Program Access Review Guide Tools For FNS Regional Offices

A Supplement to the Program Access Review Guide

USDA
Program Development Division
Food Stamp Program
Food and Nutrition Service

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Program Access Review Guide: Review Tools

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A WORD ABOUT THESE REVIEW TOOLS ……..

The following review tools are provided as a convenience to FNSRO and State agency reviewers for use with "Conducting Program Access Reviews at Local Food Stamp Offices: A Guide for FNS Regional Offices, For Adaptation by State Agencies". Several of these tools are adapted from formats developed by FNSROs. Others are updated versions of the tools provided with the original August 2000 PAR guide. Although these review tools were developed carefully to incorporate all of the PAR review elements described in this guidance, use of these review tools is optional. FNSROs and State agencies will need to adapt the tools as necessary to fit the particular circumstances of local offices being reviewed.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ACL	ACL Services Ltd. (providing audit analysis software)
CAP	Corrective Action Plan
FSA	Food Stamp Act of 1977
FNA	Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service
FNSHQ	FNS Headquarters
FNSRO	FNS Regional Office
FSET	Food Stamp Employment and Training
FSP	Food Stamp Program
GSA	General Services Administration
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
ME	Management Evaluation
NOMI	Notice of Missed Interview
NPA	Non-public assistance
PA	Public assistance
PAR	Program Access Review
PUMA	Public Use Microdata Areas
QC	Quality control
SAOR	State Agency Operations Review
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
SSN	Social Security Number
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

Review Tool 1 **LOCAL OFFICE SURVEY**

This tool is designed to help the reviewer find out how the specific local office is set up regarding application and certification procedures. Instead of spending much of the first day on-site figuring out how an office is set up and getting into the flow of its application procedures, this survey could better prepare the reviewer ahead of time. Questions could be provided several days prior to the on-site review to the local office manager/director or be discussed on a conference call, as long as the information is received before going on-site.

1. Review Logistics

Go over logistics for the upcoming review if appropriate.

- Confirm review basics:
  - Dates of the review
  - Local office name, address, phone number, and office hours
  - FNS staff and State agency staff that will participate in the review

- Request:
  - Local office contact person and phone number
  - Information about driving directions, parking availability, and local office security procedures
  - A copy of a current local office organization chart and/or list of employees and job titles
  - Use of work space, computers, copier, etc. needed for review, and staff contact for computer usage, if available
  - Data on NPA and PA households

- Discuss:
  - Review activities – observations, interviews, case file reviews.
  - How staff will be selected for interviews.
  - Computer clearances, if needed, to use the system during the review.
  - Time and date of entrance and exit conferences, if appropriate.

2. Local Office Organization

Ask the following questions about the organization of the local office if not already known:

- Is there more than one office or are all functions required for processing food stamp applications and managing case files at this office?

- Who can apply for assistance at this office (i.e. zip code areas)?

- What is the approximate food stamp caseload for this office?

- Have there been any reviews conducted recently (ME/ Special Payment Accuracy/Corrective Action, etc.)?

3. Office Technology

- Does this office have its own call center/change center? Does it interface with a regional or statewide call center? If so, how?

- How does this office interface with the State online application system?

- Does this office use imaging technology (i.e., scans documents)?

4. <u>Staffing</u>

- How many staff work on food stamp cases?
- Is the office fully staffed? If not, are there vacancies?
- If there are vacancies, how is the workload affected by staff shortages?
- Are case workers out-stationed to accept food stamp applications or conduct interviews? If yes, how many/where/when?
- Has there been any staff training conducted recently? What subject?
- How is the staff organized for food stamp processing:
  - o Generic caseworkers or specialized units/teams/service centers?
  - o How are cases assigned (one big caseload; last name; round robin; language; etc)?
- Does this office conduct supervisory case reviews, or is there a separate team that does second party case reviews?

5. <u>Application Availability and Submission</u>

- What is the procedure for giving applications to people who come into the office to ask about food stamps?

- For online applications, is there a kiosk for applicants to apply online in the waiting area?

- For telephone applications, are there phones available to apply at the local office?

- Is there a secure drop box? Inside or outside the office?

- Who assigns date or receipt for electronic applications and paper applications that are dropped off, mailed, or faxed?

6. Application Screening and Interviews
   - Who screens applications for expedited service and how?
   - At what step in the application process?
   - On average, how many days from the application filing date are interviews scheduled for expedited service applicants?
   - On average, how many days from the application filing date are interviews scheduled for non-expedited service applicants?

7. Customer Service
   - Does this office keep a log of customer complaints?
   - Can customers get same day (over-the-counter or vault) EBT cards?
   - Are EBT cards always mailed out?

- Does the customer have to return to the office to pick up the card?

- How many days are there between authorization and availability of benefits?

- Are work and training-related services provided at your location? If not, then where do clients have to go?

8. Notices
   - What notices (State/local forms) can we expect to find in the case files for:
     - New approvals
     - Denials
     - Terminations
     - Recertifications

Review Tool 2A DATA MINING PROTOCOLS:

IDENTIFYING PROJECT AREAS FOR REVIEW

- Purpose

  Select local offices from among many possible ones which are most in need of improving client access to the FSP.

- Methods
  Using ACL software, and/or a combination of Microsoft (MS) Excel or Access, select offices to review based on one or more of the following factors:
  - Offices in Counties/Urban Areas with Low FSP Participation Rates
  - Offices in Cities with Low FSP Participation Rates
  - Offices with High Negative Error Rates
  - Counties with High Ratio of Negative Actions

1. Find offices in counties with low FSP participation rates. Calculate participation rate this way:

   a. Use the National Data Bank (NDB) to obtain the number of Food Stamp recipients in each county within the State.

   b. Use data from the U.S. Census Bureau to estimate the number of people in each county with household income below 130% of the Federal Poverty Level. (http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=ACS&_submenuId=&_lang=en&_ts=).

   c. The county-level FSP participation rate is the ratio of the two numbers in 1a and 1b above. Calculate it for each county under consideration for PARs.

   d. Identify the counties with the lowest FSP participation rates.

   e. If the local office is a district office within a city rather than a county, then a more detailed analysis is needed of Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMA). This is outlined in Paragraph 2 below.

2. Find offices in cities with low FSP participation rates.
   This method uses a modification of the Program Access Index (PAI); namely, the number of people whose income is below 130% of the Federal Poverty level. The 130% figure represents the gross income limit used by the Food Stamp Program to determine eligibility.

