

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BUREAU OF HEALTH AND NUTRITION SERVICES AND  
CHILD/FAMILY/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS  
25 INDUSTRIAL PARK ROAD  
MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT 06457-1543

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TO: Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Sponsors

FROM: Maureen B. Staggenborg, Director  
Child Nutrition Programs

DATE: October 15, 2004

SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum #03C-05  
**Zero and Temporary Income Q&A**

Income Eligibility Applications that include a total income of zero, or list any form of income that is temporary in nature (“temporary income”) may be temporarily approved by the determining official for up to 45 calendar days. At the end of the approval period, the center must contact the household to determine if the household income has changed. If the income remains at zero or is still temporary in nature, the determining official must document the contact, and may again temporarily approve the application for up to 45 calendar days. If the income has changed, the center must send a new application to the household so that they may re-apply.

### **Zero and Temporary Income Q&A**

**Question:** Is temporary income the same as Temporary Family Assistance (TFA)?

**Answer:** No. Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) is the name for the cash assistance program for basic and special needs which are paid to recipients of Jobs First – Connecticut’s Welfare Reform Program, administered by the State Department of Social Services. TFA replaced what was previously known as the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program.

**Question:** What are some examples of temporary income?

**Answer:** Examples of temporary income include: unemployment, worker’s compensation, short-term disability and maternity/parental leave. However, this list is not all-inclusive, so some judgment may be required at the time the income eligibility determination is made.

**Question:** What are some other types of economic situations that might result in a temporary approval?

**Answer:** There may be other circumstances that require temporary approval besides zero income. For example, when a household reports a temporary decrease in income, temporary eligibility may be determined based on the present, reduced rate of income, rather than on annual income. Eligible participants could also receive temporary approval in the following types of economic situations: temporary layoffs, strikes (voluntary work stoppage) and temporary disability of a wage earner resulting in loss of income.

**Question:** How often am I required to follow-up on zero and temporary income situations?

**Answer:** Sponsors must document follow-up on zero and temporary income situations every 45 *calendar* days.

**Question:** Am I required to obtain a new Income Eligibility Application every 45 calendar days?

**Answer:** No. A system must be in place to ensure that sponsor *contact* with each household that has reported zero or temporary income is documented every 45 calendar days. This may be accomplished with a telephone call or when the parent/guardian comes to the center to drop off/pick up the participant. If the income situation remains the same (unchanged) at the end of the 45 days, sponsor contact may be documented by initialing and dating the application and indicating “no change.” The application should then be returned to the system for subsequent follow-up in another 45 calendar days. At the time the parent/guardian indicates that the situation is no longer zero income or temporary in nature, a new Income Eligibility Application must be obtained and a re-determination of the participant’s eligibility must be made.

**Question:** What if I am unable to make contact with the household within 45 calendar days?

**Answer:** In the event that household contact to verify zero or temporary income is not made within the required 45 calendar days, then the participant(s) must be reclassified as *over income* until the verification is performed.

**Question:** What will happen if, during the course of a CACFP administrative review, it is determined that sponsor contact was not adequately documented every 45 calendar days?

**Answer:** If an administrative review results in findings that demonstrate a failure by the sponsor to document zero and/or temporary income every 45 calendar days, the State agency reviewer(s) will reclassify the affected participant(s) from *free* to *over income* from the time(s) the 45 days expired. This will result in an over claim (monies owed to the State agency by the sponsor).

Please contact Susan Boyle at (860) 807-2074, Celia Cordero at (860) 807-2076 or Benedict Onye at (860) 807-2080 if you have any questions.

MBS:shb