



May 2014

# On Target

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*Click here to link to the Family Services Manual*



## TIPS

Tips are part of earned income. They are defined as a sum of money given for a service over and above the payment that is due. Some examples of positions that typically earn tips are waitresses, hostesses and baristas. Some folks whose positions would not immediately lead us to think of tips are restaurant hostess, cooks, bus persons and hotel/motel housekeepers.

As part of the eligibility interview, workers should be asking anyone working if they receive any other types of income like shift differential, bonuses, overtime or commissions in their normal line of conversation about earnings.

There is not an expectation to single out “service type industries”, however if there is an indicator that the customer is or may receive tips, workers should be addressing this as part of the normal line of conversation during an interview.

When conducting an eligibility interview it is good practice to ask any customer if they receive any types of other income such as bonuses, over time, commission, shift differential, tips, etc.

**WHAT’S NEW:** There will be new check boxes added to the 415F and 539A where customers can indicate whether or not they receive any “other” types of income. These changes will be made in the next revision of the forms. In addition, the name of the position will be added to help identify potential positions where tips or other types of income may be received.

*SNAP Policy Analysts*

## Bad Addresses Round Two!

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Each month SNAP Policy gets a bundle of mail returned from the vendor because the address are being input into the system incorrectly. We have noticed two big trends:

1. **“Homeless” is being coded as the home and mailing address.** We even found some examples where the physical address was filled in with a valid address, but “Homeless” was listed as the mailing address. These scenarios will guarantee, 100% of the time, mail will be returned on this case. It will also guarantee that the recipient will almost certainly have a break in benefits and be forced to make multiple contacts with the offices.
2. **The state is being left off of the physical and or mailing address.** This causes the address to truncate the city and it is returned.

Addresses are the foundation of our cases. Without a valid mailing address, we technically, do not have a filing date. Without a valid mailing address – recipients won’t get their notices. If recipients don’t get notices, they are being denied their due process, which we are federally required to provide. When this happens, we get QC errors. When we get QC errors, our error rate rises and we end up in trouble with Food and Nutrition Services (FNS).

In addition, there is a price tag for this. We get charged to mail it, charged for the return and charged to resend the mail. Not to mention the extra staff time it takes to fix it!

It’s **EXTREMELY** important to correctly code addresses on FSUP. The FSMIS system mails notices to the home address (what’s coded on the **Home Addr** field) unless another address is entered in the mailing address (**Mail Addr** field). If the case has a home and a mailing address, the system will send notices to the mailing address.

Please make sure you are not certifying cases without a valid mailing address.

Please help your clients ensure they get their notices and do not lose benefits. Make sure you have a valid mailing address on each and every case!

*SNAP Policy Analysts*

## TA-DVS, JOBS program and Time Limits

Clients with an open TA-DVS case are NOT automatically exempt from the JOBS program or Time Limits (two separate situations). To be “exempt,” the client (after conversation) must be unable to maintain or obtain employment. This means, they can’t go to, keep or find employment due to their DV situation.

**Example:** Betty fled from Gresham to Salem. She had to quit her job since there are no job transfers. She is concerned right now in locating a safe place for herself and children and once this has been addressed she will start looking for employment. Code TLD. Review for a JOBS plan that included stabilized living.

**Example:** Barney is working less than part time hours and still receiving TANF. He has applied and been approved for TA-DVS. Worker discusses with him if he is able to continue working and he states yes. Code TLY for time limits. Do NOT code TLD. Review for the appropriate JOBS case plan.

*TANF Policy Analysts*

## Loans and Verification

For SNAP money a person (borrower) gets as a loan is always excluded. For SNAP, there does not need to be a written agreement and repayment plan. Policy only requires us to verify countable income so there is no requirement to verify money from a loan. We have been asked – “How do we know it is a loan without verification?” While this may seem like a chicken and egg situation (what came first, the chicken or the egg), it is really very simple. We take the customers statement that it is a loan. Of course, if during the interview things are not adding up, and it becomes questionable, you can validate the fact it is a loan.

When someone pays back a loan, the person receiving the payment (the lender) will only have the interest portion of a loan counted as unearned income. The portion being received to pay back the principal is excluded.

*A note of caution* – loans from friends and family members can go on for a long time, years even, and that really is **okay**. We do not want to determine whether or not something is questionable based on what we would or would not be willing to do for our friends or family. Base your eligibility determination on the facts presented on a case by case basis and narrate clearly what you are counting or excluding.

*SNAP Policy Analysts*

## Social Media and SNAP Eligibility

It has recently been discovered that some staff are using Facebook, Twitter, Google and other social media sites to research our customers and make eligibility determinations based off the information available on those sites. From a SNAP Policy perspective we should NOT be using social media of any kind to determine eligibility or dig for information on our SNAP customers.

Verification requirements for the SNAP program are minimal and most things can be obtained verbally with the client or in writing with a 210 or 210a. Specific examples of verification requirements can be found in the Family Services Manual, Multiple Program Worker Guide #2.

**MP-2: Verifying Client Information** or copy/paste the following link into Internet Explorer:  
<https://apps.state.or.us/cfl/EligManual/EMnFrame.hotm?Page+ID=13-toc>

*SNAP Policy Analysts*

## Accuracy Summits Are Coming!

If you've been with DHS more than five years, you remember when we had annual accuracy summits. They're back! Accuracy summits, primarily focused on SNAP, are in development. These will be one day events. Sessions will be conducted in August through October. Locations will be: Springfield, Clackamas, Salem, Grants Pass and La Grande. Watch for more information in the coming weeks!

