

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION SERVICES
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MEMORANDUM

To: EES Chiefs

Date: July 16, 2003

From: Bobbi Mariani

RE: KEESM Rev. 15, 8/1/03 Implementation
Overview and Instructions

This memo is an overview of the implementation of simplified reporting and the elimination of monthly reporting. Please insure that staff read this memo and the appropriate sections of the KEESM Revision 15 Summary of Change letter before attending the Food Stamp Training events. It would also be helpful to bring a copy of this memo to the training session.

Background

Effective 8/1/03, the agency will implement major changes in the TAF and Food Stamp programs. Monthly reporting is being eliminated. In its place will be change reporting (CR) for all TAF consumers and simplified reporting (SR) for food stamp consumers. Current food stamp consumers who are subject to change reporting, with the exception of households in which all adults are elderly or disabled, will also become simplified reporters. Food stamp households in which all adults are elderly or disabled will stay change reporters. Change reporting requirements will, therefore, be consolidated for cash, medical, and child care recipients as well as elderly and disabled food assistance recipients.

What is a change reporting household?

Change reporting households are responsible for reporting changes within 10 days of the date the change becomes known to the household. These households are required to report changes like a change in earned income of \$100 or more, changes in unearned income of \$50 or more, household composition changes, address changes, etc. The specific reporting requirements for change reporting households can be found at KEESM 9121.

What is a simplified reporting household?

A simplified reporting household is only required to report when the household's total monthly gross income exceeds 130% of the poverty line for their household size. If there is an ABAWD in the household who is working 20 hours per week, they are also required to report if the ABAWD's work hours go below 20 hours per week. Simplified reporting households also have to complete an interim report form 6 months after approval or review. That's all they are required to report. See KEESM 9122 for simplified reporting requirements.

How will we learn about these changes?

Face-to-face detailed training on implementation of these changes for the Food Stamp Program will be provided to all staff in the upcoming food stamp training events. An additional purpose of the training events is to provide other training and workshops on overall error reduction strategies for the FSP in Kansas. Training on the TAF aspects of these changes will not be provided during the training events other than how they relate to a food stamp case. This is because the training events are being

funded by food stamp reinvestment monies. This memo, therefore, includes implementation instructions for implementing these changes for the TAF program.

How will we implement these changes?

As noted above, detailed implementation information for simplified reporting will be provided at the training events. The following information is an overview of implementation. If a staff person cannot attend a training event, they must obtain a copy of the training packet and review the packet with their supervisor or another person who attended the training.

What Else Will I Learn about Simplified Reporting at the Training?

You'll learn:

- How to process the interim report
- What happens when the interim report is not returned
- What happens when the interim report is returned after the case has closed
- Based on when the review is due, how to determine when the IR is due
- 130% income reporting threshold and how to determine it
- System changes for simplified reporting
- Detailed information about reports that will be generated for identifying and prioritizing cases to be converted
- System processing steps for converting cases
- You'll also learn about ongoing reports of IR's sent and IR closures that will be available on SAR
- How to process applications during conversion
- Case examples galore!

What other changes are in KEESM Revision 15?

- Retrospective budgeting is also being eliminated. All cash and food stamp cases will be budgeted prospectively using income conversion or income averaging, as appropriate.
- For change reporting households, the threshold for reporting unearned income changes is being raised from \$25 to \$50. Affected households will be required to report changes in unearned income of more than \$50.
- For change reporting households, the date when the change becomes known to the household is being clearly defined. A chart is included in the KEESM. For example, for a new source of income, the consumer must report the change within 10 days of receiving their first paycheck rather than within 10 days of starting the employment. See KEESM 9121.
- Because the elimination of retrospective budgeting could negatively impact persons who have just started a new job or increased their hours of employment, a Work Transition Allowance (WTA) has been developed to aid in job retention efforts and help stabilize a TAF family as they transition to employment. The WTA does not count toward the TAF 60-month time limit. It is also

considered exempt income for all other programs. TAF clients may be eligible for the WTA in addition to other Special Services (i.e., car repairs, purchase of uniforms, etc.).

How will cases be converted?

Conversion of FS cases to simplified reporting and TAF cases to change reporting will occur differently depending on the type of case that is being converted.

