

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



September 15, 2003

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-48-03

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order or Settlement Agreement
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

SUBJECT: FOOD STAMP APPLICATION VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL

REFERENCE: FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICE
03-21, TITLE 7 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS (CFR)
273.2(c)(6), MPP 63-300.3, ACIN I-08-03.

This is to remind County Welfare Departments (CWDs) of the rules regarding the application withdrawal process. A withdrawal should be an action that the client initiates for the client's own reasons. The Food Stamp Program's goal is to encourage participation.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has informed us that in the past couple of months, the FNS national office has received e-mail messages from clients stating they had been advised to withdraw their applications. In their communication, FNS emphasized the voluntary nature of application withdrawal. As such, the client independently withdraws the application without outside input. Any suggestion that a client withdraw their application is contrary to federal regulation 7 CFR 273.2(c)(6).

The intent of the food stamp regulations is to encourage a client to apply for food stamp benefits. Counties should encourage clients to apply on the first day of contact per MPP 63-300.31, even if the CWD declines the application for cash assistance. Food Stamp Program regulations provide that a household may voluntarily withdraw its application before eligibility has been determined pursuant to MPP 63.300.36. However, CWDs must record in the case file the withdrawal reason, and that contact was made with the household to confirm the withdrawal. If a county suggests a withdrawal, due to perceived ineligibility, this may short circuit an ultimate eligibility finding.

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Counties may use the CW 89-Application Withdrawal Request (2/03) or their form for application withdrawal, provided the form includes language that clearly states: 1) the applicant will not be able to file for a hearing and 2) the applicant may reapply at any time.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Sharon Brown of the Food Stamp Implementation Unit at (916) 654-0737.

Sincerely,

RICHTON YEE, Chief
Food Stamp Branch