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1800.00.00 APPLICATION REGISTRATION

This chapter contains the application registration processes. It includes:

- Request for an Application (Section 1805);
- Informed Choice (Section 1815);
- Initial Contact Person (Section 1820);
- Application Registration Process (Section 1825);
- Initial Evaluation and Referral (Section 1826);
- Scheduling the Interview (Section 1830);
- Denying an Application (Section 1830.15.00);
- Application Transfer (Section 1830.20.00); and

1805.00.00 REQUEST FOR AN APPLICATION

The Indiana Application for Assistance must be accessible to clients at all times during which the office is open. All reception staff, caseworkers and those answering telephone calls must inform clients that an application will be accepted for all 3 programs (SNAP, TANF, Health Coverage) when the name and address is completed and the form is signed. No other requirements or limitations can be placed on the client's right to file an application

Individuals may request assistance in person, by mail, or by telephone. If requested, the individual will be referred to our application portal on the FSSA website or may be given or mailed an Application for Assistance. When an application form is provided, assistance in completing the application is to be offered.

The individual requesting assistance should be encouraged to file an application the same day the Local Office is contacted. The individual is to be informed that prompt filing is important as the date of entitlement for all programs is affected by the date the signed application is received in the Local Office.

An individual has the right to apply and the right to have the determination of eligibility made without discrimination because of race, color, sex, age, handicap, religion, national origin, marital status, or political belief. An application must be provided without question or delay to any individual requesting assistance without regard to apparent ineligibility.

1805.05.00 RIGHT TO A COMBINED TANF AND SNAP INTERVIEW

When an individual applies for TANF and SNAP concurrently, there is a federal requirement that he is entitled to a single application interview for the purpose of determining eligibility under both programs. In the eligibility system, one interview is conducted for all programs for which an application is made.

1810.00.00 Reserved

1815.00.00 INFORMED CHOICE

The Eligibility System is designed around the outreach concept of "informed choice" which provides clients the option to apply for any or all programs of assistance in one interview. The first option on ICES screen ARCP allows the applicant to choose to have eligibility explored for all assistance programs within ICES for all individuals in the household. The individual has the alternate choice of applying for specific programs. The household should be informed that each program has specific eligibility requirements that do not apply to the other programs, and that loss of benefits under one program does not always mean that other program benefits will also be lost. Specifically the TANF time limits do not apply to SNAP. The household should also be informed that the receipt of has no bearing on the TANF program's time limits. It is the obligation of the Local Office to provide the individual with sufficient objective information to allow the individual to make an informed choice. Additional programs may be selected by the client during the subsequent interview with the caseworker or at any time the client desires but will require an application to be completed.

1820.00.00 INITIAL CONTACT PERSON

The individual who makes the initial request for assistance is referred to as the Initial Contact Person (ICP) for the application. The ICP completes the application registration process and signs the Application for Assistance. The ICP may or may not be seeking assistance for him and may or may not be the interviewee during the application interview.

Refer to Section 2005.05.10 which explains who may be interviewed.

The screener must inform the ICP that information about Rights and Responsibilities are included as an attachment to the Application. Rights and Responsibilities will be discussed in detail during the interactive interview with the caseworker.

1821.00.00 REFERRAL FROM DCS FOR INDIVIDUALS FORMERLY IN FOSTER CARE

Both DCS (Department of Child Services) case managers and DFR (Division of Family Resources) caseworkers should bear in mind that, for recipients who are wards, reaching the 18th birthday may require a change in category. In the situations explained below in this section, the Hoosier Healthwise application will be used; however, this is simply for informational purposes as a standard method to collect current information about the individual, including the assignment of medical rights if an assignment is not already in the case record. Wards already covered under a MED category, other than IV-E FC (MA 4) will continue in the current category if eligible. Refer to Section 2035.30.20 regarding the determination of the Foster Care Independence category (MA 14).

For individuals enrolled as IV-E Foster Care recipients in MA 4, a category change must be processed when the individual is no longer entitled to IV-E maintenance payments. If a DCS case manager has been responsible for the medical coverage, a referral to the DFR will be necessary. A smooth transition will require cooperation between the local DCS and DFR offices, who will establish their own procedures for the exchange of information.