   Data sources

   a. The geographic unit for this analysis is called the PUMA (Public Use Microdata Areas), which represent units of 100-200,000 population). The advantage of using PUMA's is that they make it possible to compare very different areas in terms of ME priority.

   b. Data on number of Food Stamp participants in each geographic area is usually obtained from a state's Data Warehouse, if they have one. (If not, it requires a special report to be created from the state's eligibility system.) This report should provide the number of Food Stamp recipients in each zip code in the most recent month available.

   c. The zip code numbers can be mapped into PUMA's using software from the University of Missouri's Census Data Center (http://mcdc2.missouri.edu/websas/geocorr2k.html).

   d. Demographic data for each PUMA geographic unit can be obtained from the website of the U.S. Bureau of the Census (www.census.gov) and represents data from the 2006 American Community Survey. We recommend the use of Beta Data Ferrett as a user-friendly tool for extracting this information.

   e. Maps can be generated using Microsoft's MapPoint 2006 software.

   f. The highest-ranked PUMA's become the target areas for Program Access ME's. The following example shows the highest-ranked PUMA's by non-participating poor people per 100,000 population, (using 125% instead of 130% of the Federal Poverty level).

NEW JERSEY LOCAL AREAS (PUMA'S) RANKED BY CONCENTRATION OF POOR NON-PARTICIPANTS (PNPs) (TOP 10 OF 61)

Rank by Number of PNPs	PUMA	County	Main Cities and towns	Food Stamp Partic	125% of Federal Poverty Level	PNPs	% of Total PUMA Population who are PNPs and FS eligible	% of Eligible PNPs in PUMA	Cumulative % of PNP	Participation Rate based on 125% of FPL
1	00601	Hudson	Jersey City (north side)	12,632	35,973	23,341	17.9%	4.08%	4.08%	35.1%
2	01402	Essex	East Orange, Orange	14,518	31,149	16,631	15.2%	2.91%	6.99%	46.6%
3	00701	Hudson	Guttenberg, North Bergen	10,008	28,294	18,286	14.4%	3.20%	10.19%	35.4%
4	00702	Hudson	Weehawken, Hoboken, Union City	10,160	26,483	16,323	14.2%	2.85%	13.04%	38.4%
5	01800	Union	Elizabeth	11,738	28,331	16,593	13.8%	2.90%	15.94%	41.4%
6	01301	Essex	Newark (east side)	22,527	39,615	17,088	12.9%	2.99%	18.93%	56.9%
7	00303	Bergen	Cliffside Park, Fairview, Fort Lee	3,557	19,931	16,374	12.7%	2.86%	21.79%	17.8%
8	00903	Middlesex	New Brunswick, Piscataway	4,561	20,378	15,817	12.6%	2.77%	24.56%	22.4%
9	01302	Essex	Newark (west side)	27,118	41,966	14,848	12.3%	2.60%	27.15%	64.6%
10	00905	Middlesex	Perth Amboy, Carteret, Woodbridge	6,870	27,297	20,427	12.0%	3.57%	30.72%	25.2%

IDENTIFYING PROJECT AREAS FOR REVIEW con't

3. Find counties with significantly higher negative error rates than their State average. Using ACL or MS Excel:

   a. Download at least one full year of negative FSP QC data from the Food Stamp Quality Control System (FSQCS) in Kansas City.

   b. For each completed QC case that is downloaded, calculate an error variable E:

      E = 0 if the QC finding is valid or was found to be valid upon expanded review for any reason

      E = 1 otherwise.

   c. For each county and for the whole state, calculate a negative error rate R:

      R = (Number of cases with E = 1) / (Number of cases completed)

   d. Calculate a t-statistic to determine the statistical significance of the negative error rate:

      t = (county R - State R) /
      sqrt [county R x (1 - county R) / (number of cases in county) + state R x (1 - state R) / (number of cases in state)]

   e. Identify those counties with t > 1.645. These counties have significantly higher negative error rates than the whole state, and are targets for PARs.

   f. Further analysis of QC negative errors can be useful as well; specifically, analysis of reason codes (i.e. failed to send a NOMI, application processing timeframes- denied prior to required timeframe, verification not needed).

4. Find counties with a high ratio of negative actions to active Food Stamp households, using ACL or MS Access in conjunction with Excel:

Review Tool 2A DATA MINING PROTOCOLS:

IDENTIFYING PROJECT AREAS FOR REVIEW con't

a. Ask your regional statistician for the most recent active and negative monthly QC sampling frames for the states being considered for review.

b. Import these files into ACL, if they are not already in ACL format. Create a table of counts of active and negative cases by local area code (LAC). LAC is either a county or a city service district.

c. Export these tables into MS-Excel.

d. For each county, calculate the ratio of the number of negative actions to the number of active cases. Identify the counties with the highest ratios and target these for PARs.

Review Tool 2B DATA MINING PROTOCOLS:

SELECTING CASE FILES FOR REVIEW

- Purpose
  Once a local office has been selected for a PAR, data mining techniques can assist in selecting the most appropriate case records for that review. The criteria for what is most appropriate may vary from one review to the next. In general, however, the objective of the case file review is to determine whether the local office is in compliance with FSP policy and procedures for approving, denying, and terminating initial and subsequent applications.

- Method

1. Identify and Request Data Fields
   The FNSRO should identify the data fields of interest, in order to analyze the data prior to the site visit and make the appropriate case selections. The sampling functions of ACL software work well for this purpose. As an example, here are some data fields that could be requested for FSP or TANF denials, and for cases terminated prematurely (before the normal end of their certification period):

   - Date of denial or termination;
   - Category (FS/TANF, etc.);
   - District;
   - Record number;
   - Application number;
   - Application date;
   - Last and first name; and
   - Reason code for denial or termination.

   The data request should be made at least one month ahead of the scheduled visit, in order to give the local agency time to create the data file, and to give the FNSRO time to analyze the data ahead of the site visit.

Any format that is convenient for the local agency can be used, including a print image file of a mainframe computer-generated report. (One of the strengths of ACL is its ability to derive information in a structured form from a wide variety of data formats.)

2. Analyze the data

   Once the data has been received, the following steps should be undertaken:

   a. Create an ACL project for the PAR being undertaken;

   b. Create one or more ACL tables using the data definition wizard. (If the local agency sent more than one data file, for example, one file for denials and another for terminations, than each data file should be the source of its own ACL table.);

   c. Validate all tables, check them for duplicates, and count records;

   d. If necessary, merge the ACL tables using the join function, unmatched, including all primary and all secondary records; and

   e. Generate statistics on all meaningful fields using the Classify and Stratify functions.

3. Generate the samples for detailed review

   Data mining does replace a detailed review of case records, but it can help to find those records that will produce the most meaningful analysis. Here are several sampling options:

   a. Systematic Random Sample.

      The simplest option is to pull a systematic random sample of case records. The advantage of this technique is that the sample represents the universe of records from which the sample was drawn, such as a month's worth of FSP approvals, denials and terminations. The disadvantage is that it will not find pockets of problematic cases, especially if the size of the sample is relatively small, say 25 cases.

To draw a systematic random sample, calculate the sampling interval as the ratio of the universe size (from (B)(3) above) to the desired sample size. For example, if the universe contains 500 records, and the desired sample size is 25, the interval will be 500 / 25 = 20.

