

Food and Nutrition Service, USDA

§ 273.21

(SSI) benefits and/or State supplementary payments as a resident of California is eligible to receive food stamp benefits. The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services has determined that the SSI payments in California have been specifically increased to include the value of the food stamp allotment.

(b) *Receipt of SSI benefits.* In California, an individual must actually receive, not merely have applied for, SSI benefits to be determined ineligible for the food stamp program. If the State agency provides payments at least equal to the level of SSI benefits to individuals who have applied for but are awaiting an SSI eligibility determination, receipt of these substitute payments will terminate the individual's eligibility for food stamp benefits. Once SSI benefits are received, the individual will remain ineligible for food stamp benefits, even during months in which receipt of the SSI benefits is interrupted, or suspended, until the individual is terminated from the SSI program.

(c) *Income and resources.* In California, the income and resources of the SSI recipient living in a household shall not be considered in determining eligibility or level of benefits of the household, as specified in § 273.11(d).

[Amdt. 132, 43 FR 47889, Oct. 17, 1978, as amended by Amdt. 132, 44 FR 33383, June 8, 1979. Redesignated at 45 FR 7217, Jan. 31, 1980, as amended by Amdt. 237, 47 FR 57669, Dec. 28, 1982; Amdt. 269, 51 FR 10793, Mar. 28, 1986; Amdt. 356, 59 FR 29713, June 9, 1994; Amdt. 364, 61 FR 54320, Oct. 17, 1996]

§ 273.21 Monthly Reporting and Retrospective Budgeting (MRRB).

(a) *System design.* This section provides for an MRRB system for determining household eligibility and benefits. For included households, this system replaces the prospective budgeting system provided in the preceding sections of this part. The MRRB system provides for the use of retrospective information in calculating household benefits, normally based on information submitted by the household in monthly reports. The State agency shall establish an MRRB system as follows:

(1) In establishing either a one-month or a two-month MRRB system, the State agency shall use the same system it uses in its TANF Program unless it has been granted a waiver by FNS. Differences between a one-month and a two-month system are described in paragraph (d) of this section.

(2) The State agency shall determine eligibility, either prospectively or retrospectively, on the same basis that it uses for its TANF program, unless it has been granted a waiver by FNS.

(3) *Budgeting waivers.* FNS may approve waivers of the budgeting requirements of this section to conform to budgeting procedures in the TANF program, except for households excluded from retrospective budgeting under paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) *Included and excluded households.* The establishment of either a monthly reporting or retrospective budgeting system is a State agency option. Certain households are specifically excluded from both monthly reporting and retrospective budgeting. A household that is included in a monthly reporting system must be retrospectively budgeted. Households not required to submit monthly reports may have their benefits determined on either a prospective or retrospective basis at the State agency's option, unless specifically excluded from retrospective budgeting.

(1) The following households are excluded from both monthly reporting and retrospective budgeting:

(i) Migrant or seasonal farmworker households.

(ii) Households in which all members are homeless individuals.

(iii) Households with no earned income in which all adult members are elderly or disabled.

(2) Households residing on an Indian reservation where there was no monthly reporting system in operation on March 25, 1994 are excluded from monthly reporting.

(c) *Information on MRRB.* At the certification and recertification interview, the State agency shall provide the household with the following:

(1) An oral explanation of the purpose of MRRB;

§273.21

7 CFR Ch. II (1-1-12 Edition)

(2) A copy of the monthly report and an explanation of how to complete and file it;

(3) An explanation that information required to be reported on the monthly report is the only reporting requirement for such information;

(4) An explanation of what the household shall verify when it submits a monthly report and how it will verify it;

(5) A telephone number (toll-free number or a number where collect calls will be accepted outside the local calling area) which the household may call to ask questions or to obtain help in completing the monthly report; and

(6) Written explanations of this information.

(7) *Special assistance.* The State agency shall provide special assistance in completing and filing monthly reports to households whose adult members are all either mentally or physically handicapped or are non-English speaking or otherwise lacking in reading and writing skills such that they cannot complete and file the required reports.

