

November 13, 2008

**SUPPLEMENTAL
NUTRITION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM
QUALITY CONTROL
POLICY MEMO**

**Region: ALRO
Index No.: QC-09-02
Provision: Handbook 310**

**Subject: Quality Control (QC) File Structure Desk
Guidelines**

FNS staff is working on making improvements to the QC process. One of the major components of the improvements that we are working towards is the development of a paperless work environment for both State and Federal QC staff. In order to accomplish such a big task we are working on a number of issues. The first will be to work towards a web based next generation version of what is currently called the Food Stamp Quality Control System (FSQCS). Of course with the recent name change this is actually now the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Quality Control System (SNAP-QCS). As we move toward this and other improvements we will eventually work towards more electronic approaches to doing QC reviews. As a first step we need to standardize as much of what we can in gathering of information. To that end we are requesting your assistance in how we get information in the QC records.

This memo provides a uniform standard in the assembly of required documentation contained in Quality Control (QC) case files. The reason for these guidelines is to increase consistency among States in our efforts to eventually becoming completely automated. In addition, by conforming to these standards, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) QC re-reviewers will spend less time searching for information and verification for a particular element. This will decrease the need for follow-up contact with a State for omitted information which should result in time and resource savings for both States and FNS.

The attached four pages detail the structures for Active Complete, Active Drop, Negative Complete and Negative Drop case files. Please implement this policy as soon as possible but no later than March 1, 2009.

signed

John Knaus
Acting Director
Program Accountability and Administration Division
Attachments

The contents of this guidance document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

QC Review - Active Complete File Structure

QC documents are to be filed and submitted to FNS in the following order:

- 1) QC Review Narrative Summary (include the sample selection date for the case)
- 2) FNS-380-1, the Quality Control Review Schedule
- 3) FNS-380, Worksheet for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Quality Control Reviews¹
- 4) Supplemental Assistance Application
- 5) All documentation from the most recent certification/recertification action which established a certification period for the QC sample month
- 6) Eligibility History
- 7) Benefit/Issuance History
- 8) Verification² Document by Element (Documents and system screen shots) – put in order by element number and identified with the appropriate element number(s)³ of the FNS-380
- 9) Documents to verify the Timeliness of Application Processing Coding.

¹ A complete FNS-380 includes: the Facesheet page 1, narrative pages 2 through 14, and a completed computation sheet.

² Examples of Verification standards are found in FNS Handbook 310 Chapter 8 through 12. They are listed in the sections by element number. Chapter 8 covers Non-financial Eligibility Criteria, Chapter 9 – Resources, Chapter 10 – Income, and Chapter 11 - Deductions.

³ Element numbers and titles are found in Column 1 of the FNS-380 on pages 2 though 14.

QC Review – Active Drop File Structure

QC documents are to be filed and submitted to FNS in the following order:

- 1) QC Review Narrative Summary¹ (include the sample selection date for the case)
- 2) FNS-380-1, the Quality Control Review Schedule
- 3) FNS-380, Worksheet for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Quality Control Reviews²
- 4) Verification/Documentation supporting the reason for dropping the case and all verification that was gathered in the attempt to complete the case by Element (Documents and system screen shots) – put in order by element number and identified with the appropriate element number(s) of the FNS-380
- 5) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Application
- 6) All documentation from the most recent certification/recertification action which established a certification period for the QC sample month
- 7) Eligibility History
- 8) Benefit/Issuance History
- 9) Documents to verify the Timeliness of Application Processing Coding.

¹ This should give a full explanation of why the case was dropped including all efforts taken to attempt to complete the case and the reason(s) why the case could not be completed.

² The FNS-380 should document all actions taken to complete the review and the obstacles that prevented completion.

QC Review - Negative Complete File Structure

QC documents are to be filed and submitted to FNS in the following order:

- 1) QC Review Narrative Summary (include the sample selection date for the case)
- 2) FNS-245¹, Quality Control – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Negative Case Action Review Schedule
- 3) Documentation of Negative Action taken (Denial, Termination, Suspension)
- 4) For Denials – the application;
For Terminations – Information that caused the termination action;
For Suspension – Information that caused the suspension action
- 5) All documents relating to the negative action that verify information or that document information observed. This includes EW documentation on why the action was taken
- 6) The following documents as they relate to the negative action taken: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Application, Eligibility History, Benefit/Issuance History.

¹ The FNS-245 is both a data input form as well as a form for documenting the result of the review. Reviewers must document the form sufficiently to explain what happened, the validity or invalidity of the action and the factual information that was the basis of their decision.

QC Review – Negative Drop File Structure

QC documents are to be filed and submitted to FNS in the following order:

- 1) QC Review Narrative Summary (include the sample selection date for the case)
- 2) FNS-245¹, Quality Control – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance negative Case Action Review Schedule
- 3) Verification/Documentation² to support the reason for dropping the case
- 4) Notice of denial/termination
- 5) The following documents as they relate to the negative action taken: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Application, Eligibility History, Benefit/Issuance History

¹ The FNS-245 is both a data input form as well as a form for documenting the result of the review. Reviewers must document the form sufficiently to explain what happened, the validity or invalidity of the action and the factual information that was the basis of their decision.

² The “Not Subject to Review” reasons are located in Section 1322 of the FNS Handbook 310 and Incomplete Cases are in Section 1323. The definition of a Case record in Section 1330 makes it clear that there are few if any cases that will meet the definition of an incomplete case.