

April 19, 2005

SUBJECT: Mexico's *Matrícula Consular* Identification

TO: All Regional Directors
Food Stamp Program

Representatives of Mexican government agencies and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) established a collaborative partnership in July 2004 to provide information and outreach about nutrition assistance programs available to Mexican Americans and Mexican nationals who live in the United States (U.S.).

The Mexican consulate network, which is comprised of 45 consulates, is the largest network of Hispanic consulates in the U.S. The consulates, in partnership with USDA, are working together to help eliminate barriers and increase access to nutrition assistance programs among Mexican nationals.

One of the functions of the Mexican consulates is to provide documentary services to Mexican nationals such as passports and consular ID's. A *Matricula Consular* ID card (also known as *Matricula Consular de Alta Seguridad* (MCAS), or as a Certificate of Consular Registration) is a document that is issued to Mexican foreign nationals that reside in the U.S. For the card to be issued, the applicant must appear in person at the consular office and present several documents showing proof of nationality and address.

We believe that the MCAS is sufficient to identify the individual and as proof of nationality. **It is not sufficient to verify an immigrant's legal immigration status in the U.S. or eligibility for benefits under the Food Stamp Program.** Although State agencies may also use the MCAS as verification of residence, they should take into consideration that the address on the card may not be current, given the potential mobility of this population.

Attached is a translation of the language from the Mexican Embassy government website describing the *Matricula Consular* card. If you have any questions, please contact your Regional representative in the Certification Policy Branch.

/s/

Arthur T. Foley
Director
Program Development Division

Attachment

Issuance of High Security IDs (MCAS)

The *matrícula consular* ID card (Certificate of Consular Registration or MCAS, for its initials in Spanish) is a document that meets census and protection purposes and is of great utility to the Mexican government. It is issued to all Mexican nationals regardless of their emigration status outside Mexico. It also has the advantage of being accepted by a great number of private and official institutions as an ID, as proof of nationality, and as a proof of address in a given consular district. Nevertheless, it is important to clarify that the MCAS is not, nor does it pretend to substitute for, a foreign country's document of legal status in that country. Thus, it only shows that the bearer resides in a foreign country and has registered before a Mexican representative.

For it to be issued, the applicant must appear in person before the Consular Office, fill out an application, and present the following documentation:

- Passport or certificate of Mexican nationality (or certificate of naturalization if not a Mexican by birth), or a certified copy of their birth certificate, and an additional set of photocopies of these documents to prove Mexican nationality.
- An original and a photocopy of an identification document issued by a Mexican authority, bearing a stamped or sealed photograph (for example: Voter Registration Card, Certificate of Origin issued by one of the states of the Republic, Education Diploma, National Military Service Card, Mexican Social Security Card, Mexican Vaccination Certificate, etc.). Only in exceptional cases will the possibility be considered of accepting foreign identity documents to issue a Mexican nationality document, such as the *matrícula*.
- A document that proves that the person is domiciled in the given consular district. In the case of the Consular Section, the applicant should reside in the states of Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, or the District of Columbia. Proof of public services (telephone, water, electricity, etc.), a lease (or a letter from the property owner of the apartment or house when there are others that live under the same roof), employment verification, proof of tax payment, proof of remission of funds to Mexico, or bank statements where address of the remitter is shown, are accepted, among others.