(d) *One and two-month systems.* Each State agency shall adopt either a one-month or two-month MRRB system. A one-month system shall have either one or two beginning months in the certification period and a two-month system shall have two beginning months. Except for beginning months in sequence as described in the preceding sentence, the State agency shall not consider as a beginning month any month which immediately follows a month in which a household is certified.

(1) *One-month system.* In the one-month system, the issuance month immediately follows its corresponding budget month.

(2) *Two-month system.* In the two-month system, the issuance month is the second month following its corresponding budget month. There are two beginning months of participation in this system, the first month and the following month.

(e) *Determining eligibility for households not certified under the beginning months' procedures of §273.21(g).* The State agency shall determine eligibility consistent with paragraph (a)(2)

of this section and in accordance with either of the following options.

(1) *Prospective eligibility.* The State agency shall determine eligibility by considering all factors of eligibility prospectively for each of the issuance months.

(2) *Retrospective eligibility.* The State agency shall determine eligibility by considering all factors of eligibility retrospectively using the appropriate budget month except for residency and compliance with the requirements regarding social security numbers. Compliance with work registration provisions shall be considered as of the issuance month or month of application. The 60-day time frame for determining the applicability of the voluntary quit provision of §273.7(n) shall be measured by the State agency from the date of application.

(f) *Calculating allotments for households following the beginning months—(1) Household composition.* (i) If eligibility is determined retrospectively the State agency shall determine the household's composition as of the last day of the budget month.

(ii) If eligibility is determined prospectively (during the beginning months or for households processed under paragraph (e)(1) of this section), the State agency shall determine the household's composition as of the issuance month.

(iii) In a two-month system, the following provisions shall apply with regard to a household which reports, in the month between the budget month and the corresponding issuance month, that it has gained a new member.

(A) The State agency shall use the same household composition for determining the household's eligibility that it uses for calculating the household's benefit level.

(B) If the new member is not already certified to receive food stamps in another household participating within the State, the new member's income, deductible expenses, and resources from the issuance month shall be considered in determining the household's eligibility and benefit level. If the new member had been providing income to the household on an ongoing basis prior to becoming a member of the

Food and Nutrition Service, USDA

§ 273.21

household, the State agency shall exclude the previously provided income in determining the household's issuance month benefits and eligibility.

(C) If the individual has moved out of one household receiving food stamps within the State and into another, with no break in participation, the State agency shall use the individual's income, deductible expenses, and resources from the budget month in determining benefits to be provided in the issuance month. The State agency shall include such an individual and the individual's income, deductible expenses, and resources in determining the issuance month eligibility and benefit level of either the household from which the individual has moved or the household into which the individual has moved, but not both. In determining the issuance month eligibility and benefit level of the household into which the individual has moved, the State agency shall disregard budget month income received by the new member from a terminated source.

(D) The State agency may add new members to the household effective either the month the household reports the gain of a new household member or the first day of the issuance month following the month the household reports the gain of a new member. The benefits shall not be prorated.

(iv) The State agency shall add a previously excluded member who was disqualified for an intentional program violation or failure to comply with workfare or work requirements, was ineligible because of failure to comply with the social security number requirement, or was previously an ineligible alien retrospectively to the household the month after the disqualification period ends. All other previously excluded members shall be added in accordance with the procedures in paragraph (f)(1)(iii)(B) of this section, using the new member's issuance month income and expenses.

(2) *Income and deductions.* For the household members as determined in accordance with paragraph (f)(1) of this section, the State agency shall calculate the allotment using the household members' income and deductions

from the budget month, except as follows:

(i) The State agency shall annualize self-employment income which is received other than monthly, in accordance with § 273.11(a). Such income shall be budgeted either prospectively or retrospectively and shall not affect more benefit months than the number of months in the period over which it is annualized or prorated. Except that, households which receive self-employment income from a farm operation monthly but incur irregular expenses to produce such self-employment farm income shall be given the option to annualize the self-employment farm income and expenses over a 12-month period.

(ii) The State agency shall prorate contract income received over a period of less than one year and either prospectively or retrospectively budget such income. Such income shall not effect more benefit months than the number of months in the period over which it is prorated.

