



CBPP SNAP Academy

Webinar 6: SNAP Recertification

February 18, 2015

Agenda

- Introduce CBPP SNAP Team and Mass Law Reform Institute
- SNAP Reporting Obligations
- SNAP Recertification/Renewal Process
- Strategies to Identify and Address “Churn”
- Questions

Guest Presenter

Patricia Baker, Senior Policy Analyst and Chair MA SNAP Coalition
 Mass Law Reform Institute www.mlri.org

MLRI
 MASSACHUSETTS
 LAW REFORM
 INSTITUTE



Home

+ About Us

Welcome to the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

+ Advocacy

The Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI) is a statewide nonprofit poverty law and policy center. Its mission is to advance economic, racial and social justice through legal action, policy advocacy, coalition building, and community outreach. MLRI specializes in large-scale legal initiatives and systemic reforms that address the root causes of poverty, remove barriers to opportunity, promote economic stability and create a path to self-sufficiency for low-income individuals and families.

+ State Budget Analysis

+ 45 Years of Impact

In addition, MLRI serves as the statewide poverty law support center for the Massachusetts civil legal services delivery system, providing expertise and support to local legal aid programs and also to social service, health care and human service providers, and other community organizations that serve low income people.

+ Our Community Partners

MLRI's goals and objectives are to:

+ Video: "End of the Line"

- address public and institutional policies and procedures that either contribute to, or perpetuate, the cycle of poverty;
- ensure that low-income and underserved populations across the state are provided the same legal protections, rights and liberties enjoyed by all members of society;
- provide local legal services providers and community-based advocacy organizations that serve low income people with the substantive expertise, technical assistance, support, and trainings they need to best serve their clients.

+ News and Media

+ Publications

+ Support & Training

+ Donate to MLRI

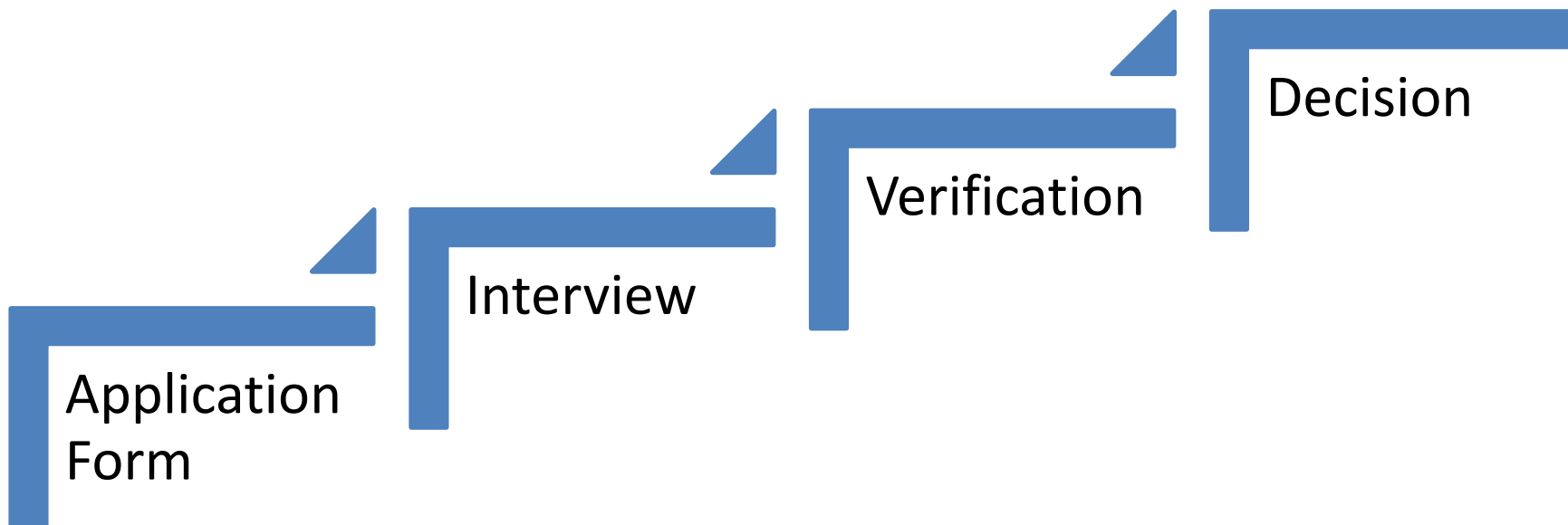
For over 45 years, MLRI's advocacy has been responsible for groundbreaking policies that have advanced the legal, economic and social rights of low-income people.

