



October 2013 On Target

October '13 Contributors

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In this issue:

Bad Addresses	1
Shelter and Utility costs	2
QC SNAP errors	
When should I remove a client from cash benefits if the client starts receiving Social Security benefits?	3
Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes....	3
Pursuit of Assets - TANF	3
Not a separate household?	4
What is considered a loan for TANF?	4
To TBA or not to TBA, that is the question!	5
News and Upcoming Training Offered by the SSP Training Unit	6
SNAP Honor Roll	7
QC Panel	7
Medical Honor Roll	8
Available Online Training	8

Bad Addresses

Recently we had to send out notices to the entire SNAP caseload. While preparing for the mass mailing we found some issues with addresses. We noticed a trend where “Homeless” is being coded as the home and mailing address. We even found some examples where the physical address was filled in with a valid address, but “Homeless” was listed as the mailing address.

These scenarios will guarantee, 100% of the time, mail will be returned on this case. It will also guarantee that the recipient will almost certainly have a break in benefits and be forced to make multiple contacts with the offices.

Addresses are the foundation of our cases. Without a valid mailing address, we technically do not have a filing date. Without a valid mailing address – recipients won’t get their notices. If recipients don’t get notices, they are being denied their due process, which we are federally required to provide. When this happens, we get QC errors. When we get QC errors, our error rate rises and we end up in trouble with Food and Nutrition Services (FNS).

It’s important to correctly code addresses on FSUP. The FSMIS system mails notices to the home address (what’s coded on the **Home Addr** field) unless another address is entered in the mailing address (**Mail Addr** field). If the case has a home and a mailing address, the system will send notices to the mailing address.

Please make sure you are not certifying cases without a valid mailing address. If the recipient is homeless, please make sure you add “homeless” to the **Home Addr** field and a valid mailing address to the **Mail Addr** field. If the applicant does not have one, they can use General Delivery as a last resort. This means that mail will be held at the local area post office for up to 30 days. In medium to large cities with multiple ZIP Codes, the applicant will want to make sure to use the ZIP Code for the area’s main Post Office. To find the main Post Office which will accept General Delivery in an area, you can speak to any Post Office associate or call 1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777).

In addition, if you receive mail returned, whether because the mailing address is coded as homeless, or it is a regular piece of returned mail, follow the returned mail process found in [Multiple Program Worker Guide #20](#). Make sure to check the files and online and narratives for any updated addresses. If found, make the update on the case and resend what has been returned. If no updated address can be found you must close the case with a reason code of RM. SNAP cases should not be opened if we do not have a valid mailing address.

Please help your clients ensure they get their notices and do not lose benefits. Make sure you have a valid mailing address on each and every case!

SNAP Policy Analysts

Shelter and Utility costs QC SNAP errors

Why do offices receive shelter and utility errors when proof of costs is not required?

QC has seen an increase in shelter and utility errors, some are agency caused and some are client caused. Let's talk about those client caused errors.

Most of the time clients do not mean to give us false information. They often didn't really understand the question on the application or how to correctly answer it. Asking for proof isn't necessarily the answer to the problem. Having a discussion is the answer. This is why interviews and the "human touch" are so very important.

Sure the application tells clients to list "everyone in your household" but do they always do this correctly – NO. How does your client define household? During the beginning of the conversation you need to ask questions so you can determine who lives in the home, how are they related to each other, and who purchases and prepares food together. Once you know who lives in the home and who is part of the SNAP filing group, you will have a better understanding of what you need to ask about the shelter and utility costs.

The 415F and the 859a were both recently revised to ask the shelter and utility questions a little differently than in past versions. Will you get better answers? We hope so. Will some people still fill it out wrong? We expect some will.

So what are some of the common things QC is finding which result in errors?

- Full rent is \$870/mo. Client doesn't report others in the household and lists the rent as \$870.00. QC finds there is a roommate who gives \$435 to our client each month. Our client then gives the full \$870 to the landlord. The agency allowed \$870 but the correct rent to allow is \$435.
- The client reports rent is \$795.00 and she lives alone. The landlord verified to QC the rent is \$750 and there is an additional \$45.00 monthly sewer charge. The agency allowed \$795 but the correct rent to allow is \$750. The \$45 charge is part of the utility allowance.
- The client reports living with a roommate and paying \$450 per month plus phone and all the utilities are included. The roommate and the client both state to QC the client has to pay \$300 every month for rent and \$150 for all the utilities (which includes heat) except for his phone which he pays for himself. The agency allowed \$450 shelter + \$54 TUA = \$504 total. The correct amount to allow was \$300 shelter + \$401 FUA = \$701 total.
- The client reports she pays \$1000/mo rent plus all the utilities and her income is \$1250/mo. QC discovers her mother rented the place for her. Her mother gives her a check every month for \$700 made out to the landlord. The agency allowed \$1000 shelter + \$401 FUA. The correct amount was \$300 shelter + \$401 FUA.
- The client reports rent is \$595/mo with all utilities included. QC discovers the client is on Section 8 and pays \$73/mo. The agency allowed \$595 but the correct amount to allow was \$73. Field Staff may believe QC receives different information because QC verifies shelter and utilities where the office accepts the client's statement. Sometimes that is true, but quite often it's the client who informs QC what the real facts are. In all the above situations the clients thought they were answering the questions correctly, but we know they weren't.