(iii) Earned and unearned educational income shall be prorated over the period it is intended to cover in accordance with § 273.10(c)(3)(iii), and it shall be budgeted either prospectively or retrospectively. Such income shall not effect more benefit months than the number of months in the period over which it is prorated.

(iv) The State agency shall budget deductible expenses prorated over two or more months, except medical expenses, either prospectively or retrospectively, *provided* That such deductions are not budgeted over more months than they are intended to cover, and the total amount deducted does not exceed the total amount of the expenses. Medical expenses shall be budgeted prospectively. The State agency shall continue to allow deductions for expenses incurred even if billed on other than a monthly basis unless the household reports a change in the expense. The State agency may average the child support expense and budget it prospectively or retrospectively.

(v) The State agency shall budget income received on a recurring monthly or semimonthly basis for the month that it is intended to cover. The State

agency shall not vary the budgeting of such income merely because it is received during another month as the result of changes in mailing cycles or pay dates, or because weekends or holidays result in an additional or missed payment.

(vi) The State agency may budget interest income using one of the following methods in paragraphs (f)(2)(vi)(A), (B), or (C) of this section. The State agency shall either establish categories of interest to be handled by each of the methods or shall offer each household the option of which method to budget the interest income.

(A) Actual interest income received in the budget month.

(B) Prorated interest income calculated by dividing the amount of interest anticipated during the certification period by the number of months in the certification period.

(C) An averaged amount adjusted for anticipated changes.

(vii) For a new household member described under paragraph (f)(1)(iii)(B) of this section, the State agency shall consider the new member's income and deductible expenses prospectively until the new member's first month living with the household becomes the budget month.

(viii) The options provided under paragraph (j)(1)(vii) of this section may affect the calculation of income and deductions.

(g) *Determining eligibility and allotments in the beginning months.* The State agency shall use the prospective budgeting procedures of this paragraph for determining the allotments and eligibility of households in the MRRB system during this first month, or first and second month of participation. The State agency shall not apply the procedures of this paragraph to the month(s) following the month of termination resulting from a temporary one-month change.

(1) *Determining eligibility during the beginning months.* The State agency shall determine eligibility prospectively in the beginning month(s).

(2) *Calculating allotments during the beginning months.* the State agency shall calculate allotments prospectively in the beginning month(s).

(3) *The first months of retrospective budgeting following the beginning months.* The State agency shall begin to base issuances to the household on retrospective budgeting during the first month for which the State's system can use the month of application as a budget month. In a one-month system, the first month for which the issuance is based on retrospective budgeting shall be the second month of participation. In a two-month system, the first month for which the issuance is based on retrospective budgeting shall be the third month of participation. If the State agency had been averaging income or converting weekly or biweekly income to a monthly amount in the beginning months, it may begin using the household's actual budget month income when the household becomes subject to retrospective budgeting. For purposes of this paragraph, any income received in either or both of the beginning months from a source which no longer provides income to the household (terminated income), which was included in the household's prospective budget, shall be disregarded when the beginning month becomes the budget month.

(h) *The monthly report form—(1) General.* (i) The State agency shall give the household a reasonable period of time after close of the budget month to submit the monthly reports.

(ii) The State agency shall require each household in the MRRB system to report on household circumstances on a monthly basis as a condition of continuing eligibility.

(iii) The State agency shall provide an individual or agency unit which a household may contact to receive prompt answers about the completion of the form. A telephone number (toll free for households outside the local calling area) which a household may use to obtain further information shall also be available.

(iv) The State agency shall ensure that households are informed about the availability and amount of the standard utility allowances, if the State agency offers them.

(2) *Monthly report form.* The State agency's monthly report form shall meet the following requirements:

Food and Nutrition Service, USDA

§ 273.21

(i) Be written in clear, simple language;

(ii) Meet the bilingual requirements described in § 272.4(b) of this chapter;

(iii) Specify the date by which the agency must receive the form and the consequences of a late or incomplete form, including whether the State agency shall delay payment if the form is not received by the specified date;

(iv) Specify the verification which the household must submit with the form, in accordance with § 273.21(i);

(v) Identify the individual or agency unit available to assist in completing the form;

(vi) Include a statement to be signed by a member of the household, indicating his or her understanding that the provided information may result in changes in the level of benefits, including reduction and termination;

(vii) Include, in prominent and bold-face lettering, an understandable description of the Act's civil and criminal penalties for fraud.

