

October 16, 2007

SUBJECT: Disaster Food Stamp Program Guidance and State Plan Review

TO: Food Stamp Program Directors
All Regions

This memorandum formalizes the information concerning processing State agency Disaster Food Stamp Program (DFSP) Plans that was presented to Regional Office representatives during DFSP training sessions held in June and July of this year.

First, we wish to recognize all Regional Offices for the substantial time and resources dedicated this year to readying State agencies, particularly States most vulnerable to disasters, to operate a DFSP. We understand that Regional Offices have been working diligently to review State DFSP Plans and work with State agencies on needed changes. We also are aware that all Regional Offices have either held or are planning to hold training on the revised DFSP Guidance for their States. Furthermore, we appreciate the comments Regional Offices have provided to enable us to continue to improve the DFSP Guidance.

As explained during the Regional Office DFSP trainings, Regional Offices must ensure that State agencies maintain current DFSP Plans that adhere to requirements set forth in the DFSP Guidance, which are mandatory. Regional Offices must take the following steps during the State DFSP Plan review and approval process:

- Regional Offices should remind their State agencies of the Plan submission deadline of August 15 of each year and establish alternate submission dates with States that request them in advance.
- Although Regional Offices may assume that a past plan remains current if a State agency has not submitted a revised plan for the upcoming fiscal year, they are encouraged to contact the State agency to confirm that the plan on file remains current. If the Regional Office is concerned that a plan on file is no longer current, the Regional Office should work with the State agency to obtain needed changes.
- Regional Offices must review each plan thoroughly to make certain that they meet *all* the requirements in the DFSP Guidance.
- If a Regional Office notes any inadequacies in the plan, they must send a letter to the State agency detailing the inadequacies and requesting revision to the document before approval.
- Once the plan is found approvable, the Regional Office must send a letter to the State agency conferring approval.
- Regional Offices should remain mindful that 7 CFR 272.2 (e) requires that if FNS fails to either approve, deny, or request additional information within 30 days, the document is approved and that if additional information is requested, the State agency shall provide this as soon as possible, and FNS shall approve or deny the Plan within 30 days after receiving the information.

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These State DFSP Plan review requirements will be incorporated into the next revision of the DFSP Guidance. If you have questions about these DFSP Plan review requirements, please contact me at 703-305-2494.

for John Knaus

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Director
Program Development Division