It's all in the conversation!

When should I remove a client from cash benefits if the client starts receiving Social Security benefits?

Page 3

Every month Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and State Family Pre SSI/SSDI (SFPSS) recipients are approved SSI and SSDI by the Social Security Administration (SSA). As part of the approval process, the SSA sends a TANF verification request to DHS to complete. This form is completed by the SFPSS program and then the ongoing worker is notified of the approval. But the question remains: When should the client be removed from the cash grant?

It's recommended no client be removed from the grant until the SSA benefits begin. The notification sent to the DHS Branches is simply an "FYI" of possible upcoming changes and should be used as such. Some case managers/workers use a tickler system within TRACS to remind themselves to check the SSA Screens, others have a task reminder system set up in the Calendar function of Outlook, while others may use sticky notes as an effective tool.

TANF Analysts

Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes...

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) created a new way of determining household composition and income for Medicaid and CHIP based on a customer's tax filing status called Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI).

As a result, The Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) has suspended the eligibility review portion of the Payment Error Rate Measurement (PERM) through 2017 and is requiring *all* states to conduct targeted "pilots" to measure the accuracy of the MAGI calculation, household size, closures, denials and if a referral was made to Cover Oregon- among other elements.

Branch 5503 will be working a vast majority of these cases and as a result Medical Eligibility Quality Control (MEQC) has decided to collaborate closely with them to identify deficiencies and the associated training needs. To say the State is on a learning curve with MAGI might be the understatement of the century...

Because of this unique review situation, *MEQC will not participate in the statewide monthly QC panel discussion*. However, you can still revel in the SNAP and TANF QC error discussion and will soon be able to enjoy the added bonus of upcoming ERDC reviews.

Quality Control

Pursuit of Assets—TANF

Sometimes our clients are unaware of potential assets they might have. As an agency, we can help our clients in identifying those potential assets. Checking UC screens, reviewing the application, and having a conversation with our clients will guide us as workers to determine if a potential asset exists. Remember, clients are required to pursue potential UC claims for all adults. For all adults, make sure to check both the EPC2 screen for potential claims and the claims history screen on ECLM for other potential claims.

If a client reports during the interview or on the application they were in an accident, they are required to pursue this potential asset by completing a 451 (Vehicle related claim) or 451NV (Non-Vehicle related injury). The form needs to be completed and returned to the address provided on the back of the form.

In order for initial TANF eligibility to be cleared, clients must inform their workers when they have actively pursued the asset—workers do not need to verify this information. This is enough information to open benefits. Please narrate the client's statement of pursuit.

Quality Control

Not a separate household?

Have you ever had a situation where a 21 year old applies for SNAP benefits while living with one or both of her parents? What about the 20 year old who submits an 852 reporting he is now living with his parent?

There is no denial reason based on being under 22 and living with their parents. The agency must make a determination of eligibility prior to denying the application or closing the case. If you are processing an application, the client can withdraw but this must be initiated by the client. If the client does not ask to withdraw or is reporting this information on an 852, the agency must request the information and verification necessary to determine eligibility, including the parent(s). Send the DHS210 or SDS539H if an application is being processed or the DHS487 if the 852 is being processed. The client has the option to submit what the agency requested or not.

If the client requests to withdraw their application, send a denial notice using withdrawal as the reason (code WI in the reas field on FCAS.) If the client fails to submit the requested verification, deny the application for failure to submit the verifications requested after the interview (use FC in the reas field on FCAS) or allow the open case to auto suspend and then auto close for failure to submit a complete 852.

Quality Control has seen a recent increase in errors because workers are denying or closing cases in these situations without first making a determination if the household is eligible for SNAP benefits.

Is it ever appropriate to deny for not being a separate household? Yes, if the others in the home already have an open SNAP case it would be appropriate to deny the new application and add the person or people to the ongoing case.