(viii) If the form requests Social Security numbers, include a statement of the State agency's authority to require Social Security numbers (SSN's) (including the statutory citation, the title of the statute, and the fact that providing SSN's is mandatory), the purpose of requiring SSN's, the routine uses for SSN's, and the effect of not providing SSN's. This statement may be on the form itself or included as an attachment to the form.

(3) *Reported information.* The State agency may determine the information relevant to eligibility and benefit determination to be included on the monthly report form except that the State agency shall not require households to monthly report medical expenses. Medical expenses may be reported in accordance with § 273.10(d)(4).

(4) *Combined form.* If the State agency uses a combined monthly report for food stamps and TANF, the State agency shall clearly indicate on the form that non-TANF food stamp households need not provide TANF-only information.

(i) *Verification.* Each month the household shall verify information for those items designated by the State agency. The State agency may designate that verification be submitted

for any item that has changed or appears questionable. If the household voluntarily reports a change in its medical expenses, the State agency shall verify the change in accordance with § 273.2(f)(8)(ii) before acting on it if the change would increase the household's allotment. In the case of a reported change that would decrease the household's allotment, or make the household ineligible, the State agency shall act on the change without requiring verification, though verification which is required by § 273.2(f)(8)(i) shall be obtained prior to the household's recertification.

(j) *State agency action on reports*—(1) *Processing.* Upon receiving a monthly report, the State agency shall:

(i) Review the report to ensure accuracy and completeness.

(ii) Consider the report incomplete only if:

(A) It is not signed by the head of the household, an authorized representative or a responsible member of the household;

(B) It is not accompanied by verification required by the State agency on the monthly report;

(C) It omits information required by the State agency on the monthly report necessary either to determine the household's eligibility or to compute the household's level of food stamp benefits.

(iii) Determine those items which will require additional verification, in accordance with paragraph (i) of this section.

(iv) Contact the household directly, and take action as needed, to obtain further information on specific items. These items include:

(A) The effect of a reported change in resources on a household's total resources; and

(B) The effect of a reported change in household composition or loss of a job or source of earned income on the applicability of the work registration requirement.

(v) Notify the household, in accordance with paragraph (j)(3)(ii) of this section, of the need to submit a report, correct an incomplete or inaccurate report, or submit the necessary verification within the extension period.

§ 273.21

7 CFR Ch. II (1-1-12 Edition)

(vi) Determine the household's eligibility by considering all factors, including income, in accordance with paragraphs (e) or (g) of this section.

(vii) Determine the household's level of benefits in accordance with § 273.10(e) based on the household composition determined in accordance with paragraph (f)(1) of this section. For those household members the following (except as provided in paragraph (f)(2) of this section) income and deductions shall be considered:

(A) Earned and unearned income received in the corresponding budget month, including income that has been averaged in accordance with paragraph (f) of this section. The earned income of an elementary or secondary school student excluded in accordance with § 273.9(c)(7) shall be excluded until the budget month following the budget month in which the student turns 18. The State agency has the option of converting to a regular monthly amount the income that a household receives weekly or biweekly. If the State agency elects to convert weekly or biweekly income for MRRB households, it shall do so for all households in its MRRB caseload. The State agency may convert or average income in the beginning months and use actual earned or unearned income received in the budget month following the beginning months of participation.

(B) The PA grant paid in the corresponding budget month or the PA grant to be paid in the issuance month. If the State agency elects to use the PA grant to be paid in the issuance month, the State agency shall ensure that:

(1) Any additional or corrective payments are counted, either prospectively or retrospectively; and

(2) the State agency shall disregard income received in the budget month from a terminated source which results in an increase in the PA grant, provided the household has reported the termination of the income either in the monthly report for the budget month or in some other manner which, as determined by the State agency, allows the State agency sufficient time to process the change and affect the allotment in the issuance month.

