Department of Human Resources 311 West Saratoga Street Baltimore MD 21201	**Family Investment Administration** **ACTION TRANSMITTAL**
Control Number: #11-29	**Effective Date: July 1, 2011**
	Issuance Date: June 9, 2011

TO: **DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES**
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF

FROM: **ROSEMARY MALONE, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

RE: **TRANSITIONAL FOOD SUPPLEMENT BENEFIT CHANGES**

PROGRAMS AFFECTED: **FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM (FSP) AND TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE (TCA)**

ORIGINATING OFFICE: **OFFICE OF PROGRAMS**

SUMMARY

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) passed the final rule for Transitional Food Supplement (TFS) benefit policy under the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 with an effective date of August 1, 2010. Provisions of the act required states to change how TFS cases are processed to;

1. Provide customers notification when the Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) case closes and they are now eligible for TFS benefits;
2. Ensure customers are notified their TFS benefits end when they return to TCA;
3. Have a determination for continued eligibility for regular FSP benefits when the customer is approved for TCA during the TFS period; and
4. Recalculation of the TFS benefit to exclude the income, resources and deductible expenses when an active member of a TFS case leaves the household to prevent duplicate participation.

FIA requested and FNS granted a waiver, which allowed for system modifications to implement the provisions above. However, we were able in January 2011, to implement one provision of the act: procedures for processing cases when a TFS household returns to TCA. To provide good customer service and avoid an increased agency

workload, FIA also implemented procedures for aligning the TCA and FSP certification periods. The procedures outlined in A.T. 11-14 for processing TFS customers returning to TCA, and procedures in A.T. 11-20 for aligning certification periods and establishing continued eligibility for regular FSP benefits after the TCA case is approved **are obsolete**.

This action transmittal outlines:

- Procedures for processing TFS cases when a member leaves a TFS household
- New procedures for processing TFS cases when the TFS freeze is broken
- Includes changes to the notices when:
  - The TCA AU is approved;
  - The FS AU changes to TFS;
  - The TFS freeze is broken, or
  - An active member of the TFS household:
    - Leaves the TFS household
    - Is recertified for SNAP benefits, or
    - Becomes a member in an active SNAP household
- Introduces new reason codes when:
  - The TFS freeze is broken, or
  - The TFS benefit is changed
- Includes new error/warning messages to prompt case managers to take appropriate action.

OPERATING PROCEDURES:

Effective July 1, 2011, the following procedures apply when processing TFS cases.

I. Recalculation of TFS Benefits

1. When an active TFS member leaves the TFS household, the income, resources and deductible expenses for that individual must be removed and the TFS benefit recalculated. CARES will recalculate the TFS benefit when:
   - Reason code **554** is entered on the STAT screen for the FS AU for the member no longer in the TFS household, or
   - "NO" is entered in the Living Arrangement field on the DEMI screen of the member no longer in the TFS household.
2. When the TFS head of household is removed, a message appears on the FS AU STAT screen, informing the case manager that the head of household needs to be reassigned and shelter costs adjusted.
3. Reason code **298**, "Transitional benefits changed because a household member moved out of the household" displays in both instances.

II. Breaking the TFS Freeze

1. When a TCA AU is approved and the household has an active TFS (AU):

   - Case managers must end the TFS period and determine continued eligibility for FSP within 30 days
   - A warning message is displayed on the DONE screen, informing the case manager to recertify the TFS AU

   Note: An interim change will not be allowed on a TFS AU when there is an active TCA AU without initiating a redetermination

2. When the case manager initiates the redetermination on a TFS AU and enters a "Y" in the Redet complete field on the MISC screen, the TFS freeze is broken and the household is recertified for six months from the ongoing month.
3. When the case manager fails to re-certify the TFS AU on the same day the TCA AU is approved, in overnight batch, the TFS freeze is broken and the household is recertified for regular FSP benefits for six months from the ongoing month

   - The case manager receives an alert to review the FSP AU.
   - Cases in which the TFS freeze was broken in overnight batch appear on a monthly report.
   - A new reason code **299**, "TFS Freeze Broken" displays in both instances.

III. Reports

CARES generates a monthly report titled, "TFS Assistance Cases Re-certified By System", for TFS AU's where the TFS freeze was broken in overnight batch.