SNAP Policy Analysts

What is considered a loan for TANF?

Quality Control has found a few TANF errors regarding clients who receive help from others in the form of a loan. For TANF, to be considered a loan, clients are required to have:

1. A written loan agreement
2. The agreement must:
 - a. State the re-payment plan
 - b. Be signed and dated prior to money given.

If all of the above criteria are not met, the income is considered unearned income.

Example 1: Janet is applying for TANF for herself and her children in September. During the interview, she states her parents loaned her some money in the same month to get by until she is able to get other help. The worker asks Janet if she has a written loan agreement—Janet says no. Janet received \$300 from her parents in September. This is countable income as there is no written loan agreement.

Example 2: Samuel applies for TANF for himself and his son in April. He reports he received \$600 in the beginning of the month from a family friend as a loan. The worker asks for a copy of the loan agreement. Samuel provides a copy which simply states,

“Loan: \$600 to be paid back \$10 each month until paid in full. Signed John Smith, Samuel Smith Dated 03/29/2013.” The worker approves TANF and does not count the \$600 as countable income.

Example 3: Paige applies for TANF for herself and grandchild as a needy caretaker relative. Paige reports she received a loan from her cousin in the same month she applied. The worker asks for a copy of the loan agreement which states, “I have loaned Paige \$250 this month to help with her bills. Signed Jack Sprat.” The written loan agreement occurred after the money was given and is not dated. This is countable unearned income as the loan agreement was not made prior to exchange of money and was not dated.

Please refer to [CCA-B.45 2a](#) and [OAR 461-145-0330](#) on how to count loans for all programs.

Quality Control

To TBA or not to TBA, that is the question!

Recently the SNAP and TANF policy units have received many, many questions around when or when not to place a case into TBA. Here are the most common questions and answers.

Q#1: The SNAP case is expiring 10/31, but the TANF case closed 10/31 as the family went over income and reported this timely. Can I put the SNAP case into TBA 11/1 even though they haven't recertified?

Answer: Yes, you may place the SNAP case into TBA. The family does not need to complete the SNAP recertification in this scenario as they meet the requirements to have the case put into TBA. This would also apply to cases that are in month six of their certification and have an Interim Report due.

Q#2: The SNAP case is in suspense this month (October) as the family did not turn in their Interim Report. They just turned in their Interim Report and report new income. They are over income for TANF and the TANF case is closing 10/31. Can I place the case into TBA 10/1 without the new income?

Answer: No, the SNAP case would go into TBA the month after TANF closes. Since the SNAP case is in suspense, the Interim Report will need to be processed and the new income used to for the October SNAP calculation. The earliest the SNAP case could go into TBA is 11/1 and the income used for October would remain in the TBA case, minus the grant.

Q#3: My TANF client reported a new job. The TANF was pended for the client to turn in their paystubs. The client never turned in the pend items so I am closing TANF for failure to provide information. The client reported the job timely though, can I put the SNAP into TBA?

Answer: No, this SNAP case does not qualify for TBA because the TANF is closing due to failure to provide. SNAP cases are not eligible for TBA if TANF ends because the client did not provide requested information or proof to continue TANF eligibility.

Q#4: This TANF case is closing because my client got married and the new spouse's income puts the case over income. The new spouse is not in the TANF or the SNAP case. I want to put the SNAP case into TBA, but what do I do about the new spouse?

Answer: The new spouse would not be in the TBA case as they were not in the SNAP case during the final month of TANF. If adding the spouse to the SNAP case would increase the SNAP benefit, the client may opt to have the spouse added to the SNAP case, but they will not be eligible to TBA – the case would stay in SRS or CRS.

Q#5: This TANF case is closing because my client had a baby and the other parent is also moving in at the same time. The other parent puts the TANF case over income. I want to put the case into TBA, but what do I do about the baby and the other parent?

Answer: The baby and the other parent would not be in the TBA case as they were not in the SNAP case during the final month of TANF. If adding the baby and the other parent to the SNAP case would increase the SNAP benefit, the client may opt to add the baby and the other parent to the case, but they will not be eligible to TBA – the case would stay in SRS or CRS. As a reminder, for SNAP, act on all reported changes at the same time, so if a new baby is born and the other parent is in the home, they both must be added to the SNAP case at the same time.

Q#6: My client got a new job and went over income for TANF. They provided their paystubs and I am closing TANF 10/31. I know this family qualifies for TBA 11/1, but since I have the paystubs, do I have to add the new income to the TBA case?

Answer: The new income would not be added to the TBA case since it was not on the SNAP case in the last month of TANF eligibility. Only income that was on the SNAP case in the final month of TANF would stay on, except the TANF grant would be removed.