In ACL, draw the sample by going to the Sampling function and choosing the Sample Type "Record". Fill in the calculated interval and select any starting point between 1 and the interval; e.g. 10. If the universe contains cases that are not desired for the case record review, then the ACL filter capability should be used to exclude these cases. For example, if the category is not Food Stamps (see 1b above), you may want to filter these out.

Once the sample has been drawn, it can be exported to MS Excel and attached to an email. It may be important to sort the file in the way that the local office maintains its client records. For example, some local offices maintain their records by client last name, in which case the file you send them should be sorted the same way. This type of file sorting can be done within ACL using the Sort Records tab, or it can be done in an Excel spreadsheet.

b. Stratified Sampling.
Another sampling option is called stratification. In this technique, one or more variables are identified as being important in the review process, and the reviewing team wants to insure that the cases they see cover all or at least most values of this variable. An example would be the reason code for denied or terminated cases (see paragraph 1 above). Different reason codes may represent important differences in client situations that a PAR review may wish to examine. The way to choose a stratified sample is:

(1) Look at the analysis of 2e above, and determine which field or fields contain variable that should be part of a stratification. For example, it might be decided that reason code for denials of Food Stamps is such a field.

(2) Looking at the result of the ACL Classify function used in 2e, determine which values of this variable should be included in the stratified sampling plan. For example, suppose that the results looked like this:

Reason code	Number of cases	Percent of total
Gross income exceeds allowance	200	40%
Failure to provide verification	90	18%
Missed scheduled interview	80	16%
Ineligible non-citizen	50	10%
Refusal to cooperate	30	6%
All other reason codes	50	10%

If a systematic random sample were used, as described in 3a above, 40% of the sampled cases would be for excess gross income, and only a few would look at reasons such as refusal to cooperate and non-citizenship. If the PAR team considers these to be important, then a stratified sample is in order, to insure that all these reason codes are a large enough part of the review.

(3) Decide on what values of the variable should be sampling strata and how many to sample within each stratum. In this example, the PAR team could decide that each of the 5 reason codes listed above are important, and that 5 cases within each reason code should be requested for detailed review.

(4) Calculate the interval to be used by the ACL Sampling function for each stratum. The interval is the ratio of the stratum universe size to the desired sample size. In this example, the calculations are shown here:

Reason code	Number of cases in universe	Desired number of cases in sample	Interval calculation
Gross income exceeds allowance	200	5	200 / 5 = 40
Failure to provide verification	90	5	90 / 5 = 18
Missed scheduled interview	80	5	80 / 5 = 16
Ineligible non-citizen	50	5	50 / 5 = 10
Refusal to cooperate	30	5	30 / 5 = 6

(5) Use the Sampling function in ACL to draw the samples for each stratum. Choose the sample type Record, and pick a starting point between 1 and the interval. When the sample is drawn, it can be printed or exported to MS Excel for attachment to an email. Sort the samples by name or whatever field is used by the local agency for its files.

4. <u>Monetary Unit Sampling (MUS)</u>.
MUS is an option in the ACL sampling program. In MUS, there is a quantity, typically a monetary value, which is the sampling unit rather than case. For example, if the PAR team was examining Food Stamp terminations, and wanted to focus on dollars terminated, then the monthly Food Stamp allotment could be used as a monetary value, and the sample would reflect a higher proportion of larger allotments than in methods 3a or 3b. The procedure to follow is the same as 3a, except that instead of using the sample type Record in the sampling step, the sample type MUS is used.

Review Tool 3A TELEPHONE CONTACT WITH THE LOCAL OFFICE

Local Office: Address: Phone Number: Date and Time of Contact: Name of Reviewer:

Call directory assistance to see if the local office's telephone number and address are available. Then contact the local office to find out who answers the phone (person or voice mail) and how helpful the person is in response to the questions listed below. Also call the local office after hours to identify if the office has a recording to provide office hours and other helpful information.

For obvious reasons, do not identify who you are on the call and do not give an address for them to mail an application. Be aware of the office's address and zip code so that you can supply your zip code, in case the person asks if you are calling the correct office. If pushed for this information, indicate that you are still thinking about applying and will re-contact them if you decide to apply.

You can ask for yourself or for a relative (e.g., Aunt). Document the responses. If possible, have a bilingual staff person call and ask the same questions in Spanish (or other appropriate language). Use the "After Hours Call" section to summarize the results of that call.

1. I need some help. What do I have to do to get food stamps? Do I have to come to the office to apply?

2. What time can I come in today to apply?

3. Can I come in later on in the day or does it have to be at a certain time?

Review Tool 3A TELEPHONE CONTACT WITH THE LOCAL OFFICE con't

4. How late would someone be there for me to talk to?

5. What do I have to bring with me?

6. How long does it take to apply?

7. How long does it take to get food stamps?

8. If I can't make it, can I call you to mail an application to me?

AFTER HOURS CALL

- What time did you place the after hours call?
- How many times did the phone ring before you either got a recorded message or does the phone just keep ringing?
- Describe the recorded message if there was one. Was the message in English only or was it also offered in Spanish or other appropriate language for the local office area?

Review Tool 3A TELEPHONE CONTACT WITH THE LOCAL OFFICE con't

EVALUATION

1. How many times did the phone ring before you either got a recorded message or someone to speak with or until the phone call automatically ended?

2. How many times did you have to redial because the line was busy?

3. Did someone provide the information or were you connected to a recorded message or voice mailbox?

   CIRCLE: Person Recorded Message Voice Mailbox

4. If you were connected to a recorded message, were you able to:
   - Leave a message on voice mail? Yes No
   - Call another number? Yes No
   - Speak with someone else? Yes No

5. Rank your impression of the person's knowledge, helpfulness and manner:
   - Answered all questions? Yes No
   - Explained options available for applying? Yes No
   - Volunteered information without being asked? Yes No
   - Courteous or Discourteous? Yes No

COMMENTS:

Review Tool 3B PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO THE LOCAL OFFICE

Research public transportation for the local office. You can call the public transportation companies, check internet sources, or utilize some other method of finding out if the local office is convenient to public transportation, and if so, what type of transportation. Summarize the results of your research below, indicating the relative cost of public transportation.

Name & Address Change Center:
Phone #:
Date and Time(s) of Contact:
Name of Reviewer:

Use this format to evaluate the assistance and information provided during an initial contact with the state/regional/local change center.

- Ask the questions that follow, by either choosing to request food stamps for you, or on behalf of a relative. You may only get a recorded message, which may answer all the questions below. If you get a recorded message, provide a summary of the message on a separate sheet and attach it to this form. If someone provided information, record the information after each question.

- If you are asked to leave a message in a voice mailbox, end the call because you cannot identify who you are.

- If you are asked for your address, do not give your home address or the FNS address because you can only apply in the state where you reside. Instead, say you are temporarily living with someone and are not sure of the address. (At this point, if there are multiple offices within the county, the contact should tell you the addresses of each so you will know where to apply.) If pressed for your name and/or address, say you have somewhere to go or someone is at the door and you will call back.