A State agency which elects to use the PA grant to be paid in the issuance month shall implement mass changes in accordance with the procedures at § 273.12(e)(2).

(C) Deductions as billed or averaged from the corresponding budget month, including those shelter costs billed less often than monthly which the household has chosen to average.

(viii) Issue benefits in accordance with part 274 of this chapter and on the time schedule set forth in paragraph (k) of this section.

(ix) Provide specific information on how the State agency calculated the benefit level if it has changed since the preceding month, either with the issuance or in a separate notification.

(2) *Notices.* (i) All notices regarding changes in a household's benefits shall meet the definition of adequate notice as defined in § 271.2.

(ii) The State agency shall notify a household of any change from its prior benefit level and the basis for its determination. If the State agency reduces, suspends or terminates benefits, it shall send the notice so the household receives it no later than either the date the resulting benefits are to be received or in place of the benefits.

(iii) The State agency shall notify a household, in accordance with paragraph (j)(3)(iii), if its monthly report is late or incomplete, or further information is needed.

(3) *Incomplete filing.* (i) If a household fails to file a monthly report, or files an incomplete report, by the specified filing date, the State agency shall give the household at least ten more days, from the date the State agency mails the notice to file a complete monthly report.

(ii) The State agency shall notify the household within five days of the filing date:

(A) That the monthly report is either overdue or incomplete;

(B) What the household must do to complete the form;

(C) If any verification is missing and the lack of that verification will adversely affect the household's allotment;

(D) That the Social Security number of a new member must be reported, if

Food and Nutrition Service, USDA

§ 273.21

the household has reported a new member but not the new member's Social Security number;

(E) What the extended filing date is;

(F) That the State agency will assist the household in completing the report.

(iii) When a State agency requires verification for the item listed and the household does not provide the verification, the State agency shall take the following actions:

(A) If the household does not verify earned income, the State agency shall regard the household's report as incomplete, take action in accordance with paragraphs (j)(3)(i) and (j)(3)(ii) of this section and, if appropriate, terminate the household in accordance with paragraph (m) of this section.

(B) If the household is using its actual utility costs to establish its shelter cost deduction in accordance with §273.9(d) and it does not verify a change in its actual utility expenses, the State agency shall not allow a deduction for such costs.

(C) If a household fails to verify a change in reported medical expenses in accordance with §273.2(f)(8), and that change would increase the household's allotment, the State agency shall not make the change. The State agency shall act on reported changes without requiring verification if the changes would decrease the household's allotment, or make the household ineligible.

(D) If the household does not verify other items for which verification is required, the State agency shall:

(1) Act on the reported change if it would decrease benefits.

(2) Not act on the reported change if it would increase benefits.

(E) If the household does not report or verify changes in child support, the State agency shall not allow a child support deduction.

(k) *Issuance of benefits*—(1) *Timely issuance.* (i) For an eligible household which has filed a complete monthly report by the scheduled filing date, the State agency shall provide an opportunity to participate within the month following the budget month in a one-month system, or within the second month following the budget month in a two-month system.

(ii) The State agency shall provide each household with an issuance cycle so that the household receives its benefits at about the same time each month and has an opportunity to participate before the end of each issuance month.

(2) *Delayed issuance.* (i) If an eligible household files a complete monthly report during its extension period, the State agency shall provide it with an opportunity to participate no later than ten days after its normal issuance date.

(ii) If an eligible household which has been terminated for failure to file a complete report files a complete report after its extended filing date, but before the end of the issuance month, the State agency may choose to reinstate the household by providing it with an opportunity to participate. If the household has requested a fair hearing on the basis that a complete monthly report was filed, the State agency shall reinstate the household if a completed monthly report is filed before the end of the issuance month.

(iii) If an eligible household files a complete report after the issuance month, the State agency shall not provide the household with an opportunity to participate for that month.

(1) *Other reporting requirements*—(1) *Information reported on the monthly report.* The monthly report shall be the sole reporting requirement for information required to be included in the monthly report. Changes in household circumstances not subject to monthly reporting shall be reported in accordance with §273.12.