CARES

Effective July 1, 2011, CARES will be modified as follows:

- When a customer becomes eligible for TFS, Notice 11, Change in Benefits, will provide the following information to the customer:

  "You will get this fixed amount for five months after your TCA case closes unless you start receiving TCA again or someone in your household applies in another Food Supplement Program case. We based this benefit amount on the Food Supplement Program benefits you got the month before your TCA closed. We did not count the closed TCA grant when we calculated your Food Supplement Program benefits. You do not have to report any changes until the end of this 5-month period. We will not act on any reported changes. If you start to receive TCA again during this period, we will redetermine your Food Supplement Program case. If you want to get Food Supplement Program benefits after this 5-month period, you will have to

complete a redetermination. You can ask for a redetermination at any time during the 5-month period. If your income goes down or you have an increase in expenses or household size you should apply for a redetermination."

- When a person is removed from the TFS household, the eligibility will not budget that person's income, resources, and expenses for the ongoing month. Any other changes to the members present in the TFS household will be ignored.
- When Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) is approved for a household that has an active TFS Assistance Unit (AU), a warning/informational message will be displayed to the case manager to recertify the TFS AU. If the case manager fails to recertify the TFS AU on the same day when the TCA is approved, then the nightly batch process will break the TFS freeze, recertify the Food Stamps (FS) for six months from the ongoing month, and generate alert **309 – "TFS BROKEN AND RECERTIFIED BY SYSTEM. PLEASE REVIEW."** to the case manager.
- Error message, **2674 – "TCA Reopened – FSP Redet must be initiated"**, will display when the case manager tries to access option "R" with an AU or IRN number of an active TFS recipient who is also an active TCA recipient and the redet has not been initiated.
- Error message, **2675 – Press Enter to Commit; TCA Reopened – Recert. must be completed on FSP**, will display on the DONE screen to remind the case manager that a recertification must be completed on the TFS when the case manager tries to access option "R" with the active TCA AU number on the same day the TCA is activated for an active TFS recipient and the FSP recert has not been completed.
- Error message, **2676 – "TCA Reopened - Recert must be completed on FSP"**, will display on the AMEN screen after the case manager finalizes a TCA AU for a household that has a related active TFS AU.
- Error message, **2677** – "**FS Redet not completed – If complete, enter Y on MISC screen"**, will display on the ELIG screen to remind the case manager that the recertification must be completed when on the same day, the TCA approval has been completed, the FSP has not been recertified, the FS redetermination has been initiated by accessing Option "N", the TCA AU is accessed using Option "R", and ELIG is called without the case manager entering a "Y" in the REDET COMPLETE field on the FS MISC screen.
- Error message **2678** – "**HOH Changed, Review relationship code for all clients & SHEL for new HOH"**, will display on the STAT screen to remind the case manager that the head of household must be reassigned and to adjust the shelter costs when the original head of household is removed.
- When the TFS freeze is broken by the nightly batch process a monthly report will be generated to show these cases. The report format is below:

SGXYM2PR

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
CLIENTS' AUTOMATED RESOURCE AND ELIGIBILITY SYSTEM
TFS ASSISTANCE CASES RECERTIFIED BY SYSTEM

AS OF DATE: MM/DD/CCYY
RUN DATE: MM/DD/CCYY
PAGE: 9999

DO: 999 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

CASE MANAGER NAME	CASE MANAGER ID	FS AU ID	HOH LAST NAME	HOH FIRST NAME	DATE TFS BROKEN	NEW RECERT DATE
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXX	999999999	XXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXX	MM/DD/CCYY	MM/DD/CCYY
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXX	999999999	XXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXX	MM/DD/CCYY	MM/DD/CCYY
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXX	999999999	XXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXX	MM/DD/CCYY	MM/DD/CCYY
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXX	999999999	XXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXX	MM/DD/CCYY	MM/DD/CCYY

INQUIRIES

Please direct FSP policy questions to Rick McClendon at 410-767-7307 or rmcclend@dhr.state.md.us, TCA policy questions to Gretchen Simpson at 410-767-7937 or gsimpson@dhr.state.md.us, and systems questions to Joyce Westbrook at 410-238-1299 or jwestbro@dhr.state.md.us .

cc: DHR Executive Staff
FIA Management Staff
Constituent Services
DHR Help Desk