the CARES freeze to prepare for implementation of CARES 2.0, we are unable to add CARES data to the form at this time.

57. Do we have to do a FSP calculation work sheet?

    Answer: No, unless this is part of your local department's procedure.

58. If the client is required to attach proof for their employment, will we still need 2 paystubs for bi-weekly pay and 4 stubs for weekly pay, or will one pay stub suffice?

    Answer: Yes, the customer must provide the required pay stubs for the payment method, (i.e. 4 consecutive pays stubs for weekly, 2 for bi-weekly) or can submit other acceptable forms of verification as indicated in A.T. 10-38.