Conversion of change reporting food stamp households to simplified reporting:

- These households will be notified of their new reporting requirements in a mass notice mailed from Central Office on 7/28/03. This notice will include the 130% threshold amount for the food stamp household size. With this notice, we are considering all these cases to be simplified reporters effective August 1, 2003. A copy of this notice will be in Notice History for each case.
- Conversion of these cases will start 8/1, or as soon as staff are back from training. Since these cases are already prospectively budgeted, converting the case mostly means doing some coding and entering when the interim report will be due.
- Cases with a review due January 2004 or sooner, will NOT need an interim report due date entered as part of conversion, since the case will come due for review prior to the end of six months. Remember, simplified reporters must complete an interim report six months from the date they are certified as a simplified reporter. Therefore, any case due for review within 6 months of 8/1/03 will not need an interim report set up. Coding on MRHR and FSAD will, however, be required if FSAD is authorized before the review date.
- Cases with a review date of February 2004 or later, WILL need an interim report due date entered as part of conversion since the case will be certified for longer than 6 months from 8/1/03. To avoid all interim reports being due at the same time, a conversion schedule has been developed which will assure that interim reports are staggered for the next 6 months.
- Staff must prioritize conversion of cases and do those due for review in 2/04 first, then reviews due 3/04 and 4/04, 5/04, 6/04, and finally 7/04.
- The first interim report will be due for households with a review date of 2/04. They will be generated on 8/20 (mailed 8/21) and will be due back 9/5. Cases due for 2/04 review, therefore, must have conversion of the case done by 8/20/03.
- The second interim reports will be for cases due for 3/04 and 4/04 reviews. These are being doubled up and must have conversion done by 9/19/03 to insure that an interim report is generated on 9/20/03. (These months are doubled up because we essentially have 5 months to do 6 months of conversion.)
- After the first two months are converted, staff will continue converting cases for the next 3 months with a deadline to convert by the IR run date. This will be explained in detail at the training and a chart outlining all deadlines is contained in the training packet. A report will be generated to assist staff in this conversion! More on that to follow.

A special note - for cases listed above - if the case has a change that must be processed before the conversion of the case or before the next review - and FSAD must be authorized, the case will have to be converted at that point since the system will "force" entries on MRHR and FSAD after 8/1/03. Again, we'll go into detail about this in the training. A message will also be sent from Helpdesk when the changes are migrated into production - this is important since staff attending the Wichita training events the first week of August will need to know about these changes prior to attending the training.

Conversion of monthly reporting households to simplified reporting or change reporting:

- Food stamp cases currently attached to TAF cases and subject to monthly reporting will become simplified reporters. These households will NOT be included in the mass mailing of 7/28/03 since a notice will also need to be sent regarding the change in TAF reporting requirements. A worker generated notice must be sent when the case is converted. Numerous notices have been prepared for this and you will learn about them at the training.
- TAF cases subject to monthly reporting will become change reporters. TAF households will NOT be notified of the change in reporting requirements through the mass notice. Like the food stamp cases attached to them, they must be notified of the new reporting requirements via a worker generated notice.
- MR cases being converted must be converted in August or September 2003.
- September will be the last retrospectively budgeted month based on July income. All cases should be prospectively budgeted for October 1, 2003.
- The date of the next review is also important for food stamp monthly reporting cases being converted to simplified reporting. As noted above, food stamp cases with a review due in 2/04 must be converted first and they must be converted by 8/20/03.
- Any case that has a change which must be acted on in August should be converted at that time. If a food stamp case is converted in August based on its 2/04 review date, then the corresponding TAF case should be converted at the same time.
- Other MR cases can and should also be converted in August. All the rest of the cases have to be converted by 9/19/03. Again, FS MR cases with a review due 3/04 and 4/04 must be converted by this date to allow an auto IR to be sent on 9/20.
- The last MR mailing dates are 8/22 and 8/29, and the last MR closure runs the night of 9/18.

FS Cases That are Change Reporting and Staying Change Reporting:

- Little will need to be done to these cases. As previously noted, because of the changes that will be made to MRHR and FSAD effective 8/1/03 (a Helpdesk message will tell you about these changes when they are migrated to production) these cases will have additional coding the next time FSAD is authorized. In addition to any change in benefits notice, these households should also be sent a Change Report Form which will have the new unearned income reporting requirement of more than \$50.

What kind of reports will be issued to assist staff in monitoring conversion?