Q#7: This client reported a new job, but did not report timely. The job started 2 months ago. They provided their paystubs and the TANF is closing due to over income. The income is under 130% FPL for SNAP, so they didn't have to report it for SNAP. Do they qualify for TBA?

Answer: This case is not eligible for TBA as the client did not timely report the new income for TANF. The TBA is based off the reason for the TANF closure and whether or not the change reported was timely. The client did not report a required change for TANF within 10 days.

If you have questions about TBA, please contact SNAP.POLICY@state.or.us If you have questions about TANF eligibility, please contact TANF.POLICY@state.or.us

News and Upcoming Training Offered by the SSP Training Unit

We are aware of the high waitlist for SSP core classes and are working diligently towards a resolution. The SSP training unit is adding classes and trainers as additional venues are made available. We are pleased to announce that we have recently added a classroom in Woodburn and the first training (Essentials) was held there the week of October 15. We hope the addition of this venue will help alleviate the waiting lists over time in many of our core courses.

Important reminders to staff:

- Please register for classes in the correct sequence as these courses build on one another. This will aid in the learning process for new workers.
- If you know you will not be able to attend a class you are registered for, please cancel your registration so others on the wait list can receive notification and attend.
- Please do not remove your name from a waitlist, even if the class has already occurred. If a new session gets added, notification is sent to those on the waitlist to attend the newly added session, before it is opened statewide for registration.

Core Class offerings with begin date/location.

Bolded dates/locations are recently added classes

Essentials	11/12 Tigard, 12/17 Tigard
Computer Connections	10/22 Woodburn , 11/12 Salem, 11/19 Salem, 12/17 Salem
Interpersonal Competence (formerly Customer Service)	10/29 Salem , 10/30 Salem, 11/12, 11/13 Salem
Expedited SNAP	11/12 Woodburn , 11/25 Portland, 12/18 Portland
SNAP Basics	10/29 Woodburn , 11/5 Portland, 12/3 Salem, 12/3 Portland
ERDC	11/12 Salem , 12/10 Tigard
TANF Eligibility	10/22 Salem, 11/19 Tigard
DV Policy & Case Planning	10/31 Salem
Services to Noncitizens	11/5 Salem, 12/3 Tigard, 12/17 Woodburn

Upcoming Netlink or Webinar

OFSET	10/22 Netlink
Medical Deductions	11/19 Netlink
SRS	11/20 Netlink
Calculating Income	12/17 Webinar (not on LC)

Email SSP.Training@state.or.us if you have questions regarding offered courses.



September 2013

Targeted SNAP Reviews

100% Accuracy Honor Roll

0511 St. Helens APD	1811 Klamath Falls APD	2711 Dallas AAA
0911 Bend APD	1911 Woodburn AAA	2911 Tillamook AAA
0913 LaPine APD	2011 Eugene LCOG AAA	3013 Hermiston APD
1202 Condon SSP	2019 Cottage Grove AAA	3102 Enterprise SSP
1211 John Day APD	2101 Newport SSP	3111 LaGrande APD
1301 Burns SSP	2111 Toledo AAA	3211 Florence AAA
1402 New Market Theater	2701 Dallas SSP	3415 Tigard APD
1404 Refugee Branch		3617 McMinnville AAA

90% or Better

96.67 Lebanon SSP	2202	94.00 South Salem SSP	2401	92.00 Portland Mid-Area AAA	3515
96.00 South Valley SSP	1502	93.55 Cottage Grove SSP	2003	91.84 McKenzie Center	2001
96.00 Grants Pass APD	1717	93.33 Baker City APD	0111	91.67 The Dalles SSP	3301
96.00 West Eugene SSP	2002	93.33 Candy APD	0310	91.01 Metro Processing Center	1403
96.00 Tillamook SSP	2901	93.33 Oregon City APD	0311	90.38 North Salem SSP	2402
96.00 La Grande SSP	3101	93.33 Milwaukie APD	0313	90.00 Astoria SSP	0401
96.00 Hillsboro APD	3411	93.33 Warrenton AAA	0411	90.00 Alberta SSP	0701
95.83 Pendleton SSP	3001	93.33 St. Helens SSP	0501	90.00 Prineville SSP	1601
95.00 Integrated Services SSP	0702	93.33 Roseburg APD SSO	1011	90.00 D4 Processing Center	2203
95.00 Cave Junction SSP	1702	93.33 Ontario APD	2311	90.00 Santiam Center	2404
95.00 D2 ERDC Proc Center	3503	92.00 Springfield SSP	1101	90.00 Milton-Freewater SSP	3004
94.74 D8 Processing Center	1503	92.00 Albany AAA	2211	90.00 Gresham SSP	3502

Quality Control (QC) Panel

On the last Monday of each month, the Quality Control (QC) unit conducts a statewide video conference (QC Panel meeting, 1:15pm) to review the errors they have identified. The concept of the meeting is for staff in branch offices, QC, QA, policy staff, training staff, and all connected parties, to meet and talk about what caused the error and how to prevent similar errors in the future.