+ Contact Us

It is considered one of the premier law reform and statewide poverty law support centers in the nation.



Re-Cap on Applications



SNAP Recertification Framework

Why is the recertification process important?

What is different about the SNAP recert vs application process?

How much time do individuals have to complete the process before their SNAP case closes?

Why is it important for us as advocates or assisters to engage in the recertification process?



SNAP Eligibility Framework

Apply
(application,
interview,
and
verifications)

Participate

Report
changes and
verifications



Recertify
interview
and
verifications

Participate

What are Certification Periods?

- SNAP benefits are approved for a set number of months – called a **“certification period”**
- The length of time usually depends on the characteristics of the household
- **Before the end of the cert period**, the state must give the household the opportunity to renew or recertify without interruption.

SNAP Certification Periods

Most households:
Certified for 6-12
months

“Interim” or
Simplified Reporting

Seniors & persons
with disabilities:
Certified 24+ months

Interim “contact” &
Change Reporting

Special SNAP Certification Periods

Expedited:

Certified 1-2 months pending completion of full application process

ABAWDs:

Typically certified for 3 months, if subject to time limit

Notice of Approval/Recertification

- After completing the SNAP recertification process, the household typically receives one or two **written notices** that give:
 - The amount of monthly SNAP benefits
 - The length of the certification period and/or the month when the cert period ends
 - The household “reporting requirements” during the cert period (this may also be in a separate SNAP notice to the household)

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR CALFRESH BENEFITS

COUNTY OF _____

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Notice Date : _____
 Case Name : _____
 Number : _____
 Worker Name : _____
 Number : _____
 Telephone : _____
 Address : _____

(ADDRESSEE)

Questions? Ask your Worker.

State Hearing: If you think this action is wrong, you can ask for a hearing. The back of this page tells you how. Your benefits may not be changed if you ask for a hearing before this action takes place.

YOUR APPLICATION FOR CALFRESH BENEFITS HAS BEEN APPROVED.

Your initial amount of benefits is: \$ _____ for _____. Your benefit amount for the rest of your certification period will be \$ _____ from _____ through _____.

IF YOU ALSO APPLIED FOR CASH AID, and it has not yet been approved, your CalFresh benefits may be lowered or stopped without another notice if your cash aid is approved.

- Your CalFresh eligibility starts the same day as your cash aid.
- Your first month's benefits include more than one month's benefits because of the date your application was approved.
- Your first month's benefits were prorated from the date you filed your application.

BECAUSE YOU RECEIVED CALFRESH BENEFITS RIGHT AWAY, we did not require you to give us the following verification:

Time line for Recertification

12 Month Certification

SNAP approval notice sent
12 month certification
Household advised of reporting requirements

Notice of expiration and recertification form sent
Verifications requested
Interview scheduled

45-60 days before end

Last Day of Cert Period

SNAP continues with new cert period
State should process timely, avoid interruption in benefits

“Notice of Expiration” of Cert Period

- A notice must be sent **before** the first day of the last month of the certification period:
- The notice must include
 - The date the certification period ends
 - The date by which household must reapply to avoid an interruption in SNAP benefits
 - What happens to benefits if the household does not reapply or fails to attend an interview
 - How to file the recertification or reapplication form

STATE OF CALIFORNIA – HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CALFRESH NOTICE OF EXPIRATION OF CERTIFICATION

COUNTY OF

Notice Date :
 Case Name :
 Case Number :
 Worker Name :
 Worker Number :
 Telephone Number :
 Address :