- FS Cases Converting to Simplified Reporting - When the mass notice is generated on 7/25, a report will also be generated on SAR for staff to identify and prioritize cases for conversion. This report will contain all FS cases with a 2/04 or later review due date changing to simplified reporting. This report includes the FS MR cases with a review due of 2/04 or later changing to SR, however, as already noted these households will NOT be sent the mass SR notice.
- The report will be sorted by caseload and by alphabet and review due date in descending order.
- All open programs will be listed on the report.
- It will be run July 25th and will available July 28th.
- The report name is FS Simplified Reporters Review >1/04. The SAR ID is: SWM06FSR-R01.

- Monthly reporting printouts - Two print-outs will be issued to staff in late July based on information in KAECSES as of 7/8/03. One print-out will show MR TAF cases with income, and one will show MR TAF cases without income. This will allow staff to prioritize earned income cases first for conversion. Clean-up reports of TAF cases still coded as MR will be produced in early September and again in early October.
- Cases will be listed alpha by case name and sorted by caseload.
- More detailed information about these printouts will accompany the printouts.

What about notices?

- One of the most important aspects of these changes is that consumers MUST be notified of their reporting requirements - whether a change reporter or simplified reporter. All cash and FS households must be sent a notice with the approval notice that explains the reporting requirements. At the training you will get a list of all the new and modified notices and a "notice matrix" that will assist you in determining what reporting requirements notice needs to be sent based on the circumstances of the case.
- As noted earlier in this memo, no mass change notice or stuffer will be issued to TAF or FS households being switched from monthly reporting to change reporting/simplified reporting. Staff will be required to send Notice V040, Cash Change Reporter/FS Simplified Reporter or V041, Cash Change Reporter, as appropriate, to each former MR household upon case conversion.
- These notices will be not be available to staff until August 1st.

How will TAF cases be converted and how do I implement the Work Transition Allowance (WTA)?

- Effective date for applicants. All applications processed on or after August 1, 2003, shall have eligibility for all months (back to the date of application) budgeted prospectively using income conversion or income averaging as appropriate. If income is not representative, use actual income to determine benefits. Utilizing the Notice Matrix, determine the proper notice to notify the TAF consumer of their reporting requirements. (You'll get this at the training.)
- Case closures. No TAF cases may be closed for failure to provide a monthly report form after 9/30/03.
- Conversion steps are as follows:
 - Convert earnings and place on prospective screen
 - Review HOSU to insure any other income and expenses are known and placed on prospective screens
 - Change MRHR to show MR exempt for TAF by changing Y to N with the reason code of NA
 - Authorize AAFP
 - Send appropriate reporting requirements notice based on Notice Matrix.
 - System changes that are occurring
 - Automatic de-authorization of cases with earnings will stop before rollover in August for October benefits.

- No system changes for the TAF programs have been made on MRHR. TAF could still be retrospectively budgeted if the CA MR and Reason fields on MRHR are not changed to "N" and "NA," respectively. The "R" budgeting method is still available for recalculating past month's benefits. Staff, therefore, must be diligent in selecting the "P" (Prospective) budgeting type from the KAECSES menus when converting cases.
- The batch jobs related to MR processing are being discontinued. The last MR will be mailed in August for cases not already converted. The last MR closure will run in September.
- The "SU" code which was previously used in retrospective budgeting to withhold payment when a case was anticipated to be over the income limit for only one month will no longer be available as the "SU" code does not work for prospectively budgeted cash cases.
- These cases will now have to be closed.
- Implementation of the Work Transition Allowance (WTA)
- Effective date. The first month a WTA could be paid is September 2003.
- Who is eligible. Consumers who lose TAF cash eligibility at the end of the same month that the employment starts or wages increase are eligible for a WTA. Note that the consumer would not be eligible for the WTA if one of the exceptions to eligibility for extended services (i.e., client moving out of state, no longer a TAF eligible child in the home, death of the only adult on the case, or the 60 month TAF time limit-See KEESM 3410) occurs at the same time as the loss of cash assistance due to the increase in earned income.
- Determining the amount of the WTA.
- When a consumer reports employment or an increase in earned income, the EES case manager is expected to have a conversation with the consumer about the need for a WTA. This conversation should include the following: When the rent and utilities will be due; additional expenses expected during the next month; amount and date paychecks will be received; child support and any other income that may be available to the family during the month following the loss of cash assistance and when that other income should be received.
- To aid in job retention, the goal of the WTA is to assure the consumer has enough money for basic living expenses and does not face late fees, eviction, or utility shut-offs for delaying payment on bills because of the timing of paychecks and the loss of cash assistance.
- The amount of the allowance is to be based on individual consumer need for rent and basic living expenses and may be up to the amount of the previous TAF monthly benefit for the household.
- The allowance is to be issued early in the month following the effective date of closure of cash assistance.
- Coding Issues
- In order to track WTA expenditures on KsCares, staff must add the WP activity code of WTA to SESP and the service payment code of WT to AUSW to identify these allowances.
- In KsCares, a consumer is to be coded JO TR on PASS whenever the TAF cash case is closed. When the TAF case is closed due to earnings, an EMP Activity is to be opened on SESP with the scheduled hours of employment. When a WTA is being paid, the WTA Activity should also