## Quality Control ERDC Case Review Error Trends

Quality Control has completed nearly six months of ERDC case reviews. One of the common error trends identified during the reviews involves not acting on reported changes. We have found the ERDC case is not always updated when verification is received for another program. When the verification shows changes in the countable income it may change the family's copayment amount and will require an adjustment of authorized child care hours!

It is important to make sure to review all open programs when information and verification is received. When a reduction in benefits occurs by way of an increased copayment, the DHS 7294 or DHS456 serves as a timely continuing benefit decision notice. *Be sure to mail your notice no later than 10 calendar days before the effective date of the action.*

### Case Scenario:

An MSC415F, with a date of request of 6/30/13, was received. The household consisted of Mary and her three children. Mary reported working 25-32 hours per week, earning \$10 per hour, paid bi-weekly and submitted two pay stubs. The agency authorized 138 (32x4.3) childcare hours and calculated Mary's anticipated income to be \$1271.19 (6/7 \$537.50 + 6/21 \$645 / 2 x 2.15) based on the check stubs provided. This generated a copayment of \$59 per month for a household of four.

On 8/12/13, Mary submitted an application reporting her hours had increased to 35-40 hours per week. Mary submitted her 7/5 paystub showing earnings of \$752.50 and her 7/19 pay stub showing earnings of \$860 with her application.

- 1. How many hours should be authorized?**
- 2. What income should be coded on the ERDC case?**
- 3. What is her ongoing copayment amount?**

### Answers:

- 1. Mary is eligible for 172 child care hours.**
- 2. Mary's new anticipated ongoing income is \$1733.44 (6/7 \$752.50 + 6/21 \$860 / 2 x 2.15)**
- 3. Her new anticipated ongoing income generates a copayment of \$143 per month for a household of four.**

Once all updates have been made and the client properly notified of the changes, yep, you guessed it.....  
NARRATE, NARRATE, NARRATE!!!

### Additional Information:

- ☐ A [DHS7294](#) Notice of Reported Income is used to notify the client of the benefit amount, countable income and certification period. This form can also be used for notification of how changes affect the benefit amount (decrease, increase, or when the income changes but the copayment stays the same). Hearing rights are included on the form.

\*You will also find [CM07294](#) Notice of Reported Income on NOTM.

- ☐ On NOTM you will find [CMC3F02](#) to close or deny ERDC.

# April 2014

## Targeted SNAP Reviews

### Honor Roll Hiatus

Many branches are taking advantage of a temporary shift away from using our normal random samples for targeted reviews to focus on specific areas for accuracy improvement. While this will give branches much more useful information locally, it has the downside of skewing data used for determining the honor roll. Unfortunately, without a random sample as basis for our reviews, we will be putting the Honor Roll on hiatus for the next few months. While we can't recognize individual branches this month, we *can* express our appreciation for each branch's thoughtful efforts to identify and improve accuracy in new ways!

*Quality Assurance*

### News and Upcoming Training Offered by the SSP Training Unit

Our schedule, registration data, and waitlist information is available on the training unit's intranet site at [https://inside.dhsoha.state.or.us/images/stories/dhs/self-sufficiency/training-unit/docs/training\\_schedulex.pdf](https://inside.dhsoha.state.or.us/images/stories/dhs/self-sufficiency/training-unit/docs/training_schedulex.pdf). This information is updated weekly. Please watch for newly added classes and keep your registration updated in the Learning Center. [Contact the training unit](#) if you have questions regarding offered courses.

Core Class offerings and begin dates:

<b>Interpersonal Competence:</b>	6/24 Salem, 7/29 Salem
<b>Essentials:</b>	6/3 Gresham, 7/22 Salem, 7/29 Portland, 8/26 Tigard
<b>Computer Connections:</b>	6/3 Tigard, 6/10 Gresham, 7/29 Salem, 8/5 Portland
<b>Expedited SNAP:</b>	7/22 Portland, 8/19 Tigard, 9/30 Salem
<b>SNAP Basics:</b>	6/3 Salem, 6/10 Salem, 6/17 Gresham, 7/8 Tigard, 8/26 Portland
<b>ERDC:</b>	6/17 Salem, 8/12 Tigard, 9/9 Portland
<b>TANF Eligibility:</b>	6/3 Portland, 6/17 Tigard, 7/8 Salem, 9/9 Tigard
<b>TANF Case Management:</b>	6/3 Salem, 6/24 Portland, 7/22 Tigard, 8/12 Salem
<b>DV Policy &amp; Case Planning:</b>	6/12 Portland, 6/26 Tigard, 7/17 Salem, 9/18 Tigard
<b>Services to Noncitizens:</b>	6/24 Salem, 8/5 Tigard, 8/26 Salem, 9/23 Portland

Have you taken one of our online courses? View this short video, <https://vimeo.com/79249744>, to learn about all the convenient features that make learning at your desk a cinch! The video lists all the online courses currently available which each take between 10-20 minutes to complete.

Look for Webcasts and other Online courses for:

**SNAP Civil Rights – C02996:** This course needs to be completed annually.

**SNAP NED Eligibility and Coding – C03279**

**Job Participation Incentive (JPI) – C03468**

**SNAP Transitional Benefit Alternative (TBA) – C03472**

**Oregon Vital Event Registration (OVERS) Update Training – C03639**