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## FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES CERTIFICATION

### APPLICATIONS

#### FNS 450 SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION APPLICATIONS

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#### **FNS 450 Social Security Administration Applications**

**Change #09-2021**

**August 9, 2021**

#### **450.01 FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES (FNS) APPLICATIONS TAKEN BY THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (SSA) OFFICE**

A household consisting of only Supplemental Security Income (SSI) applicants and/or recipients may apply for FNS at the Social Security Administration (SSA) Office.

#### **450.02 SSA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

The SSA Office takes FNS applications for those households who contain only SSI applicants/recipients. The SSA refers non-SSI households to the appropriate county department of social services (DSS) to apply.

Do not require the applicant to be seen at the local DSS when the SSA Office takes an application. Additional information may be requested, but the applicant does not have to come in to the agency. In no event would the applicant be required to appear at the FNS office to complete the application process.

The SSA Office completes joint SSI and FNS applications for residents of public institutions. In accordance with the SSA Pre-Release Program, these individuals may apply for both SSI and FNS benefits prior to their release from the institution. The applicant is not eligible to receive the FNS benefits until he is released from the institution.

#### **450.03 SSA RESPONSIBILITIES**

The SSA Office has the following responsibilities.

- A. Inform SSI applicants and recipients of the availability of benefits under the FNS Program and the availability of the application. The SSA Office is not required to accept applications or to conduct interviews for SSI applicants or recipients who are not members of households that contain only SSI applicants and/or recipients.
- B. Conduct the interview.
- C. Complete the SSI/ Food and Nutrition Services Application, DSS-8207-SSI.
- D. Prescreen applications for expedited service on the day the application is received at the SSA Office.

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- E. Verify those items that can be verified at the time of the interview from either SSA records or from documents provided by the applicant.
- F. Forward the completed application and available information provided by the applicant to the appropriate county DSS (unless a telephone interview is conducted). The application is forwarded within one federal workday after the application is accepted and the interview is conducted.
- G. If a telephone interview is conducted, the SSA Office mails the application to the applicant with a return envelope addressed to the appropriate DSS office.
- H. If the applicant is eligible for expedited service, SSA will inform the applicant and immediately send the application to the appropriate local DSS via fax. SSA mails the original application to DSS within one federal workday. Expedited service application time standards begin on the date DSS receives the application.
- I. If the applicant is not eligible for expedited service, SSA informs the applicant and mails the application to the appropriate DSS within one federal workday. Normal application processing time standards apply. The application processing time begins on the date the application is received by SSA.
- J. Train the appropriate SSA employees in FNS policy procedures to ensure that all required duties are carried out.

#### **450.04 SSA RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PRE-RELEASE APPLICATIONS**

The SSA staff will complete joint SSI and FNS applications for residents of public institutions. This applies to residents of public institutions who apply for SSI prior to their release from the institution under the SSA's Pre-Release Program for the Institutionalized. SSA will use the DSS-8207-SSI, SSI/ Food and Nutrition Services Application, as the application form.

- A. If SSA knows the planned place of residence after release, SSA forwards the completed FNS application to the applicant's proposed county of residence within one federal workday after the application is taken. SSA identifies the anticipated county of residence from information received from the applicant and the institution.

SSA also provides the county agency with the applicant's proposed date of release from the institution. This information is included on the cover sheet of the DSS-8207-SSI, SSI/\_Food and Nutrition Services Application.

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- B. If SSA does not know the proposed date of release and/or place of residence after release, SSA holds the application up to 30 calendar days.

When the institution informs SSA of the release date and/or place of residence after release, SSA forwards the application to DSS within one federal workday of notification.

If SSA receives a release date but no place of residence, SSA forwards the application to the DSS office serving the institution. SSA completes the cover sheet of the DSS-8207-SSI to include the name, address, telephone number of the institution, and contact person. When the applicant is released, SSA provides DSS with the place of residence and verification of the new living arrangement in accordance with SSI rules.

- C. If the applicant is eligible for expedited service, SSA informs the applicant. SSA immediately forwards the application to DSS via fax and mails the original application within one federal workday.
- D. If the applicant is not eligible for expedited service, SSA informs the applicant and mails the application to DSS within one federal workday.
- E. SSA refers non-SSI households to the appropriate county DSS. Normal application and processing procedures apply.

#### **450.05 COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. Determine eligibility and give eligible SSI households the opportunity to purchase food within 30 days following the date the application was received by SSA. All eligibility factors must be verified. Note time frame exceptions with expedited service applications and pre-release applications.
- B. Process expedited service applications so eligible households are able to purchase food within seven calendar days. The expedited processing time standards begin on the date DSS receives the application.
- C. If an application and the supporting documentation are sent to the wrong DSS, the receiving DSS must forward the application and documentation to the appropriate DSS within one working day of receipt.
- D. Applicant households that contain only SSI applicants or recipients are not required to see a DSS eligibility worker or be interviewed by DSS staff. DSS must process the FNS application. DSS must not contact the applicant household to obtain information for certification unless:
1. The application is improperly completed; or

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- 2. Mandatory verification is missing; or
- 3. DSS determines that information on the application is questionable.
- E. Screen all applications received from SSA for entitlement to expedited service. This must be done on the day the application is received by DSS.
- F. Determine if members of SSI households are active FNS participants prior to processing the application.
- G. Allow SSI households to apply for FNS benefits at the agency if the household chooses to do so. In such cases, all verification, including that pertaining to SSI Program benefits, must be provided by the household, by SDX or BENDEX, or obtained by DSS rather than being provided by SSA.

#### **450.06 COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PRE-RELEASE APPLICATIONS**

- A. Determine eligibility of residents of public institutions who apply jointly for SSI and FNS benefits so eligible households are able to purchase food within 30 days following the date of the applicant's release from the institution. Expedited processing time standards begin on the date of release from the institution.
- B. SSA notifies DSS of the applicant's release date from the institution. If DSS is not notified of the release date in a timely manner, restore benefits back to the date of release.

#### **450.07 APPLICATION PROCESSING REQUIREMENTS**

All FNS applications taken by SSA must be processed timely, and the following actions must be taken.

- A. Verify all required eligibility factors prior to certification. Households entitled to expedited service must be processed according to Section 320, Expedited Service.
- B. Verify SSI benefits through the State Data Exchange (SDX), the Beneficiary Data Exchange (BENDEX) or SOLQ, and/or through verification provided by the household. Do not reverify SDX and BENDEX data unless questionable. Give a household the opportunity to provide verification from another source if all necessary information is not available through SDX/BENDEX or if the data is contradictory to other household information.
- C. Refer to FNS 500 Simplified Reporting Category and Reporting Requirements for the appropriate certification period. Give the FNS unit a DSS-8550 Change Report Form. Quality Control (QC) errors that occur during the 12-

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month initial certification period are not included in the QC error rate due to the joint application processing that occurs between SSA and DSS.

- D. If the FNS unit applied jointly for FNS and SSI but the SSI is denied during the Certification Period mail the FNS unit a DSS-8650 Notice of Information Needed to Complete your Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) if necessary.

#### **450.08      ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- A. The FNS unit is responsible for reporting changes as required in Section 450, Simplified Reporting.
- B. Monitor SDX/BENDEX data to ensure that correct FNS benefit amounts are received.
- C. Process mass changes that affect FNS benefit amounts.
- D. Restore benefits that were lost due to SSA and/or DSS errors during the joint application process.