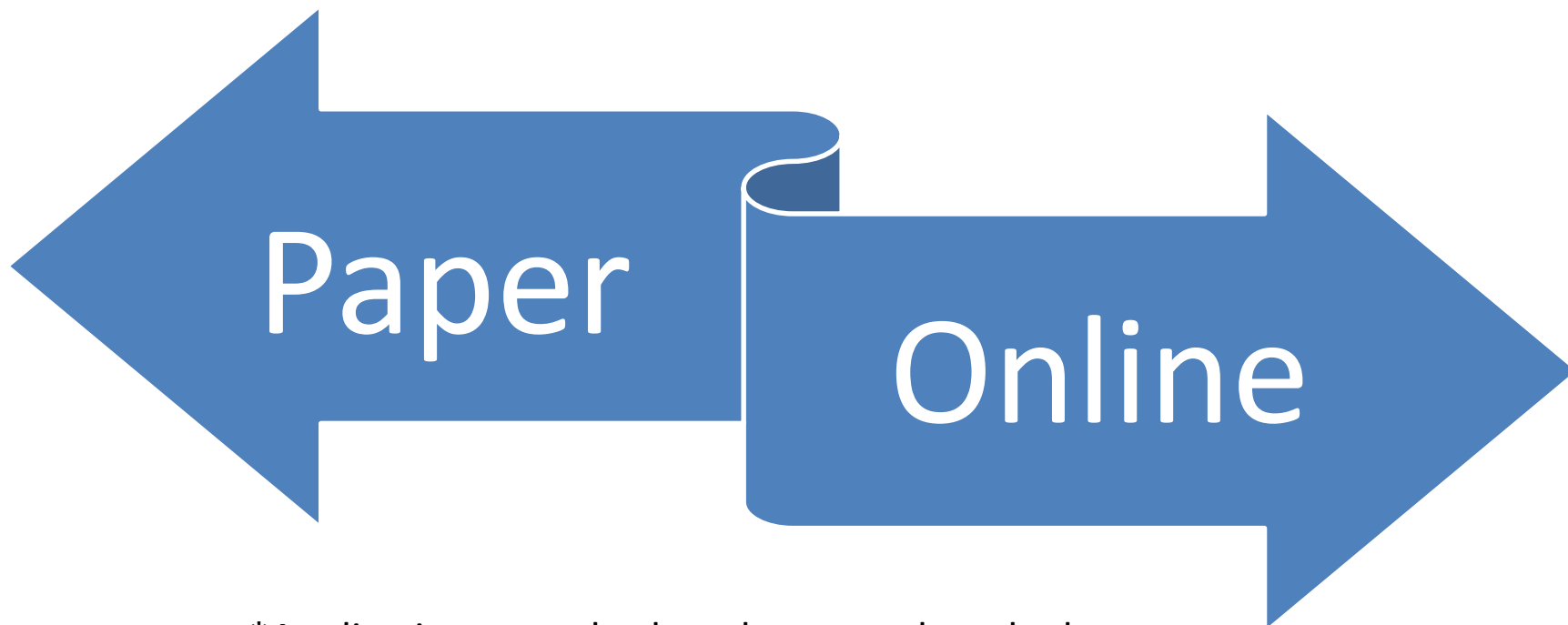
Questions? Ask your worker.

State Hearing: If you think this action is wrong, you can ask for a hearing. The back of this page tells you how. Your benefits may not be changed if you ask for a hearing before this action takes place.

-
1. Your CalFresh Certification period will end on MMDDCCYY

 2. If you want to keep getting your benefits without a break; you must file an application no later than the 15th day of the last month of the certification period. An interview must be completed, and **any** proof of income, expenses, or other information turned in no later than the end of the certification period.
 3. If you have a one-month or two-month certification period, contact your worker for when your application needs to be turned in.
 4. You will get a separate letter with an interview appointment date and time. Call your worker right away if you do not get the appointment letter within 10 days of this notice. Your appointment letter will tell you if you have a phone interview or if you have to come into the office for your interview.
-

SNAP Recertification Options



*Applications can also be taken over the telephone.