be opened on SESP with "0" scheduled hours for the month that the allowance is issued.

- Paying the WTA
- A WTA is to be paid from KsCares to the consumer. The consumer will be the Recipient of Payment on AUSW.
- The payment type is Special Services (SS).
- WTA will be included in the payment totals calculated on WPAH and WPPH
- Funding of the WTA
- Additional funds have been earmarked to fund WTAs.
- Each area will be provided with an initial allocation specifically for the WTAs. Additional funds will be allocated, if necessary, to support Work Transition Allowances.
- A report will be issued monthly so areas and Central Office can monitor the use of the WTA

allocation. In order for these reports to be accurate, it is imperative that staff place the WTA activity code on SESP and the WT service code on AUSW when issuing a work transition allowance.

- Notices. A new KsCares notice, W809, has been developed and is to be used to notify the consumer when a WTA is authorized.
- Case examples. Some examples involving the issuance of a WTA will be provided during the Food Stamp Training Conference. The following additional examples further illustrate the intent of the policy:
 - *New Employment Reported* – TAF consumer receives \$403 September cash benefits and then reports on 9/5 she started work on 9/2. On 9/12, the consumer supplies the information necessary to determine her October eligibility. The consumer is determined ineligible for TAF cash in October and the cash case is closed 9/30 due to excess income. The EES case manager has a conversation with the consumer to plan for support services, including the WTA. This conversation includes the following: When the rent and utilities will be due; additional expenses expected during the next month; amount and date paychecks will be received; child support and any other income that may be available to the family during the month following the loss of cash assistance and when that other income should be received. In this scenario, it is jointly determined that a \$300 WTA will be needed in October in order to meet the consumer's rent and utility needs and avoid late charges. The allowance is to be issued on KsCares so that it is received within the first 5 days in October.
 - *Loss of Employment is Reported* – Consumer received a \$300 WTA on 10/3/03. On October 7, consumer reports that she lost her job on October 2 and will receive her last paycheck on October 10. She requests TAF cash assistance for the month of October. A new application is not required to determine eligibility for October nor is pro-ration applicable. October TAF cash eligibility is determined based on the prospective earned income received in October and the child support received by the consumer that month. The WTA is not considered as income in the determination of eligibility nor is it considered an overpayment. The consumer is eligible for a \$ 350 TAF cash benefit for October and a \$403 November cash benefit. Note: The worker should have a conversation with the consumer about the option of not receiving the TAF October cash benefit in order to save that month of TAF assistance.

- *New Employment for Exempt TAF Consumer* – Exempt TAF consumer (child under age one) receives \$403 cash benefits for September and then reports on 9/5 that she started work on 9/2. The consumer supplies the information necessary to determine the October eligibility on 9/12. The consumer is determined ineligible for TAF cash in October and the cash case is closed 9/30 due to excess income. Even though this consumer has not been involved in work programs, the EES case manager or the Eligibility Worker has a conversation with the consumer to plan for support services, including the WTA. This conversation includes the following: When the rent and utilities will be due; additional expenses expected during the month; amount and date paychecks will be received; child support and any other income that may be available to the family during the month following the loss of cash assistance and when that other income should be received; the need for child care, transportation and any other supports (i.e., car repair, uniforms, etc.) that would be helpful in maintaining employment.

It is jointly determined that a \$403 WTA will be needed in October in order to meet the consumer's rent and utility needs and avoid late charges. In addition, the consumer needs child care and transportation. A KsCares case would be opened as a result.

THANK YOU for reading this memo! Please be prepared to ask any questions that you have at the training events, or contact Diane Dykstra or Paula Gibson regarding specific TAF/WTA implementation issues.

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