Review Tool 3C TELEPHONE CALL TO CALL/CHANGE CENTER con't

- Attempt to call 3 times: once in the morning and report the results, once in the afternoon and report the results, and one call when the change center is closed to find out if there is a recorded message with the office hours to encourage people to apply. Use the "After Hours Call" Section to summarize the results of that call.

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1. I need some help. I would like to get some food stamps. What do I need to do? Do I have to come into the office to apply?

2. What time can I come in today to apply and where do I go to apply?

3. What do I need to bring with me?

4. How long will I be at the office to apply?

5. How long does it take to get food stamps?

5a. If the person says it will take longer than 7 days to get food stamps, ask the next question. If the person presses you about your personal circumstances give the following information: "I don't have any income and only have about $50 in the bank."

I need them sooner than that. Can I get them sooner?

6. If I can't get to the office, can I call again and ask to get an application by mail?

7. Could I fax the application back? What is your fax number?

AFTER HOURS CALL

What time did you place the after hours call?

How many times did the phone ring before you either got a recorded message or does the phone just keep ringing/

Describe the recorded message if there was one. Was the message in English only or was it also offered in Spanish or other appropriate language for the local office area?

EVALUATION

1. How many times did the phone ring before you either got a recorded message or someone to speak with or until the phone call automatically ended?

2. How many times did you have to redial because the line was busy?

3. Did someone provide the information or were you connected to a recorded message or voice mailbox?

   CIRCLE: Person Recorded Message Voice Mailbox

4. If you were connected to a recorded message, were you able to:

   - Leave a message on voice mail? Yes No

Review Tool 3C PHONE CALL TO CALL/CHANGE CENTER con't

• Call another number?	Yes	No
• Speak with someone else?	Yes	No

5. Give your impression of the person's knowledge, helpfulness and manner:

• Answered all questions?	Yes	No
• Explained options available for applying?	Yes	No
• Volunteered information without being asked?	Yes	No
• Courteous or Discourteous?	Yes	No

COMMENTS:

Review Tool 3D LOG SHEET FOR CALL CENTER REVIEWS

Use this format if you are reviewing a call center and are able to listen in on live phone calls or recorded phone calls.

County/local office being reviewed:

Date: Time:

Call Center agent number:

Customer case number (if ongoing customer):

Reason for the call:

Was agent's response correct?

Was agent clear, courteous, professional?

Did agent make changes or case notes on the electronic case file?

If placed on hold, how long was the hold time?

Comments:

Review Tool 4

OBSERVATION FORMAT FOR PROGRAM ACCESS REVIEWS

Local Office:
Date of Review:
Reviewer:

EXTERIOR OF THE BUILDING	Yes	No	Comments
Is there a visible sign on the building that clearly identifies it as the (Human Services/FSP) office?			
Is the office, conveniently located and easy to find?			
Is ample parking available near the facility?			
Are parking spaces reserved for customers?			
Is the area safe and well-lighted?			
Are the hours of operation posted on the exterior of the building?			
Is the building compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (such as sufficient handicap parking spaces, electronic doors, ramp)?			
Does the facility have a drop-box, mail slot, or other means that customers can use to drop off applications and or other information?			
• If yes, where is it located- inside or outside the building? • If yes, is it well labeled/handicap accessible?			

Review Tool 4

OBSERVATION FORMAT FOR PROGRAM ACCESS REVIEWS con't

LOBBY/WAITING AREA	Yes	No	Comments
Is the lobby/waiting area welcoming, clean, and neat?			
Does the lobby entrance door allow adequate passage so persons who use wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, and other mobility aids can get through the door?			
Is the "Rights and Responsibilities" posted in the lobby/waiting area?			
Is the "Justice for All Poster" Displayed?			
Are the hours/days of operation posted in the lobby/waiting area?			
Are bus schedules available in the lobby/waiting area?			
Is there a phone in the lobby available for customer use?			
Does the lobby/waiting area provide adequate seating to accommodate all participants waiting for services?			
Does the lobby/waiting area provide a play area for children?			
Is adequate access to the office provided for disabled participants?			
Is adequate access to the office provided for people with strollers?			
Are there convenient restroom facilities for the public?			
Are food stamp applications available in the waiting room/lobby?			
Are pamphlets and brochures about other services/assistance programs available (Low Income Home Energy Assistance, health care, child care, nutrition, housing, transportation services etc) displayed in an accessible area			

LOBBY/WAITING AREA	Yes	No	Comments
of the waiting room\lobby? • List types of pamphlets/brochures available:			
Are any of the above materials available in another language?			
Is any of the information material displayed related to other Food Assistance Programs? • WIC ___ • CSFP ___ • TEFAP (i.e., Food Banks) ___ • Other ___			
Is there a place in the lobby/waiting area that customers can use to complete paperwork? – (i.e., desk and chairs)			
Is the front desk well-staffed?			
Is the process of being served well-organized and easy for clients to follow? (Are there greeters, kiosks, or directions telling people what to do, where to go?)			
How many people are waiting to be served?			
Note how long the average wait time is for clients.			
In the reviewer's opinion, does the office meet the needs of the participants/ what kind of impression is conveyed?			

Other Observations/Comments/Suggestions:

Review Tool 5

LOCAL OFFICE INTERFACE WITH ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESSING

Use a combination of observation, interviews, and case file reviews to answer the following questions.

1. Describe the local office's involvement in accepting, screening, and processing online applications.

2. Describe the office space provided for applicants to apply online.

a. Are there kiosks or computer terminals available for applicants to apply online at the local office?

b. Is staff available to assist applicants?

c. Is there sufficient privacy so others cannot easily see the information being entered?

d. How can an applicant print a copy to keep?

Review Tool 5

LOCAL OFFICE INTERFACE WITH ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESSING con't

3. Describe any other services the local office provides to assist customers in the application process (e.g. use of telephones, fax machines, copy machines, availability of other spaces in the office or outside the office to complete paperwork associated with applying for benefits).

4. For systems with e-signature capability, describe the local office's role in processing online applications.

a. What date is used for the application filing date?

b. What date is used when an online application is filed outside of normal business hours?

c. What is the work flow process and timeline for the application to be given to the worker?

5. For systems without e-signature capability, describe the local office's role in processing online applications.

Review Tool 5

LOCAL OFFICE INTERFACE WITH ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESSING con't

a. What must applicants do to get a signed application in the system for processing?

b. What file date is used in these instances?

c. What is the work flow process and timeline for the application to be given to the worker?

6. Describe the local office's role in screening online applications for expedited service.

7. How does the local office track the timeliness of processing applications? Is there any difference in the local office's statistics on application processing timeliness (expedited/30 day) based on the method of filing – online, fax, mailed, dropped-off, etc?

8. Describe how and when interview appointments are scheduled for online applications.

Review Tool 5

LOCAL OFFICE INTERFACE WITH ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESSING con't

9. Can online applications be viewed electronically by local office staff before/during/after the eligibility interview? Explain.

