



July 2015

On Target

July '15 Contributors

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Worker's Compensation: Unearned or Earned Income?

Worker's Compensation may not be one of the more common sources of income workers see in determining eligibility for SNAP. When it does come up, however, it is imperative to determine correctly whether it is earned or unearned income.

It is easy to think of worker's comp as unearned income, and often it is, but there is an exception. If the customer receiving payments is still employed while recuperating from a temporary injury or illness, the worker's comp counts as *earned* income. The key wording here is "still employed." If the customer intends to return to the same job at some point but is not currently employed, the workers comp is unearned income for SNAP.

To prevent an under-issuance error, it is up to the worker to remember the possibility of counting worker's comp as earned income. Ask any clarifying questions needed to help you decide whether to code this income as ACC or EML. To prevent an over-issuance, don't rely only on what the customer intends to do. Only count the payments as earned income if the person is still employed. Getting it right helps the customer and may save the agency from receiving a Quality Control error.

Blake Adams, SNAP Quality Control Lead

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Did you notice if you sent a notice?

Many times in our work, we have one customer waiting for us and another on the phone, just while we are finishing up that last thing! It is very easy to forget where we left off or whether we hit “F9”. Take a breath.

When we are doing negative actions, many errors come from doing a negative action and sending an invalid notice or none at all. We can't reduce, close or deny benefits without a notice. We all know that but sometimes we forget in the heat of the moment.

Here are some quick tips to jog your memory.

Closing benefits: FSMIS never sends out closure notices for us even if we enter a notice code in the notice field; that's on us. If you are using NOTM, a copy will already be saved for you. If you are sending a 540, 456 or another manual notice, you must keep a copy in the file or scanned to EDMS. It is part of your action record. If it is not there, well it didn't happen by review standards.

Denying benefits: You can use the notice code on FCAS screen but choose wisely, grasshopper. There are a lot of OLD cheat sheets out there. Be sure you have the most up to date version from Policy and take a moment to double check the notice is the actual one that fits the situation. It is important that we tell the customer why their application was denied and that the information provided is accurate. Again, if you send your notification manually, scan or keep a copy if your office still keeps paper files.

Approving benefits: Yes, it happens. Some customers never get an approval notice. When a worker uses CRT or REC action on a case and saves, then goes in afterwards and does an ADJ or SRS action, the approval notice is suppressed. Basic rule, if you are approving, don't do anything else to the case that day other than issue the benefits. If a mistake is made and you need to fix it, be sure to use a REC action. That way you will ensure your client is notified they are approved and when their certification starts and ends.

Charna Freehan, Program Management Evaluator (PME)

Tools for Referring TANF Clients for Mental Health and Learning Disability Evaluation

When working with TANF clients, a need for further evaluation or testing is often identified. Evaluation and testing information can be a valuable tool in providing appropriate services and accommodations. These reports are vital tools in helping DHS better understand what an individual is capable of accomplishing and possible supports needed in order to reach their goals.

The process for referring TANF customers for psychological evaluations with or without learning disability testing or neuropsychological evaluations can be a tricky process. To help ease the process of making a referral, we have created the following guides and tools, which can be found on the Self-Sufficiency Staff Tools website.

The guide will help with steps for referring a TANF customer for a psychological, psychological with learning disability, or neuropsychological evaluation. The guide also provides: a checklist for referral to evaluation, example of a Psychological Referral, example of a Psychological and Learning Disability Testing Referral, example of a Psychological and Neuropsychological Testing Referral and an updated TRACS Disability page resource guide for entering disability and accommodation information.

There are other guides and tools found on the [TANF Staff Tools website](#) (Disabilities & Limitations section) which include potential accommodations for:

- Cognitive Disorders
- Mental Health Disorders
- Physical Health
- Specific Learning Disabilities
- Substance Use Disorders

TRACS Testing Page Guide.

Please see transmittal [SS-IM-15-015](#) and SSP - TANF Staff Tools website: <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/caf/ss/tanf/index.html> for more information.

TANF Policy Analysts

Do you ever wonder why so many SNAP reviews are conducted and what they all mean?

Each type of review has a different focus, but the overall purpose is to maintain a high accuracy rate, good access to benefits and excellent customer service. Reviews are a report card for the program and each of us plays a role in getting a good report. The different types of reviews are:

1. **Quality Control (QC):** QC reviews are required under federal law. There are two types of reviews. Open FS case reviews are called “actives.” Close, suspend or denial actions are called “negatives.” Each month, about 100 actives and 60 negatives are chosen randomly. QC is required to verify all eligibility factors and interview the client. QC reviewers work hard to justify that the case received correct benefits or to make any payment error as low as possible. QC cites errors only if the case is ineligible or eligible with a difference in benefits of \$38 or more.

Information on each case reviewed is sent to the federal database. The total benefit dollars issued on the cases reviewed vs the total dollars in error are used to establish the QC accuracy rate. In addition to a high accuracy rate, a good report in these reviews may mean additional money for the state. Each year, one or two states receive bonus awards for a low error rate on denials or closures, for issuing benefits timely and for high state-wide participation in the FS program.

2. **Management Evaluation Reviews (ME):** ME reviews are also required under federal law. Each year the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) gives the state a list of review elements. This is a review of the office’s procedures and sometimes includes eligibility. Practices and procedures within central office are also included. The two state reviewers visit 11 to 13 offices each year. The ME findings are sent to the FNS.
3. **Targeted Reviews:** Targeted reviews are conducted in all SNAP offices as part of corrective action designed to improve the QC accuracy rate. These reviewers look at the paper and electronic case file without interviewing the client or requesting additional verification. These reviews focus on high error areas identified by DHS management. Currently, they include income and household composition. The purpose is to identify problems and correct the case before it is reviewed by QC. The findings from each review are entered into a state database but are not shared individually with FNS.
4. **State Agency Operation Review (SAOR):** SAOR reviews are conducted by FNS each year. Staff from the regional FNS office visit Oregon for one week. Generally they visit two local offices and various units within central office. The purpose is to ensure the state is following federal regulations in processing applications, issuing benefits, establishing overpayments, conducting QC reviews, etc.