(2) *Households excluded from monthly reporting.* Households which are excluded from monthly reporting shall report changes in accordance with §273.12.

(m) *Termination.* (1) The State agency shall terminate a household's food stamp participation if the household:

(i) Is ineligible for food stamps, unless suspended in accordance with paragraph (n) of this section:

(ii) Fails to file a complete report by the extended filing date; or

(iii) Fails to comply with a non-financial eligibility requirement, such as registering for employment.

(2) The State agency shall issue a notice to the household which:

§273.21

7 CFR Ch. II (1-1-12 Edition)

(i) Complies with the requirements of §271.2 for adequate notice;

(ii) Informs the household of the reason for its termination;

(iii) If the State agency allows reinstatement under paragraph (k)(2)(ii), explains how the household may be reinstated;

(iv) Informs the household of its rights to request a fair hearing and to receive continued benefits. If termination is for failure to submit a monthly report and the household states that a monthly report has been filed, the notice must advise the household that a completed monthly report must be filed prior to the end of the issuance month as a condition for continued receipt of benefits.

(3) The State agency shall issue the notice to the household so that it receives the notice no later than the household's normal or extended issuance date.

(n) *Suspension.* The State agency may suspend a household's issuance in accordance with this paragraph. If the State agency does not choose this option, it shall instead terminate households in accordance with paragraph (m) of this section.

(1) The State agency may suspend a household's issuance for one month if the household becomes temporarily ineligible due to a periodic increase in recurring income or other change not expected to continue in the subsequent month. The State agency may on a Statewide basis either suspend the household's certification prospectively for the issuance month or retrospectively for the issuance month corresponding to the budget month in which the noncontinuing circumstance occurs.

(2) The State agency shall continue to supply monthly reports to the household for one month.

(3) If the suspended household again becomes eligible, the State agency shall issue benefits on the household's normal issuance date.

(4) If the suspended household does not become eligible after one month, the State agency shall terminate the household.

(o) If a household has been terminated or suspended based on an anticipated change in circumstances, the

State agency shall not count any non-continuing circumstances which caused the prospective ineligibility when calculating the household's benefits retrospectively in a subsequent month.

(p) *Fair hearings—(1) Entitlement.* All households participating in a MRRB system shall be entitled to fair hearings in accordance with §273.15.

(2) *Continuation of benefits.* (i) Any household which requests a fair hearing and does not waive continuation of benefits, and is otherwise eligible for continuation of benefits, shall have its benefits continued until the end of the certification period or the resolution of the fair hearing, whichever is first. If the State agency did not receive a monthly report from the household by the extended filing date and the household states that a monthly report was submitted, the household is entitled to continued benefits, *provided* That a completed report is submitted no later than the last day of the issuance month.

(ii) The State agency shall provide continued benefits no later than five working days from the day it receives the household's request.

(iii) A household whose benefits have been continued shall file monthly reports until the end of the certification period. If the fair hearing is with regard to termination for nonreceipt of the monthly report by the State agency, a completed monthly report for the month in question shall be submitted by the household no later than the last day of the issuance month.

(iv) During the fair hearing period the State agency shall adjust allotments to take into account reported changes, except for the factor(s) on which the fair hearing is based.

(q) *Recertification—(1) Timeliness.* The State agency shall recertify an eligible household which timely reapplies and provides it with an opportunity to participate in the household's normal issuance cycle.

(2) *Retrospective Recertification.* (i) The State agency shall recertify the household using retrospective information to determine the household's benefit level for the first month of the new certification period.

(ii) If the State agency is operating a two-month MRRB system, the State

Food and Nutrition Service, USDA

§ 273.21

agency may delay reflecting information from the recertification interview in the household's eligibility and benefit level until the second month of the new certification period.

(iii) The State agency shall recertify households according to one of the three options set forth in paragraphs (q) (3), (4), or (5) of this section.

(3) *Option One: Recertification form.* (i) The State agency shall provide each household with a recertification form to obtain all necessary information about the household's circumstances for the budget month.

(ii) The State agency shall mail the form to the household, along with a notice of expiration, in place of the monthly report form. The State agency shall either: Mail the recertification form along with the notice of expiration; use a recertification form which contains a notice of expiration; or mail the recertification form and the notice of expiration separately, as long as the forms are mailed at the same time.