The DCS case manager will:

- Assist the ward in completing a Hoosier Healthwise (purple) application one month prior to the 18th birthday;
- Detach the page of the application, entitled Important Information about Hoosier Healthwise, and give it to the ward as it contains a list of Rights and Responsibilities for Hoosier Healthwise members;
- Fill out a Foster Care Independence Referral, attach it to the application and forward (in the manner established locally) to the DFR office;
- Maintain the ward's coverage until notified by the DFR worker that the new category is ready to be authorized.

Upon receiving the referral, the DFR caseworker will:

- Review the referral form and application and request income verification from the recipient, if necessary;
- Proceed with the eligibility determination;
- When case processing is complete except for authorization of the benefit, the DFR caseworker will contact the DCS case manager (whose contact information is shown on the referral form) and request closure of current coverage;
- Authorize the new category.

In many instances, medical support rights will have been assigned for the former foster child. However, if an Assignment of Rights to Medical Support is not found in the case record, the individual will need to sign an FI-0750 Assignment of Rights to Medical Support and Payment for Medical Care.

The DFR will encounter former wards between the ages of 18 and 21 who have not been referred by DCS. An applicant may state, at the eligibility interview, that she/he has been in foster care. The caseworker must verify whether the individual was in foster care on his or her 18th birthday with the Indiana Department of Child Services. When possible, the caseworker will verify the wardship status, type, and placement locally. However if this information cannot be obtained from the local DCS office, the supervisor may contact Central Office, specifically the Help Desk or the Policy Answer Line. When provided the name, SSN and date of birth, Central Office staff will obtain the necessary information from DCS and relay it to the DFR supervisor.

1825.00.00 APPLICATION REGISTRATION PROCESS

Application registration begins the application process for individuals requesting assistance. This process is completed by a screener who interacts with the ICP. The purpose of application registration is to:

Gather basic demographic information on the individual(s) for application completion;

Perform individual clearance, statewide clearance, prior contact checks and address inquiries through ICES;

Identify expedited Food Stamp AGs; and

Initiate tracking of applications through ICES.

1825.05.00 COMPLETION OF THE APPLICATION

The online application may be completed online from any

location. A client may also complete an online application in any local office and may receive assistance in completing the application from a local office staff member if requested. Clients may also call the Division of Family Resources central contact number and have an application mailed to them, which they may then fax, mail or deliver to a local office. Clients may also request a paper application (available in English or Spanish) at a local office which they can fill out at their convenience and return by mail, fax or in person. In the case of systems failure, any client visiting the local office for the purpose of completing an application will be provided with a paper application and may request staff assistance in completing the application.

An individual with no fixed home address may provide another mailing address at the time of application. If no other address is available to the client, the local office address may be used.

An application is considered valid when, at a minimum, a name, address, and signature are provided. Once the application has been signed, the recorded information supplied by the ICP is not to be changed nor is information to be added. The date of application is the date on which a signed application is received by the Division. Any application received after 4:30 pm Eastern time of on a non-business day, should be dated as received on the next business day.

1825.05.05 Receipt Of an Application

When a valid Application is received electronically, through the mail, by fax, or is hand delivered, the application will be stamped with the date of receipt. Any application received after 4:30 pm Eastern time or on a non-business day, should be dated as received on the next business day. Inquiry into the Eligibility System will be performed to determine the active, inactive, pending, or unknown status of the individual. Refer to Section 1825.05.15 for information regarding individual clearance.

When an invalid application (missing name, address and/or signature) is received through the mail, the screener does not record its receipt. The form is returned to sender with instructions for proper completion.

1825.05.10 Joint SSI/FS Application (S)

A household where all members are receiving or applying for SSI benefits has the right to apply for SNAP benefits at the Social Security Office. An application is to be completed at the Social Security Office and forwarded to DFR for processing. The SSA office must prescreen the application

for entitlement to expedited service the day the application is received at the SSA office, and enter "Expedited Processing" on the application, if appropriate. Also, the SSA office is to advise the household that expedited benefits may be provided sooner if they apply directly at the Local DFR Office. The date of application will be the date SSA date stamps the application, unless the application qualifies as expedited. The date of application for an expedited application is the date the application is received by DFR

Upon receipt of an application and supporting documents from SSA, DFR is responsible for determining eligibility based upon the information received and the following guidelines:

If an SSI AG is currently receiving Food Stamps, has applied within the 30 days preceding application at SSA, or have an application pending, the caseworker records on the application the reason the application is not accepted, and signs and dates the application. The form and supporting documents are then scanned into the existing case record.