Although to a worker, this may feel intimidating; those who have attended have provided feedback quite to the contrary. Workers and others attending walk away with a better understanding of what may have caused the errors, how to prevent them in the future, and the efforts QC makes to avoid citing errors to begin with. And- no one *ever* gets yelled at or singled out in any way. In fact, we need your help and perspective- increasing accuracy is a statewide effort!

QC staff strives to make the meeting as informal as possible, and policy staff are available to provide clarification as needed. It is our goal for the meeting and discussions to be meaningful for those attending.

Even if you don't have an error, we encourage you to attend the QA panels. It's a great way to find out what is happening around the state, clear up misinformation, learn about why we have reviews and connect with your fellow workers statewide.

If you would like to attend, talk to your manager, then contact one of the Quality Control managers, Susan Bechtold or Lisa Barger-Fox, to access copies of the cases to be discussed and locations for the video conference. Local staff are invited to attend in person.

Hope to see you at a QC panel meeting soon! *Quality Control*



September 2013

Targeted Medical Reviews

100% Accuracy Honor Roll

0101 Baker City SSP	1503 D8 Processing Center	2203 D4 Processing Center
0401 Astoria SSP	1602 Madras SSP	2404 Santiam Center
0501 St. Helens SSP	1603 Warm Springs SSP	2601 St. Johns SSP
0903 LaPine SSP	1702 Cave Junction SSP	2701 Dallas SSP
1002 South Umpqua Center	1801 Klamath Falls SSP	2901 Tillamook SSP
1201 John Day SSP	1802 Lakeview SSP	3004 Milton-Freewater SSP
1301 Burns SSP	2002 West Eugene SSP	3101 La Grande SSP
1402 New Market Theater	2003 Cottage Grove SSP	3102 Enterprise SSP
1406 Mult Teen Parent SSP	2101 Newport SSP	3501 East Portland SSP
1501 Medford SSP	2201 Albany SSP	3503 D2 ERDC Proc Center
1502 South Valley SSP	2202 Lebanon SSP	3601 McMinnville SSP

90% or Better

94.74 South Salem SSP	2401	94.12 Metro Processing Ctr	1403	91.67 Hillsboro SSP	3402
94.68 Oregon Health Plan	5503	93.33 Grants Pass SSP	1701	91.67 Wa Co Processing Ctr	3404
94.44 North Salem SSP	2402	93.33 Woodburn SSP	1901	90.00 McKenzie Center	2001
94.12 North Clackamas SSP	0303	92.31 NE Portland Proc Ctr	2803	90.00 Gresham SSP	3502

Available Online Training

Are you familiar with the computer based trainings currently available on the Learning Center? Most take only a short time to complete and are a great way to get important information from the comforts of your own desk.

Please check out our newly developed Self-Sufficiency Program Overview. This computer based training course provides a brief overview of the four major self Sufficiency programs - TANF, SNAP, ERDC and TA-DVS. This is a great introductory tool for newly hired staff and should be taken by staff prior to attending the Essentials class.

The following trainings are current and available to take at any time. When you get a chance, take a moment or two to peruse the list and see if you could use a quick refresher by taking any one of these:

Online: Self Sufficiency Program Overview- C03904. *Newly revised*

Online: SNAP Civil Rights – C03640-**Annual requirement for staff who determine SNAP eligibility**

Online: National Voter Registration Act – C03475

Webinar: Oregon Vital Events Registration (OVERS) – C03682

Webinar: SNAP NED Eligibility and Coding – C03279

Online: Job Participation Incentive (JPI) – C03468

Online: SNAP Transitions Benefits Alternative (TBA) – C03472

CAPI: All Staff Module 2 –C02808

CAPI: Case Worker Module 1 - C02961

CAPI: Case Worker Module 2 – C02962

CAPI: Case Worker Module 3 – C02963

CAPI: Support Staff Module 2-Assigned Application Queue – C02811

CAPI: Support Staff Module 3-Missed Appointments Queue – C01812

Please continue to check often as there are several more trainings in development and coming to a computer near you!

SSP Training Unit