10. Can online applications be modified or completed electronically by local office staff before/during/after the eligibility interview? Explain.

11. When an online application is completed, can the customer see and/or obtain a copy of the entries that have been entered thus far that will be used to determine eligibility?

12. Does the online application process provide applicants with confirmation that they applied online?

Review Tool 6A **QUESTIONS FOR**

MANAGERS, SUPERVISORS, AND CASE WORKERS

Name: Title:	State/local agency:
Interviewer:	Date of interview:

CLIENT SERVICES

Local Office Operations

1. What are the days and hours of operation?

2. Can an application be filed at anytime the office is open?

3. Is there ever a restriction placed on when clients can be seen for any reason during office hours? If so, why?

4. How long do clients generally have to wait before they are served? (Note to reviewer: If a time is provided, how did the worker determine this? Compare the answer given to reviewer's observations of wait time.)

5. How do you accommodate special needs of persons such as:
   - Elderly
   - Disabled
   - Homeless
   - Non-English speaking persons

- Working persons

- Persons living in remote areas or lacking transportation?

(Note to reviewer: adjust question based on the local office's caseload. Some examples for accommodating persons with special needs include offering at-home visits, telephone interviews, signers on call for deaf clients, etc.) 7 CFR 273.2(a)(1)

6. What other services are provided at this location? (For example, WIC, rental assistance, health department services, etc.)

Availability of Applications

7. How are applications made available? 7 CFR 273.2(c)(3) (Note to reviewer, if applications are not in plain view, follow up with more questions to find out how easily an interested person can obtain one.)

8. When people ask for food stamp information or indicate food insecurity, who answers these requests and what information is provided? 7 CFR 273.2(c)(2)(i)

9. Does this vary depending on how the request is received (i.e., in person, phone call, letter, fax, or internet)? If so, please explain. 7 CFR 273.2(c)(2)(i)

Availability of Bilingual Services

10. Are applications, client services, and other program information materials available for people who don't speak English? 7 CFR 272.4(b) (Note to reviewer: Obtain a list of all languages and what type of information and services are available for each.)

Level of Case Worker Services

(Note to reviewer: Some of the following questions may be more appropriate to ask only the manager and supervisors.)

11. How do you track or monitor applications to ensure timeliness?

12. Have complaints been made by clients or advocates concerning poor customer service by case workers? What do people complain about?

13. Are clients able to contact their case workers when they need to communicate information or ask questions related to their application or case?
    - If no, describe any alternate means of communication made available to clients by local office/State agency. (Note to reviewer: e.g., call centers, email, voice mail)

Review Tool 6A QUESTIONS FOR

MANAGERS, SUPERVISORS, AND CASE WORKERS con't

14. Is there a toll-free hotline number in use for clients to call to report changes or ask questions about their application or case?

- If so, is it local/regional/or statewide?

- Please describe any feedback from clients about the hotline/call center.

15. Does this office have a policy for returning customers' telephone calls within a certain time frame? If so, how do you monitor to ensure compliance with your policy?

16. Are individuals applying for food stamps ever referred to other programs or services? (Note to reviewer: if the answer is yes, find out what/where/why.)

17. Are workers in this office out-stationed to accept applications or to conduct application interviews in the field? How often is this done? What are the circumstances of the clients making use of this service?

Review Tool 6A QUESTIONS FOR

MANAGERS, SUPERVISORS, AND CASE WORKERS con't

Program Access Initiatives

(Note to reviewer: Some of the following questions may be more appropriate to ask only the manager and supervisors.)

18. Do you think your office is making the FSP accessible to applicants?
    - If so, can you describe some of the activities or procedures that encourage people to apply for food stamp benefits?
    - Were these activities or procedures initiated by the State agency or by your office?

19. Do you participate in any meetings with advocates or community organizations to discuss program access (or outreach)?
    - If so, are these meetings at the local, regional, or state level?
    - Please explain how the meetings have benefited the food stamp clients at this office.

<u>Application Submission</u>

20. Describe all the ways in which applications and documents are accepted by your office and how the application filing date is determined and documented. 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1) (i.e., in person, mail, fax, internet)

21. Do you require potential applicants (those persons coming into the office to apply for help) to do anything before they actually file an application? If so, what do they have to do? 7 CFR 273.3(a)(1) (Note to reviewer: The State agency cannot impose additional application processing requirements, as a condition of eligibility.)

22. Does the office have a drop-box so that applications or documents can be left when the office is closed?
    - How are these applications or documents handled?
    - By whom?
    - When are they date-stamped?

23. Please explain how your office handles an FSP application that has been sent to the wrong office. 7 CFR 273.2(c)(2)(ii)

24. What is the minimum information necessary on the application form in order for your office to consider it a filed FSP application? 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1) (Note to Reviewer: name, address and signature)

25. What happens if someone (with or without a completed application) who is interested in applying for food stamps walks into the office right before closing time? 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1)

26. How does your office handle the situation when an applicant decides to withdraw his/her application? (7 CFR 273.2(c)(6)

Application Screening

27. Are applications screened for determination of expedited service entitlement? (7 CFR 273.2(a)(2), 273.2(i)(1) and (i)(2)) (Note to reviewer: Continue with follow-up questions below.)

- When is this done?
- Who does it?
- Does this include applications filed online?
- Is the procedure for screening online applications/multi-program applications for expedited service any different?

- Is a form used to screen applicants for entitlement to expedited service? (Note to reviewer: If so, obtain a copy of the form.)

- What action is taken when applicants are not initially determined during the interview to be eligible for expedited benefits?

28. Please explain what information about the application process is provided to the household during the screening process. (7 CFR 273.2(c)(1))

29. What is the procedure when someone wants to apply for more types of assistance besides food stamps, such as TANF, medical assistance, child care, or child support collection?

- How does your agency ensure that another program's requirements do not delay food stamp processing?

<u>Online Application Interface with the Local Office</u>

(Note to reviewer: Refer to questions in Appendix E, "Local Office Interface with Online Application Processing" as appropriate when interviewing food stamp staff.)

Interview Procedures

30. Who schedules application interviews?

31. Generally, how many days after the application is submitted is the interview scheduled? 7 CFR 273.2(e)(3)

32. What is the local office policy on waiving face-to-face interviews? At what point in the application process are applicants/potential applicants told about this option? Who makes the decision to waive in each situation? 7 CFR 273.2(e)(2)

33. Are applicants given a date and time for interviews, if they cannot be interviewed on the date they apply? 7 CFR 273.2(e)(2)

34. What happens if a household fails to keep its scheduled application interview? 7 CFR 273.2(e)(3)

35. What does the case worker explain to the household during the interview? 7 CFR 273.2(e)(1)

36. Explain how privacy is provided for households during the interview process? 7 CFR 273.2(e)(1)

37. Are households permitted to bring another person to the interview? 7 CFR 273.2(e)(1)

38. Are clients ever asked to come in for an interview during the certification period? If so, why? 7 CFR 273.2(e)(1) (Note to reviewer: State agencies may request but not require clients to do this.)