(iii) The household shall submit the form to the State agency in accordance with paragraph (h)(1)(i) of this section.

(4) *Option Two: Monthly report and addendum.* (i) The State agency shall provide each household with a notice of expiration and monthly report form and an addendum to obtain all additional information necessary for recertification.

(ii) The State agency shall either: Mail the monthly report form along with the notice of expiration; use a monthly report form which contains a notice of expiration; or mail the monthly report form and the notice of expiration separately, as long as the forms are mailed at the same time.

(iii) The household shall submit the monthly report to the State agency in accordance with paragraph (h)(1)(i) of this section.

(iv) The State agency shall deliver the recertification addendum to the household along with the monthly report form or obtain the necessary information from the household at the interview.

(v) The household shall submit the addendum to the State agency no later than the time of the interview.

(5) *Option Three: Signed Statement.* (i) The State agency shall recertify house-

holds based on the monthly report and the interview.

(ii) At the interview, the State agency shall obtain all of the information not provided in the monthly report which is necessary for recertification.

(iii) The State agency shall ensure that it has on file a statement signed by the appropriate household member that the household has applied for recertification.

(6) *Interview.* (1) The State agency shall conduct a complete interview with a household member or an authorized representative.

(ii) The State agency shall schedule the interview at any time during the last month of the old certification period.

(iii) If the State agency schedules the interview for a date on or before the normal filing due date of the monthly report, the State agency shall permit the household member and authorized representative to bring the recertification form or monthly report to the interview.

(r) *Procedures for households that change their reporting and budgeting status.* The State agency shall use one of the following procedures for households subject to change in reporting/budgeting status.

(1) *Households which become subject to MRRB.* The State agency may change the reporting/budgeting status of households which become subject to monthly reporting at any time following the change in household circumstances which results in the change in the household's reporting/budgeting status, subject to the following conditions:

(i) The State agency shall provide the household with information provided to MRRB households under paragraph (c) of this section. If the State agency elects to implement the change during the certification period, it may omit the oral explanation of MRRB required under paragraph (c)(1).

(ii) The State agency shall not require the household to submit a monthly report during any month in which the household was subject to the change reporting requirements of § 273.12.

(2) *Households which are no longer subject to MRRB.* The agency shall use one

§273.21

7 CFR Ch. II (1-1-12 Edition)

of the following procedures to remove households from the MRRB system.

(i) *Procedures for households exempt from MRRB.* For any household which becomes exempt from MRRB under paragraph (b) of this section, the State agency shall notify the household within 10 days of the date the State agency becomes aware of the change that the household has become exempt from monthly reporting and is no longer required to file any future monthly reports and has also become exempt from retrospective budgeting and when the change in budgeting will go into effect. The State agency shall begin determining the household's benefits prospectively no later than the first issuance month for which a household has not submitted a monthly report for the budget month.

(ii) *Other households moving from MRRB to change reporting and prospective budgeting.* When a household is no longer subject to MRRB under a State agency's system, the State agency may begin determining the household's benefits prospectively in any month following the month the State agency becomes aware of the changed circumstances which necessitate the need to change the household's reporting/budgeting status. If the State agency elects to change the household's reporting/budgeting status prior recertification it shall provide the household with a notice explaining the change in the month prior to the month the change is effective. If the State agency elects to change the household's status at recertification it shall advise the household at the recertification interview that its reporting/budgeting status is being changed.

(iii) *Households moving from MRRB to retrospective budgeting and change reporting.* If a household's status necessitates changing it from a monthly reporter to a change reporter while continuing to be budgeted retrospectively, the State agency may change the household's status at any time. If the State agency elects to change the household immediately, the State agency shall provide the household with a notice that it is no longer subject to monthly reporting. The notice shall include information about the

household's reporting requirements under §273.12.

(s) *Implementation of regulatory changes.* The State agency shall implement changes in regulatory provisions for households subject to MRRB prospectively based on the effective date and implementation time frame published in the FEDERAL REGISTER. Rules are effective as of the same date for all households regardless of the budgeting system.