States variations on SNAP recertification

- Traditional blank paper recertification form or application
- “Pre-populated” recertification form
- On-line recertification option

Sample Traditional Recertification or “Renewal” form

Form H-1010R
December 2012



Your Texas Benefits: Renewal Form

Case Number: 1234567890

<p>How to Renew</p> <p>You can renew online at www.YourTexasBenefits.com.</p> <p>If you don't want to renew online, fill out this form:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If you need to correct anything on this form: (a) cross it out, and (b) update it. Sign and date page(s) 9,10 Attach the items we need. Items are listed next to the questions. Send in this form by fax, mail, or in person: <p>Fax: 1877-447-2839. If the form is 2-sided fax both sides</p> <p>Mail: HHSC, P.O. Box 14700, Midland, TX 79711-9907</p> <p>In person: At a benefit office. Call 2-1-1 to find one near you.</p> <p>All phone and fax numbers on this form are free to call.</p>	<p>Questions</p> <p>Call 2-1-1 or 1-877-541-7905. After you pick a language, press 2 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask question about this form. Find where to get help filling out this form. Check the status of this form. Ask questions about benefit programs. <p>To learn more about benefits, you also can go to www.hhsc.state.tx.us and www.CHIPMedicaid.org.</p> <p>Report waste, fraud, and abuse If you think anyone is misusing HHSC benefits, call 1-800-436-6184.</p> <p>Medicaid for people age 65 or older and for adults who have a disability: If you want to apply for Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities, call 2-1-1. Ask for a different form.</p>
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First Name: John	Middle initial:	Last name: Doe		
Home address (street and apartment number) 2250 Ridgepoint Dr, APT 123	City Austin	State TX	ZIP 78754	County Travis
Home phone 234-234-3456		Cell or daytime phone		
Mailing address (if different from home address)	City	State	ZIP	

Important information to know about “on-line” SNAP case-specific services

- On-line recertification **works best** for SNAP households with internet access, computer and ability to do on-line transactions
- Many on-line transactions do **not** work on mobile (cell phone) devices




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 MYFLFAMILIES.COM

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Urgent Message:
 Please note that applications submitted using a mobile device may not be supported by ACCESS Florida. People who use a mobile device may experience difficulties.

Next, the Interview

- This interview is usually shorter than the first application interview. The SNAP interviewer will go over the recertification information and any data they have which indicate possible changes.
- It is still important to make sure the information is accurate and complete.



Sample notice of Recertification Interview - OR

Print Form

Clear Form



Program:	Branch:	Case number:
Case name:	Worker ID:	

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Recertification Interview Information

We must review your Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) case to see if you still qualify for food benefits. You need to have an interview as a part of this review.

- Check here if you want to go to an office for an interview.

- Please mail a phone interview date and time to the address on my application.

For the phone interview, you prefer a call on these days of the week:

- Monday
 Tuesday
 Wednesday
 Thursday
 Friday

The best time to call is in the morning or afternoon.

Please give us the phone number you want us to call you at: _____.

- Yes, I need an interpreter. Language? _____

You will be contacted within 15 days from the date you turn in the paperwork about an interview.

Return this form along with your application by mail or at a DHS office drop box.

Verifications

- There are usually **fewer** verifications at recertification than application
 - Earned income usually needs to be re-verified
 - Unearned income such as Social Security is often re-verified via federal data bases
 - Income deductions (shelter costs, child care, medical) that have NOT changed usually does not need to be re-verified
 - Recipients can still claim/verify income deductions at any point, even if not claimed at application

Change Reporting

Typically SNAP households with just seniors and/or persons with disabilities and no earnings

Must report changes of > \$100 earned income OR > \$50 unearned income

Simplified Reporting

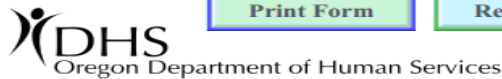
Most SNAP households - childless, families with kids

Must report if gross income > household's gross income test

Simplified Reporting - What is it?