<u>Timeliness of Benefits</u>

39. Does your EBT issuance process ensure timely expedited benefits? If no, what are the reasons that benefits are not issued on time?

Review Tool 6A QUESTIONS FOR

MANAGERS, SUPERVISORS, AND CASE WORKERS con't

Verification

40. For households entitled to expedited service, what verification is required? 7 CFR 273.2(i)(4)(i)(A), (B)

41. Are applicant households being told/given something in writing to specifically identify what verification is required for food stamp purposes? (Note to reviewer: If the answer is yes, obtain a copy of any information provided to applicants concerning verification.)

42. How much time do applicants have to provide verification? 7 CFR 273.2(2(f)

43. What is the procedure for verifying social security numbers? 7 CFR 273.2(f)(1)(vi)

44. What type of documentation is accepted to establish residency and identity? 7 CFR 273.2(f)(1)(vi), (vii) (Note to reviewer: specific documents such as birth certificates to verify identity are not required for food stamp purposes.)

45. For households that are cooperating but may be having trouble obtaining the necessary verification, how does your office assist? 7 CFR 273.3(f)(5)(i)

46. Are households required to present verification in person? 7 CFR 273.3(f)(5)(i)

47. Under what circumstances are home visits used to verify the household circumstances? 7 CFR 273.2(f)(4)(iii) (Note to reviewer: the home visits must be scheduled in advance with the household.)

48. Is finger imaging used as a type of verification? If so, please explain the process.

Notices

(Note to reviewer: you may want to get this information before you get to the office.)

49. Please describe the notices that we can expect to find in the case files for:
   - New approvals 7 CFR 273.10(g)(1)(i)(A), (B)
   - Denials 7 CFR 273.10(g)(1)(ii)
   - Terminations 7 CFR 273.21(m)(2)
   - Recertifications 7 CFR 273.10(f)(4)

Multi-Program Case management

50. Are households applying for TANF notified of their right to apply for food stamps at the same time? 7 CFR 273.2(j)

51. What happens when a family applies for food stamps and TANF and then you find that they are not eligible for TANF? 7 CFR 273.2(j)(2)(iv)

52. How is food stamp eligibility determined for households that are applying for SSI and food stamps? 7 CFR 273.2(k)

53. What happens when a TANF sanction is applied to a member of a household also receiving food stamps? 7 CFR 273.11(k)(5)

Recertification:

54. How are recertification interviews arranged? 7 CFR 273.14(b)(3)
(Note to reviewer: the options are in person, by phone, home visit, or none for recertifications occurring less than 12 months apart.)

55. Briefly describe the steps of the recertification process. 7 CFR 273.14(b)

56. If the clients do not attend the recertification interview, does the agency send a NOMI? 7 CFR 273.14(b)(3)(iii) (Note to reviewer: if yes, obtain a copy of the notice.)

<u>Work Requirements</u>

57. Are work and training-related services provided at your location? If not, where do they have to go? (Work and training services such as FSP work registration and FSP employment and training.)

58. How does this impact the application processing?

59. How does your office determine whether a food stamp participant did not comply with work requirements? 7 CFR 273.7(i)

Review Tool 6B OPTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR FOOD STAMP STAFF:

CIVIL RIGHTS/LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Name: Title:	State/local agency:
Interviewer:	Date of interview:

1. How does the local office determine the presence and needs of Limited English Proficiency or Non-English speaking (LEP) groups within its service area?

2. How does the local office plan for meeting the needs of LEP groups within its service area?

3. How does the local office staff communicate with LEP groups or applicants?

4. Does the local office provide applications, brochures, forms, and other materials in languages other than English? If so, which languages?

5. Does the local office participate in any outreach efforts to LEP groups to make them aware of the FSP?

Review Tool 6B OPTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR FOOD STAMP STAFF:

CIVIL RIGHTS/LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY con't

6. How are clients informed about the availability of services in languages other than English?

7. What type of written guidelines have case workers and other food stamp staff been given on serving LEP persons?

8. Have you received training on serving LEP persons?
   - When?
   - By whom?

9. Have you and your staff received civil rights training?
   - When?
   - How frequently is it given?
   - Is it mandatory?
   - What is the process of handling non-discrimination complaints?

10. How and when do you inform applicants/clients of the discrimination complaint process?

Review Tool 6B OPTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR FOOD STAMP STAFF:

CIVIL RIGHTS/LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY con't

- Is this information made available in languages other than English? If so, what languages?

- What is the process of handling non-discrimination complaints?

11. How are these complaints analyzed? (Note to reviewer: does the local office analyze to determine if a systemic problem exists or are they only addressed with the individual worker?)

12. What accommodations are made for persons with disabilities? (Note to reviewer: How does the local office ensure that persons with disabilities are provided the needed accommodations and an accessible facility?)

13. Have you received training on serving clients with disabilities?
    - When?
    - By whom?

Review Tool 6B OPTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR FOOD STAMP STAFF:

CIVIL RIGHTS/LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY con't

14. Has the local office been reviewed for physical accessibility?
    - When?
    - By whom?

15. What is the process for handling requests for accommodations by clients with disabilities?

Review Tool 6B OPTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR FOOD STAMP STAFF:

EBT/ISSUANCE

Name: Title:	State/local agency:
Interviewer:	Date of interview:

1. Briefly describe the steps of the EBT process at the local office for households newly approved for the Food Stamp Program.

2. Do you have EBT training materials for clients?
   - Are the materials available in languages other than English? (Note to reviewer: obtain copies of the training materials in all languages.)

3. What days of the week and time of the day can a household get an EBT card and get it pinned?

4. Does a household have to get an appointment or can they just show up to get an EBT card?

Review Tool 6B OPTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR FOOD STAMP STAFF:

EBT/ISSUANCE con't

5. What days of the week and time of the day can a household get training on EBT card?

6. Once expedited service is approved, how soon can a household receive an EBT card and get it activated?

7. Does a household need to show a photo ID to get an EBT card?

8. What do you do if a household is homeless or otherwise does not have a photo ID?

Review Tool 6C QUESTIONS FOR SCREENERS

Name: Title:	State/local agency:
Interviewer:	Date of interview:

(Note to reviewer: Per 7 CFR 273.2(i), a screener can be a receptionist, volunteer or other non-merit personnel. However, the eligibility interview/certification interview must be conducted by merit personnel per 7 CFR 272.4 (a).

Ask the screener when it would be convenient for the reviewer to observe the screener actually screening an application with an applicant.)

1. At what point in the application process do you see individuals wishing to apply for the FSP?
   (Reviewers: Agencies are required to screen on the application filing date.)

2. How long do clients generally have to wait before you screen the applications?

3. What form does the local agency use to screen applicants for entitlement to expedited service?
   (Reviewers: Get a copy of the form and note whether it asks for name, address, signature and the correct criteria for determining entitlement to expedited service [< $150 in income; < $100 in resources; income and resources < shelter costs; migrant].)