SNAP Policy Analysts

Didja Know?? An under-issuance error cited by Quality Control affects the state’s error rate the same way as an over-issuance.

The dollar amount of an under-issuance cannot be used to offset over-issuance amounts on other cases.

Quality Control

Didja Know?? Liquid assets are only accounts that can immediately be accessed for cash.

Here are some examples of items that would be included in reviewing liquid assets:

Cash on hand and Bank accounts

Examples of assets that would not be included:

Certificate of deposit

Annuities

Stocks/bonds

Narration

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The Quality Control Unit has noticed an increased number of cases where narration is either missing or insufficient. It's important to narrate who, what, where, when, why, and how of every case. Conversations with the client which support the agency decision should also be captured in narration.

The SNAP unit has provided guidance in the SNAP Worker Guide #3 found in the following link <https://apps.state.or.us/cf1/EligManual/EMnlFrame.htm?token=narration&Page+ID=06fs-wg3&contents=narration&TOC=06-toc&Chapter=Supplemental%20Nutrition%20Assistance%20Program%20%28SNAP%29%20%2D%20Table%20of%20Contents>

Remember proper narration can prevent a QC error.

Nancy Estrada, TANF/ERDC Quality Control Lead

News and Upcoming Training Offered by the SSP Training Unit

Our schedule, registration data, and waitlist information is updated weekly, and is available on the training unit's intranet site at

<https://inside.dhsoha.state.or.us/dhs/self-sufficiency-training-unit/self-sufficiency-training-unit-resources.html>

For more information regarding the SSP Core Training Outline:

<https://inside.dhsoha.state.or.us/dhs/self-sufficiency-training-unit/self-sufficiency-training-unit-resources.html>

Contact the training unit if you have questions regarding offered courses.

Core Class offerings and begin dates:

Interpersonal Competence:	None
Essentials:	8/11 Salem, 9/1 Tigard
Computer Connections:	8/4 Tigard, 9/1 Salem
Expedited SNAP:	8/25 Salem
SNAP Basics:	8/25 Portland
ERDC:	8/11 Tigard, 8/25 Salem
TANF Eligibility:	9/22 Salem
TANF Case Management:	8/4 Salem
DV Policy & Case Planning:	8/6 Tigard
Services to Noncitizens:	8/11 Tigard, 9/1 Salem
Self-Employment	8/6 Winema

Have you taken one of our online courses? View this short video, <https://vimeo.com/79249744>, to learn about all the convenient features that make learning at your desk a cinch! The video lists all the online courses currently available which each take between 10-20 minutes to complete.

Look for Webcasts and other Online courses for:

2015 SNAP Civil Rights – C04948 SNAP NED Eligibility and Coding – C03279

Job Participation Incentive (JPI) – C04877

SNAP Transitional Benefit Alternative (TBA) – C04708

Oregon Vital Event Registration (OVERS) Update Training – C03682



June 2015 Targeted SNAP Reviews

100% Accuracy Honor Roll

0111 Baker City APD	1301 Burns SSP	2311 Ontario APD
0701 Alberta SSP	1311 Burns APD	2911 Tillamook AAA
0801 Gold Beach SSP	1402 New Market Theater SSP	3004 Milton-Freewater SSP
0913 La Pine APD	1404 Refugee Branch SSP	3013 Hermiston APD
0914 Redmond APD	1513 Medford APD SSO	3102 Enterprise SSP
1202 Condon SSP	1612 Madras APD	3111 La Grande APD
1211 John Day APD	1802 Lakeview SSP	3504 Metro Family Stability
	2202 Lebanon SSP	

90% or Better

96.55 St. Helens SSP	0501	94.44 La Pine SSP	0903	91.67 North Bend APD	0611
96.55 Cottage Grove SSP	2003	94.29 Medford SSP	1501	91.67 Grants Pass APD	1717
96.30 Coos Bay SSP	0601	94.12 Cave Junction SSP	1702	91.67 East Multnomah AAA	3518
96.00 South Valley SSP	1502	93.75 Baker City SSP	0101	91.11 Salem AAA	2411
95.83 Klamath Falls APD	1811	93.33 Warrenton AAA	0411	90.00 John Day SSP	1201
95.65 SE Portland AAA	1418	93.33 Springfield SSP	1101	90.00 Prineville SSP	1601
95.00 McKenzie Center SSP	2001	93.33 Keizer SSP	2405	90.00 Prineville APD	1611
95.00 Dallas AAA	2711	93.33 Tigard APD	3415	90.00 Pendleton SSP	3001
94.92 West Eugene SSP	2002	92.86 Canby APD	0310	90.00 Hillsboro APD	3411
94.87 SE Portland SSP	1401	92.00 Roseburg SSP	1001	90.00 McMinnville AAA	3617
		92.00 Roseburg APD DSO	1017		

Worker Honor Roll

Quality Assurance will publish a “Worker Honor Roll” to call attention to the outstanding work done by so many of you in the field. The workers on the list will have SNAP targeted review accuracy rates of 95% or better in the past six months.

Is your name on the list? [You can find out here.](#)

SNAP Preventative Tips

- Confusing pay stubs, call the employer to get clarification and share the information with your coworkers.
- Review the pay stubs. Pay frequency? Partial check? Potential tips? Additional income listed?
- When you are the worker who receives the pended information, read the narratives, check the screens and be sure to use all the income when processing the case.