- Under “simplified reporting,” a SNAP household is **not required** to report most changes until the reporting due date.
- Most states have **semi-annual** or 6 month simplified or “interim” reporting periods
 - The **EXCEPTION** to this rule is when household gross income **exceeds** the gross income test (or if a work-required ABAWDs loses a job).

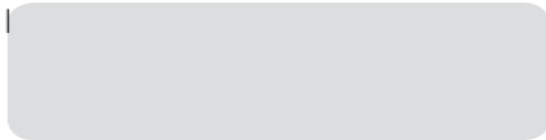
Sample Simplified Reporting - Interim Change Form - OR



[Print Form](#)

[Reset Form](#)

Simplified Change Report For Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Employment Related Day Care (ERDC)



Keep this form until you have a change to report. You must report changes by the tenth of the month after the change happens.

If you can't mail this form or bring it to the office, you can report the change by calling us at:

_____ You may call collect, if needed.

This report form is for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Employment Related Day Care (ERDC). If you are getting cash or medical benefits, you must report more changes.

I want to report:

My total household gross income last month was more than the amount shown above.

The income totaled: \$ _____ (attach proof of income)

The income went up because: _____

The income is expected to be the same this month. Yes No

For ERDC, loss of employment:

Name of person who is no longer working: _____ Date last worked: _____

For ERDC, a current or expecting parent or the spouse of the caretaker moved in. Date: _____

For ERDC, I have a new child care provider. This is my primary provider. Yes No

Provider name and phone number: _____

Something else happened (you do not have to fill this in). You can report changes that could give you more benefits. Some examples are: your shelter costs went up, someone moved into your home, you have out of pocket dependent care costs or medical expenses for elderly or disabled individuals:

Program:	Branch:	Case number:	Worker ID:
Case name:			

What you must report

- When your gross monthly income is above the amounts below, use the figure in the column. (Gross income is the amount before deductions, such as taxes.)
- For ERDC, When a child's parent or expectant parent, or the caretaker's spouse moves in; or if you lose employment or change providers.

Household size

1	\$1,265
2	\$1,705
3	\$2,144
4	\$2,584
5	\$3,024
6	\$3,464
7	\$3,904
8	\$4,344



More than 8 For each additional person, add \$440 to the 8-household amount.