4. Describe what happens when an applicant is routed to you for screening and describe the screening process. (Reviewers: Screening for entitlement to expedited service should occur at the time the household requests assistance.)

5. Please explain how you handle partially completed applications.

6. Please explain anything that is different about screening multi-program applications for entitlement to expedited service for food stamps.

7. What questions do you ask an applicant during the screening process? Are the questions in the computer system, in print, or do you ask your own questions?

8. Do you ask every applicant the same questions?

9. Who determines that the household is entitled to expedited service?

10. Please explain how and when you screen applications that are:

- Dropped off

- Mailed

- Faxed

- Sent by internet

(Reviewers: Screening for entitlement to expedited service should occur at the time the household requests assistance.)

11. Please explain what happens if a person comes in to apply one minute before closing time.

12. After you screen a mailed-in application or internet application and you identify the household as entitled to expedited service, can the household be approved for expedited benefits before being interviewed?
(Reviewers: Households must be interviewed before being approved for expedited service benefits. The interview for expedited service that advises the household of pending verification serves as the certification interview.)

Review Tool 6C QUESTIONS FOR SCREENERS con't

13. If the screening process identifies the household to be entitled to expedited service, does this household get scheduled for an eligibility interview sooner than a household who is not entitled to expedited service?

14. If the eligibility interview does not take place the on the same day as the screening, how is an interview scheduled?

15. If the applicant works and needs to return for an interview, is there any consideration given to their work schedule when scheduling the appointment? If yes, what?

16. What is documented in the case file about the application screening? When is this done and by whom?

17. During the screening, what do you inform the applicant about verification requirements? (Reviewers: Ask for a copy of the form or notice that is used.)

18. How do you screen the application of a household who does not speak English?

19. Describe what you would do if a client approached you who was hearing or vision impaired.

Review Tool 6D **QUESTIONS FOR CLIENTS**

Name: (Leave Blank at Client's Option)	State/local agency
Interviewer	Date of interview

(Note to reviewer: Explain to the client who you are and that you are taking a SURVEY as part of your review of local agency operations. Make sure the client understands that he/she is anonymous and the information collected will not impact their participation. Complete this form yourself - do not have the client complete the form!)

1. Why did you contact the office today?
   New application_____
   Recertification_____
   Reporting a change or new information _____
   Supplying requested verification_____
   Scheduled Interview_____
   Other_____

2. If you are here for an FSP interview, were you given the option of a telephone interview instead of appearing today at the office?

3. What programs are you applying for or receiving?
   FS_____
   TANF_____
   Medicaid/Health_____
   Child Care_____
   Employment Services_____
   Other ______

4. If you have been to this office before, is there anything that has made your recent visits better (easier or faster) or worse (more difficult, slower) than earlier visits? (If yes, what is different?)

Review Tool 6D QUESTIONS FOR CLIENTS, con't

5. Did you have any problems when you initially tried to apply for the assistance you wanted? (Note to reviewer: E.g.,having to come back more than once to file an application, told you couldn't apply, lost your paperwork, denied incorrectly, language interpreter not provided, directed to wrong office, etc.)

6. Did you need help with the application process? If yes, who helped you?

7. With an appointment, how long do you usually have to wait before you are seen? Is this acceptable or unacceptable to you?

8. Do you ever have difficulty calling the office for information or to report a change? Explain.

9. Are you able to leave a message and have someone call you back? Explain.

10. Have you had difficulty in turning in or dropping off documents at this office? Explain

11. Was the application process clearly explained to you? Were your questions answered?

12. What do you think prevents people from applying for Food Stamps?

13. Are the food stamp notices understandable to you or are they not clear or confusing?

14. Did the staff offer any other referrals to help you? (Note to reviewer: E.g., WIC, food pantries, help with housing, energy assistance, job search)

15. Have you ever filed a complaint about services received? If yes when and what happened? How were you informed of the complaint process?

16. Have you ever requested a fair hearing on a food stamp matter? If yes, was a hearing held and were you satisfied that you received fair treatment?

17. Using a rating of 5 to 1, with 5 being EXCELLENT and 1 being UNACCEPTABLE, how would you rate the services and treatment you receive from this office (Circle one)

    5 Excellent   4 Very Good   3 Acceptable   2 Poor   1 Unacceptable

18. Do you have any suggestions for improvements that would make it easier for people to apply for food stamp benefits at this office?

Review Tool 6E QUESTIONS FOR ADVOCATES AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Contact Information: (Organization, Name & Title of Representative, Address, Phone, website, email)	
Date of Interview: Reviewer:	Local Office Under Review:

1. Are you aware of any barriers that prevent potential recipients from applying for FSP benefits? Please describe.

2. Are you aware of any recent changes (in the last year) made by the local agency or the State agency to remove barriers and/or improve the accessibility of the FSP? Explain.

3. Do you have any suggestions on how the local agency could improve operations to better serve their clientele?

Review Tool 7A **CASE FILE WORKSHEET**

Local Office:
Date:
Reviewer:

Reviewed Action:
Initial Application
Denied Case
Terminated Case

ERROR or CORRECT

Case Name:	If LEP HH…what language?	Simplified or Change Reporter?
Case #: **Worker #**	Application: paper/fax/ online	Categorically Eligible HH? Y / N
Programs applied for: TANF / MA / FS / GA	ABAWD in the HH? Y / N	Elderly/ Disabled HH? Y / N

Dates:	**Dates:**	What action on 30th day?	Certification Period	Expedited Issuance (7days)
Application: Screening: Interview:	Approval Notice: Denial Notice: Pending Notice: No notices sent ___	Approved ____ Denied ___ Pended ___ No action taken ___	Household size	Standard Issuance (30 days)

EXPEDITED SERVICE DETERMINATION for approved and denied sample:

Decision made by the local agency	**Decision made by FNS**
• Not entitled to expedited service • Entitled to expedited service • Determination not made • Not evident that local agency determined entitlement	• Not entitled to expedited service • Entitled to expedited service/reason: o Income < $150 & Resources <= $100 o Rent/mortgage & Utilities/SUA > Gross income & Liquid resources

On the date of application what was used for expedited service determination?