In addition, the household is notified by letter of the reason the application from SSA is not accepted.

If the AG was eligible to apply through SSA, the AG is not required to see a caseworker or participate in an additional interview with DFR. SSA or the AG can complete the application and the SSA interview may be conducted in person or by phone. In addition, the caseworker may not contact the AG further in order to obtain information unless:

- o The application is completed improperly;
- o Mandatory verification is missing; and/or
- o The caseworker determines that certain information on the application is questionable.

1825.05.15 Individual Clearance

Once the assistance is requested, the screener is to ask the ICP if anyone in the household has already applied for or is receiving assistance. It is imperative that the inquiry screens be accessed to identify all individuals who have any previous history in the system. Inquiry must be completed prior to the clearance process for each and every individual residing at the household address using both name and SSN. The screener must resolve any clearance problems before application registration processing continues. Failure to match someone correctly may lead to multiple records and duplicate benefits.

1825.10.00 PERSON WHO SIGNS THE APPLICATION

Anyone can sign the Application for Assistance. The person signing the application is required to swear or affirm that the information he provides on the application is true and correct to the best of his knowledge or belief. Once the application is signed, the recorded information supplied by the ICP is not to be changed, nor is information to be added.

1825.10.05 Alias

The individual's legal name is to be used on the application in most cases. If the individual has an alias or has used other names in the past, it is important to establish which name the individual uses most frequently when doing business. The individual's most commonly used name is the name under which the case is to be established.

All other names by which the individual is known are to be documented in Comments.

1825.15.00 DATE OF THE APPLICATION

The date of application is the date a signed application is received by DFR. Any application received after 4:30 pm Eastern time or on a non-business day, should be dated as received on the next business day.

For SNAP redeterminations, the date of the application is the date of the interview. When an active case requests to add SNAP, there must be an application signed and submitted which is the date of the application.

If a signed application is received by a Local Office designee at an outreach or itinerate location, the date of application is the date the application is received by the designee. In the event the client elects to add program choices after the Application Registration process, DFR staff must provide the applicant/recipient with an application. If the request is made in person, the application should be provided the day of the request. If the request is made by phone or by mail, the application must be mailed to the applicant/recipient on the same day the request is received. The date of the add-a-program application will be the date the application is received by DFR with the minimum required information (name, address and signature). Any application received after 4:30 pm Eastern time or on a non-business day, should be dated as received on the next business day.

1825.20.00 COUNTY IN WHICH THE APPLICATION IS FILED

An application for assistance may be filed in any Local DFR Office regardless of where the applicant resides. Under no circumstances is an individual to be denied the right to apply for assistance.

Wardship and spousal impoverishment cases require special consideration if the ward resides in a county other than the one in which the individual responsible for him resides, or if the community spouse resides in a county other than the one in which his spouse is institutionalized. For these cases, the application should be processed in the Local DFR Office which is most advantageous for the individual.

1825.25.00 SCREENING FOR FS EXPEDITED SERVICE (S)

During the application registration process, each Food Stamp application must be screened for potential eligibility for SNAP expedited service. This includes each application received through the mail or from SSA. The Eligibility System will identify those AGs which are potentially eligible for expedited service based solely on the answers to the questions. No other prescreening questions or activities are permissible to determine entitlement to expedited processing. These AGs should be scheduled for an interactive interview on the same day they file an application, if possible, or the following day. This is to ensure that SNAP benefits are available to the AG no later than seven calendar days following the date the application was filed.

If an application requires expedited service and has not been processed within prescribed time frames, the eligibility system generates a reminder alert to the eligibility worker. If the application is not authorized within seven days, an alert is sent to the supervisor notifying the supervisor that the case is overdue.

1825.25.05 Expedited Service (S)

Each household filing an application must be screened to determine eligibility for a SNAP expedited interview. Expedited service must also be determined when adding the SNAP program. All applicant households which contain a member not certified in the month of application are entitled to expedited service when one of the following criterions is met:

Households with less than \$150 monthly gross income and liquid resources do not exceed \$100 in the month of application;

Migrant or seasonal farm worker households that can be classified as "destitute" as defined in Section 1825.25.15 with liquid resources that do not exceed \$100; or

Households whose combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than the household's monthly rent or mortgage and utilities, including entitlement to a SUA in the month of application. The appropriate SUA is used to calculate the total shelter.