The Green Family

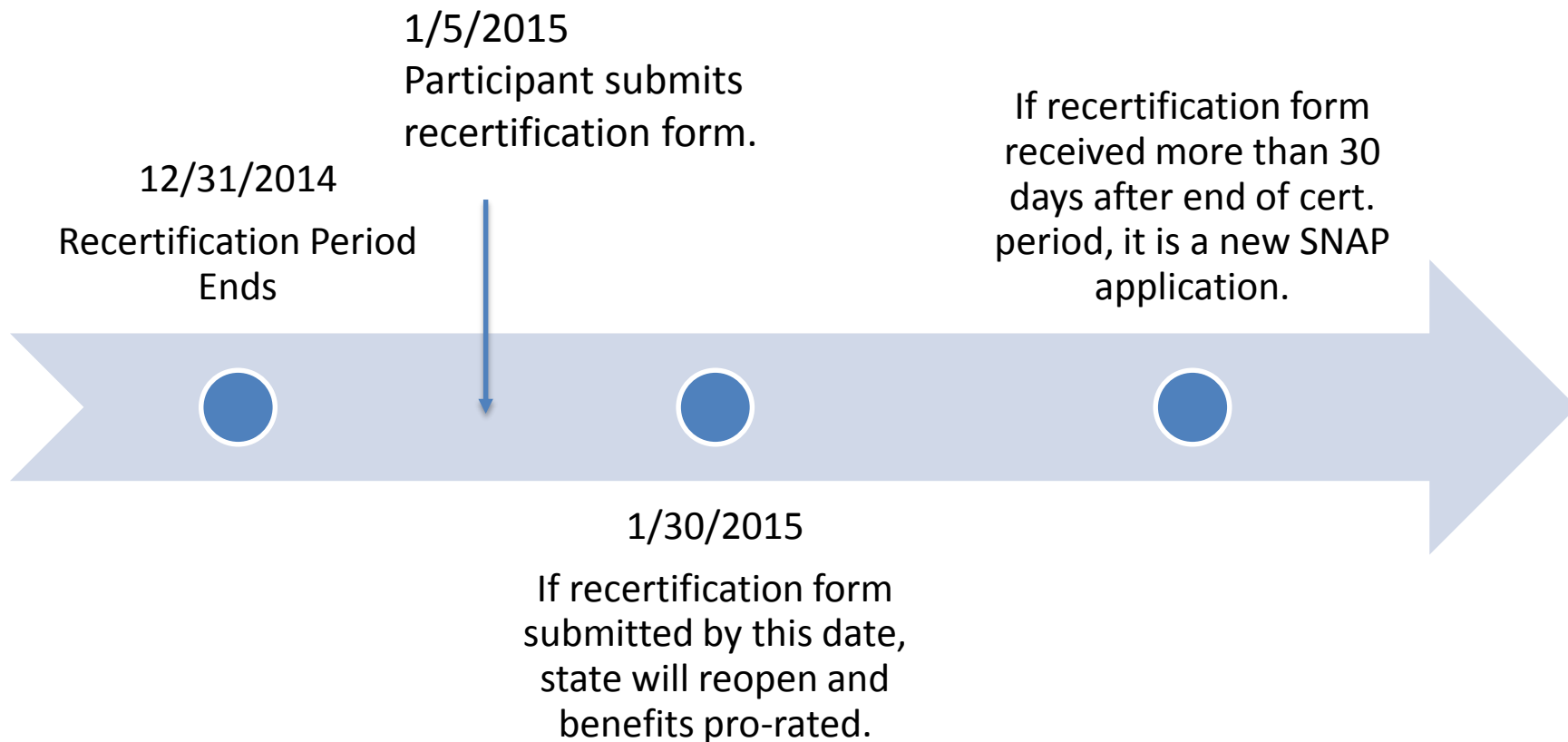


Molly and Jeff live with their daughter Katie. Both parents work, earning between \$1,800 and \$2,100 a month. They are certified for \$315/month for 12 months -Jan 2015 to Jan 2016.

The Green family certification and reporting obligations

- Family certified for 12 months – January 1st thru December 30th
- Green's must file an “**interim report**” before June 30th (halfway through the cert period)
- Greens do not need to report changes in between -unless their gross income exceeds \$2,144 (gross income 130% FPL)

Delayed Recertifications?



Questions?



Avoiding “Churn”: Keeping Eligible People Connected to SNAP

- At initial application we have outreach and timeliness
- For ongoing eligibility the equivalent is avoiding “churn”
- Upcoming CBPP paper on Measuring and Addressing Churn

What is Churn?

- Eligible clients do not complete the recertification but quickly re-enroll.
- Break in enrollment is short – 0 to 90 days.
- Typically a procedural problem.



Possible Causes of Churn

People move and don't receive notices.

Paperwork gets lost or doesn't arrive timely.

Confusion about what is required and when.

Disconnects on requirements across programs.

Recertification timeliness not a management focus historically.

Systems set to auto-close cases.

States are backlogged and overwhelmed.

Interview missed or not at a convenient time.

Will be Different in Different States

Churn Affects People

- Families in poverty often lose benefits.
- Can trigger a cascade of problems, stress, and hardship.
- Often find out at supermarket check-out.
- Raises need for emergency food and other services.