Rent /mortgage Total shelter (Rent + appropriate SUA)	SUA	Gross income	Liquid resources

DENIAL:

1. What benefits were denied? FS TANF MA Other

2. What was the date of the denial notice? ___________________________________

3. On the denial notice, what reason was given for the denial and what documentation supported the decision?

TERMINATION:

1. What benefits were terminated? FS TANF MA Other

2. What type of notice was issued? Notice of Expiration Notice of Adverse Action Other

3. What was the date of the notice? ___________________________________

4. On the notice, what reason was given for the termination, and what documentation supported the decision?

5. Did benefits stop timely? Y / N

OTHER:

1. If the HH was not interviewed on the day it first applied, did the agency give the HH a scheduled time and date for the interview? Y / N

2. If the HH missed the first scheduled interview, did the agency send a notice that stated this and it is the HH's responsibility to reschedule (notice of missed interview)? Y / N

3. Although the HH received benefits, were there any obvious signs it was not eligible to participate? Y / N

PROCESSING STANDARDS:

Approval Notice Timely?	Denial Notice Timely?	Terminated Notice Timely?	Pending Notice Timely?
Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
Met 7-Day?	Met 30-Day?	Met 60-Day?	Benefits Timely?
Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N

ERROR SUMMARY:

Complete this form for <u>all</u> ERROR cases. (circle all that apply)

1. Application: missing or did not have application filing date on it (date received by local office).
2. Application incomplete: did not have the applicant's name, address and signature on it.
3. Online application: delayed screening for expedited/denied without interview/delayed processing.
4. Expedited service: the screening form was missing.
5. Expedited service: the HH was not screened on the application filing date or no date on form.
6. Expedited service: the HH was approved for benefits BEFORE the interview.
7. Missing notices: appointment/missed interview/verification/approval/denied/pending/termination.
8. Untimely notices: appointment/missed interview/verification/approval/denied/ pending/termination.
9. Notices: the content of the notice was confusing.
10. Bilingual Needs: If required in project area, office failed to provide bilingual interpreters for interview/application/client notices. What is non-English language?
11. Excessive application requirements: HH was required to comply with non-FSP requirements.
12. TANF/SSI categorically eligible HH was denied or terminated for residency/SSN/sponsored alien info/gross or net income limits/resources.
13. Interview: office failed to notify of availability of phone interview due to hardship AND hardship HH was denied or terminated for failure to be interviewed.
14. Interview: HH was required to complete 2 interviews (for expedited and ongoing benefits).
15. Interview: is scheduled so HH may participate within 7/30 days of filing date.
16. Verification: HH was required to submit excessive verification or verification not required by FSP (specific docs like birth certificate/proof of school attendance for children/marriage certificate.
17. Verification: HH was required to provide a Social Security Card/office did not permanently annotate SSN in case file.
18. Documentation: to support the case action was inadequate or missing.

19 Benefits: the HH was approved but was ineligible or overissued.

20. Benefits: pro-ration was incorrect (Should be to App Filing Date for no delays or agency delays. 21. Should be to Date the HH completed app process for HH delays or combination caused delays.)

22. Work requirements: TANF sanction was applied to entire FSP HH instead of TANF violator only.
23. Work requirements: office did not follow exemption or good cause policy correctly.
24. Denial/Termination: was for an invalid reason.
25. Inconsistent information between paper and electronic files.
26. Other (describe)

Review Tool 7B **CASEFILE WORK SHEET: RECERTIFICATIONS**

Local Office:
Date:
Reviewer:

ERROR or CORRECT (circle one)

Case Name:	**Case #:** **Worker #**	Household Size	Recertified for: FS / MA / TANF /GA or FSP only

Previous Cert Period	Expiration Notice (Date)	Recert Application (Date)	Recert Application: paper/fax/online
Current Cert Period	Recert Approval Notice (Date)	Recert Interview (Date)	Interrupted benefits? Yes /No

Should be recert or initial?	If taken as initial, screened for expedited?	If LEP HH…what language?
Simplified or Change Reporter	Categorically Eligible HH? Yes / No	Elderly or Disabled HH? Yes / No

If household was recertified, answer the following question:	**Yes**	**No**
Although the HH received benefits, were there any obvious signs it was not eligible to participate?		

If household was NOT recertified, answer the following questions:	**Yes**	**No**
Was the household notified that its certification period was ending?		
Was a recertification appointment made?		
Did the household keep the appointment for the recertification interview?		
If the HH did not attend the recertification interview, did the agency send a notice that stated this and it is the HH's responsibility to reschedule (NOMI)? (Reviewers: The agency is required to do this only if the HH had submitted an application for recertification.)		
Did the household cooperate in the recertification process?		
What was the date of the denial notice (if any)?		
On the denial notice, what reason was given for the denial <u>and</u> what documentation supported the decision?		

Was the household recertified timely?		

Review Tool 7B **CASEFILE REVIEW WORK SHEET: RECERTIFICATIONS con't**

Case Name:	**Case #:**

ERROR SUMMARY:

1. Application: missing or did not have application filing date on it (date received by local office).
2. Application incomplete: did not have the applicant's name, address and signature on it.
3. Online application: denied without interview/delayed processing.
4. Missing notices: appointment/missed interview/verification/approval/denied/pending.
5. Untimely notices: appointment/missed interview/verification/approval/denied/ pending.
6. Notices: the content of a notice was confusing.
7. Bilingual Needs: If required in project area, office failed to provide bilingual interpreters for interview/application/client notices. What is non-English language?
8. Excessive application requirements: HH was required to comply with non-FSP requirements.
9. TANF/SSI categorically eligible HH was denied for residency/SSN/sponsored alien info/gross or net income limits/resources.

10. Interview: office failed to notify of availability of phone interview due to hardship AND hardship 11. HH was denied for failure to be interviewed.

12. Interview: HH was required to complete 2 interviews.
13. Interview: is scheduled so HH may participate within 30 days of filing date.
14. Verification: HH was required to submit excessive verification or verification not required by FSP (specific docs like birth certificate/proof of school attendance for children/marriage certificate.)
16. Verification: HH was required to provide a Social Security Card/office did not permanently annotate SSN in case file.
17. Documentation: to support the case action was inadequate or missing.
18. Benefits: the HH was approved but was ineligible or overissued.
19. Benefits: pro-ration was incorrect (Should be to App Filing Date for no delays or agency delays. Should be to date the HH completed App process for HH delays or combination of caused delays).
20. Work requirements: TANF sanction was applied to entire FSP HH instead of TANF violator only.
21. Work requirements: office did not follow exemption or good cause policy correctly.
22. Inconsistent information between paper and electronic files.
23. Other (describe)

COMMENTS:

Review Tool 8 FOOD STAMP PROGRAM ACCESS INITIATIVES

(PROMISING PRACTICES)

1. Name, title, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number of State/local agency contact person:

2. Describe the program access initiative succinctly, but in as much detail as possible in the context of the State's administrative practices related to the initiative.

3. How long has the initiative been fully implemented?

4. Did the State or local agency make policy changes in order to implement this initiative? If so, please describe them.

Review Tool 8 FOOD STAMP PROGRAM ACCESS INITIATIVES con't (PROMISING PRACTICES)

5. Was this program access initiative State or local in scope? If local in scope, please identify the city or county in which it was implemented.

6. Were additional resources necessary to implement and/or administer the program access initiative?

7. Were there any unanticipated costs associated with the initiative? Please describe.

8. What impact has the initiative had on employees, applicants and or recipients?

9. Are there other benefits from the initiative? If possible, please quantify.

10. Were there any unanticipated problems that have resulted from the initiative? If so, how did you address them? Please describe.

11 . What advice would you give to those interested in replicating the initiative?