§ 275.13 Review of negative cases.

(a) General. A sample of households whose applications for food stamp benefits were denied or whose food stamp benefits were suspended or terminated by an action in the sample month or effective for the sample month shall be selected for quality control review. These negative cases shall be reviewed to determine whether the State agency’s decision to deny, suspend, or terminate the household, as of the review date, was correct. Depending on the characteristics of individual State systems, the review date for negative cases could be the date of the agency’s decision to deny, suspend, or terminate program benefits, the date on which the decision is entered into the computer system, the date of the notice to the client, or the date the negative action becomes effective. However, State agencies must consistently apply the same definition for review date to all sample cases of the same classification. The review of negative cases shall include a household case record review; an error analysis; and the reporting of review findings. For a positive decision, the invalidity of the action may be an issue. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the reviewer may attempt to verify the element(s) of eligibility in question by telephoning either the household and/or a collateral contact(s). Through the review of the household case record, the reviewer shall complete the household case record sections and document the reasons for denial, suspension or termination on the Negative Quality Control Review Schedule, Form FNS–245.

(b) Household case record review. The reviewer shall examine the household case record and verify through documentation in it whether the reason given for the denial, suspension, or termination is correct or whether the denial, suspension, or termination is correct for any other reason documented in the case file. When the case record alone does not prove ineligibility, the reviewer may attempt to verify the element(s) of eligibility in question by telephoning either the household and/or a collateral contact(s). Through the review of the household case record, the reviewer shall complete the household case record sections and document the reasons for denial, suspension or termination on the Negative Quality Control Review Schedule, Form FNS–245.

(c) Error analysis. (1) A negative case shall be considered correct if the reviewer is able to verify through documentation in the household case record or collateral contact that a household was correctly denied, suspended or terminated from the program. Whenever the reviewer is unable to verify the correctness of the State agency’s decision to deny, suspend or terminate a household’s participation through such documentation or collateral contact, the negative case shall be considered incorrect.

(2) The reviewer shall exclude a variance when the State agency erroneously denied, suspended or terminated a household’s participation based on an erroneous verification of alien documentation by the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program. The reviewer shall exclude the variance only if the State agency properly used SAVE, and the State agency provides the reviewer with:
   (i) The alien’s name;
   (ii) The alien’s status; and
   (iii) Either the Alien Status Verification Index (ASVI) Query Verification Number or the INS Form G–845, as annotated by INS.

(d) Reporting of review findings. When a negative case is incorrect, this information shall be reported to the State agency for appropriate action on an individual case basis, such as recomputation of the coupon allotment and restoration of lost benefits. In addition, the reviewer shall code and record the error determination on the Negative
§ 275.14 Review processing.

(a) General. Each State agency shall use FNS handbooks, worksheets, and schedules in the quality control review process.

(b) Handbooks. The reviewer shall follow the procedures outlined in the Quality Control Review Handbook, FNS Handbook 310, to conduct quality control reviews. In addition, the sample of active and negative cases shall be selected in accordance with the sampling techniques described in the Quality Control Sampling Handbook, FNS Handbook 311.

(c) Worksheets. The Integrated Review Worksheet, Form FNS–380, shall be used by the reviewer to record required information from the case record, plan and conduct the field investigation, and record findings which contribute to the determination of eligibility and basis of issuance in the review of active cases. In some instances, reviewers may need to supplement Form FNS–380 with other forms. The State forms for appointments, interoffice communications, release of information, etc., should be used when appropriate.

(d) Schedules. Decisions reached by the reviewer in active case reviews shall be coded and recorded on the Integrated Review Schedule, Form FNS–380–1. Such active case review findings must be substantiated by information recorded on the Integrated Review Worksheet, Form FNS–380. In negative case reviews, the review findings shall be coded and recorded on the Negative Quality Control Review Schedule, Form FNS–245, and supplemented as necessary with other documentation substantiating the findings.


Subpart D—Data Analysis and Evaluation

§ 275.15 Data management.

(a) Analysis. Analysis is the process of classifying data, such as by areas of program requirements or use of error-prone profiles, to provide a basis for studying the data and determining trends including significant characteristics and their relationships.