(t) *Monthly reporting requirements for households residing on reservations.* The following procedures shall be used for households which reside on reservations and are required to submit monthly reports:

(1) *Definition of a reservation.* For purposes of this section, the term "reservation" shall mean the geographically defined area or areas over which a tribal organization exercises governmental jurisdiction. The term "tribal organization" shall mean the recognized governing body of an Indian tribe (including the tribally recognized intertribal organization of such tribes), as well as any Indian tribe, band, or community holding a treaty with a State government.

(2) *Benefit determination for missing reports.* The State agency shall not delay, reduce, or suspend the allotment of a household that fails to submit a report by the issuance date.

(3) *Reinstatement.* If a household is terminated for failing to submit a monthly report, the household shall be reinstated without being required to submit a new application if a monthly report is submitted no later than the last day of the month following the month the household was terminated.

(4) *Notices.* (i) All notices regarding changes in a household's benefits shall meet the definition of adequate notice as defined in §271.2 of this chapter.

(ii) If a household fails to file a monthly report by the specified filing date, the State agency shall notify the household within five days of the filing date:

(A) That the monthly report is either overdue or incomplete;

(B) What the household must do to complete the form;

(C) If any verification is missing;

(D) That the Social Security number of a new member must be reported, if the household has reported a new member but not the new member's Social Security number;

(E) What the extended filing date is;

(F) That the State agency will assist the household in completing the report; and

(G) That the household's benefits will be issued based on the previous month's submitted report without regard to any changes in the household's circumstances if the missing report is not submitted.

(iii) Simultaneously with the issuance, the State agency shall notify a household, if its report has not been received, that the benefits being provided are based on the previous month's submitted report and that this benefit does not reflect any changes in the household's circumstances. This notice shall also advise the household that, if a complete report is not filed timely, the household will be terminated.

(iv) If the household is terminated, the State agency shall send the notice so the household receives it no later than the date benefits would have been received. This notice shall advise the household of its right to reinstatement if a complete monthly report is submitted by the end of the month following termination.

(5) *Supplements and claims.* If the household submits the missing monthly report after the issuance date but in the issuance month, the State agency shall provide the household with a supplement, if warranted. If the household submits the missing monthly report after the issuance date or the State agency becomes aware of a change that would have decreased benefits in some other manner, the State agency shall file a claim for any benefits overissued.

[48 FR 54965, Dec. 8, 1983]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting § 273.21, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.fdsys.gov.

§ 273.22 [Reserved]

§ 273.23 **Simplified application and standardized benefit projects.**

(a) *General.* This subpart establishes rules under which Simplified Application and Standardized Benefit Projects shall operate. State agencies and political subdivisions chosen as project operators may designate households containing members receiving TANF, SSI, or Medicaid benefits as project eligible. Project eligible households shall have their food stamp eligibility determined using simplified application procedures. Food stamp eligibility shall be determined using information contained in their TANF, or Medicaid application, or, in the case of SSI, on the State Data Exchange (SDX) tape, and any appropriate addendum. Project-eligible households shall be considered categorically food stamp resource eligible based on their eligibility for these other programs and shall be required to meet food stamp income eligibility standards. However, income definitions appropriate to the TANF, SSI or Medicaid programs shall be used instead of food stamp income definitions in determining eligibility. In addition, such households shall, as a condition of program eligibility, meet and/or fulfill all food stamp nonfinancial eligibility requirements. (Project-eligible households defined as categorically eligible in § 273.2 (j) and (k) of these regulations are not required to meet the income eligibility standards.) To further simplify program administration, benefits provided to such households may be standardized by category of assistance and household size.

(b) *Program administration.* (1) Simplified application and standardized benefit procedures are applicable in five States and five political subdivisions. For the purpose of this section, a political subdivision is a project area as defined in § 271.2 of these regulations.

(2) State agencies and political subdivisions seeking to operate a Simplified Application and Standardized Benefit Project shall submit Work Plans to FNS in accordance with the requirements of this section.

(3) FNS shall evaluate Work Plans according to the criteria set forth in