Churn Affects State Workloads

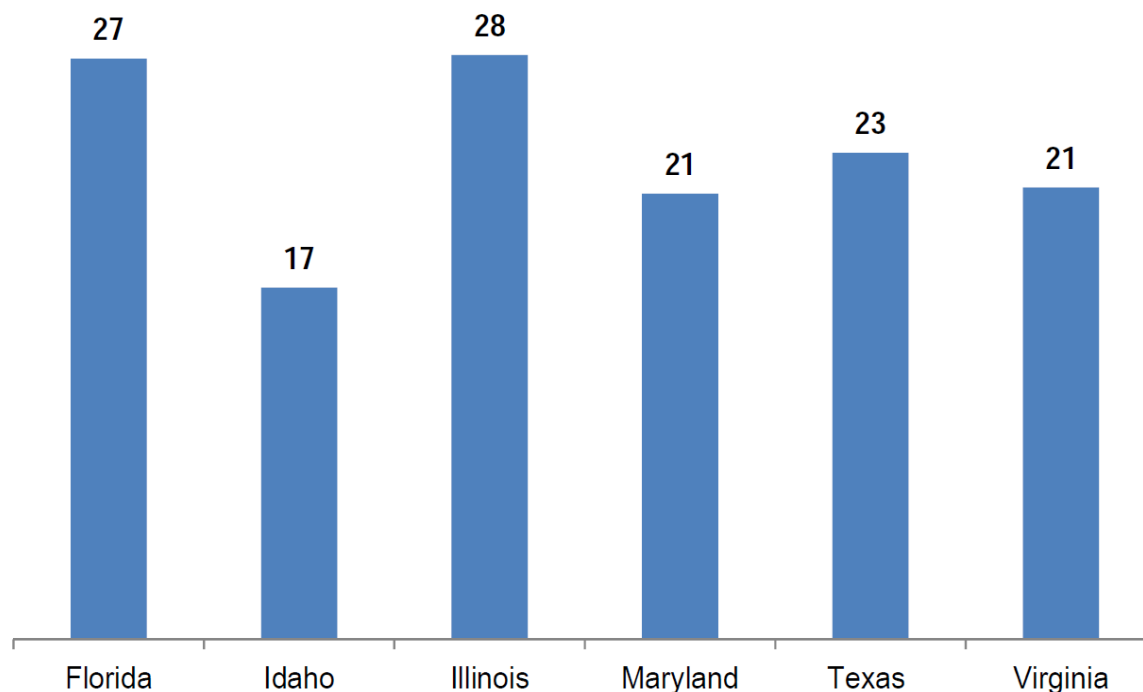
- State/county workers have to spend more time keeping eligible households connected.
- Lobbies and phone lines get clogged with unhappy customers.
- Consider the applications that could be avoided!



How Big Is Churn?

Annual Churn Rates from recent USDA study

Figure 2. Rate of Churn by State, FY 2011



In six study states, between 17 and 28 percent of SNAP households “churned” during 2011.

Other Interesting Data from USDA:

- 62%-79% of “churners” off SNAP less than one month.
- Certification costs associated with churn averaged \$80 for each reapplication
- Annual amount of SNAP benefits forgone due to churn estimated to be between \$2.2 million in Idaho to \$108.2 million in Florida.

Strategies to Reduce Churn

- Reduce the Risks of Closure
 - Longer certification periods
 - Leverage information across programs
- Address Specific Problems
 - Dedicated staff, better processes, more options for families (online, telephone)
 - Focus on the pieces
 - Returned mail, unclear forms
 - Over-verification
 - Interviews

Challenges Engaging with State

- Churn often invisible – “Auto-Closure”
- Who’s to blame?
 - Process seems simple to state workers
- Hard to measure
- Root causes hard to disentangle

First Steps: What Can be Done?

- Start a conversation
- Find a way to:

Begin Measuring and Tracking

Make a Priority, Set a Goal

View as win-win for states and families

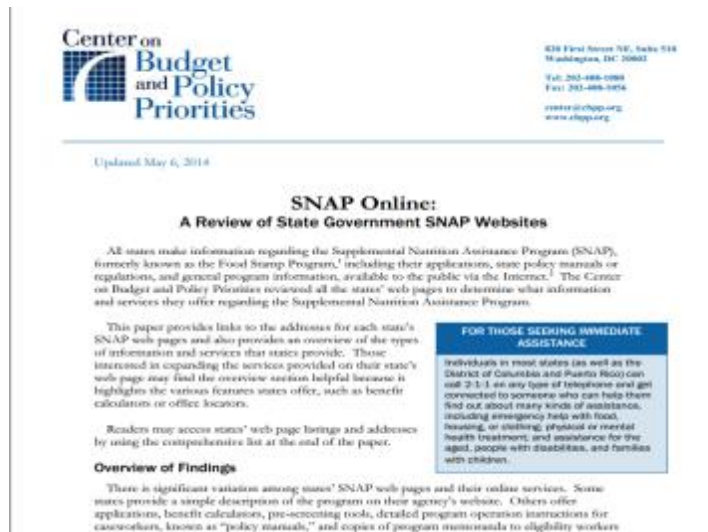
Listen to customer experiences

Learn from other states' experiences



National Resources

CBPP Food Assistance Webpage



Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

420 First Street NE, Suite 514
Washington, DC 20002

Tel: 202-462-0869
Fax: 202-462-0874
center@cbpp.org
www.cbpp.org

Updated May 6, 2014

SNAP Online: A Review of State Government SNAP Websites

All states make information regarding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, including their applications, state policy manuals or regulations, and general program information, available to the public via the Internet. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reviewed all the states' web pages to determine what information and services they offer regarding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

This paper provides links to the addresses for each state's SNAP web pages and also provides an overview of the types of information and services that states provide. Those interested in expanding the services provided on their state's web page may find the overview section helpful because it highlights the various features states offer, such as benefit calculations or office locators.

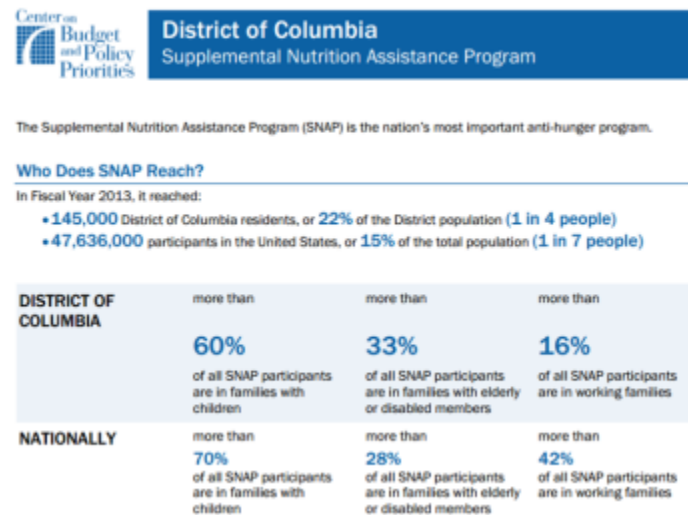
Readers may access states' web page listings and addresses by using the correspondence list at the end of the paper.

Overview of Findings

There is significant variation among states' SNAP web pages and their online services. Some states provide a simple description of the program on their agency's website. Others offer applications, benefit calculations, pre-screening tools, detailed program operation instructions for caseworkers, known as "policy manuals," and copies of program manuals to eligibility workers.

FOR THOSE SEEKING IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE

Individuals in most states (as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico) can call 2-1-1 on any type of telephone and get connected to someone who can help them find out about many kinds of assistance, including emergency help with food, housing, or clothing; physical or mental health treatment; and assistance for the aged, people with disabilities, and families with children.



Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

District of Columbia Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nation's most important anti-hunger program.

Who Does SNAP Reach?

In Fiscal Year 2013, it reached:

- **145,000** District of Columbia residents, or **22%** of the District population (**1 in 4** people)
- **47,636,000** participants in the United States, or **15%** of the total population (**1 in 7** people)

	more than	more than	more than
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	60% of all SNAP participants are in families with children	33% of all SNAP participants are in families with elderly or disabled members	16% of all SNAP participants are in working families
NATIONALLY	70% of all SNAP participants are in families with children	28% of all SNAP participants are in families with elderly or disabled members	42% of all SNAP participants are in working families

Additional Resources

- The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
- Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)

Partner Resources

- Alameda County Community Food Bank:
 - www.accfb.org
- Center for Civil Justice:
 - <http://www.ccj-mi.org/>
- Hunger Free Vermont
 - <http://www.hungerfreevt.org/>
- Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
 - <http://mlri.org/>
- Ohio Association of Food Banks
 - <http://www.benefits.ohiofoodbanks.org/>