An AG previously certified with postponed verification(s), is entitled to expedite processing again only if:

The postponed verifications were subsequently provided after the previous expedited certification; or

The proposed verifications are currently provided; or

The AG has been certified under normal processing standards since the previous expedited certification.

1825.25.10 Expedited Joint SSI/FS Application (S)

DFR must prescreen a SNAP application received from SSA on the day the application is received to determine entitlement to expedited service. If the expedited service requirements are met, the seven day expedited processing standard for an AG in which all members receive SSI begins on the date the application is received by DFR.

1825.25.15 Migrant or Seasonal Farm Worker (S)

Migrant AGs are considered destitute and are eligible for expedited service when the only household income for the month of application:

Is received from a terminated source prior to the date of application; and/or

Is from a new source and no more than \$25 will be received by the 10th calendar day after the date of application. (f5b)

1825.30.00 TRACKING THE APPLICATION

Another part of the application registration process is the tracking of applications through the eligibility system. Tracking begins with the date of application. If an application is not processed within 30 days, a reminder alert is generated by ICES to the eligibility Worker. If the application is not processed within 35 days, an alert is

sent to the supervisor advising the supervisor that the application is overdue.

1826.00.00 INITIAL EVALUATION AND REFERRAL

Once an applicant has made contact with the Division of Family Resources, the needs of the individual and family are to be evaluated to determine the type and range of service needed. The Eligibility Worker is to accomplish this by asking the applicant to describe the circumstances which led the applicant to seek assistance. This evaluation is to be accomplished through a structured interview, prior to the initiation of an eligibility interview.

The structured interview is used to determine the extent of:

- Unpaid rent or utilities;
- Employment experience;
- Unmet medical needs;
- Child care issues;
- Unpaid child support;
- Child or spousal abuse;
- Mental health concerns;
- Unmet food or nutritional needs; and
- Paternity establishment

After discussing the family's circumstances, the worker and applicant are to collaborate in identifying necessary services and determining which may be provided by the Division of Family Resources and which will require referral to other service providers. If the family has financial or medical needs, DFR may be the most appropriate agency to provide support, and the caseworker is to take immediate action to determine eligibility. The Eligibility Worker's knowledge of Family and Social Services Administration programs and the available community resources is essential to the process of matching the family's needs to the services best suited to addressing them. This process requires the worker to be accepting of the applicant and supportive of his or her decisions. The Eligibility Worker is not to impose personal judgments upon the applicant and always is to be aware of the applicant's circumstances.

When the family is in need of financial assistance, the applicant's past/current employment and potential for future employment are to be discussed. Individuals who are unemployed or marginally employed are to be provided with the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of employers who are currently hiring and encouraged to contact the employers as soon as possible. The employment information is to be viewed by both interviewer and interviewee as a helpful resource. Since many applicants will require IMPACT services to be successful, the initial services for most

applicants will be TANF or SNAP benefits in combination with IMPACT services.

Needs evaluation and referral also are essential for aged and disabled clients regardless of the fact that assistance for those individuals is often expected to be long-term rather than temporary. The Division's goal for all applicants is to achieve the highest degree of self-sufficiency possible.

The evaluation process is intended to assist families in making the choices which will best serve their needs. To be successful, the choices must be based on complete and accurate information regarding the options available to the family.

Needs evaluation must not be used as a means of coercing applicants to terminate the application process. The applicant is to be provided the opportunity to file an application at the point of initial contact whether or not the needs evaluation can be performed at that time.

Once the type and scope of services needed by the family have been identified, staff will take all actions necessary to initiate the services which will be provided by the Division of Family Resources and/or refer the individual or members of the individual's family to external service providers. **Emphasis is placed on services which promote short-term dependence and self-sufficiency such as employment or child support services.**

Each Local Office is to establish a referral network with community providers. The referral process within this network is to be as simple as possible to facilitate the delivery of service to the people for whom referrals are initiated.

Agencies to which referrals are routinely made include, but are not limited to:

- Township Trustees
- Indiana Federation of Older Hoosiers
- Social Security Administration
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children) nutritional program
- Violent Crimes Compensation
- Prosecutor's Office (Child Support or Domestic Violence Sections)
- Legal Services
- Indiana Society to Prevent Blindness
- Central Indiana Council on Aging
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Worker's Compensation
- Workforce Development

Unemployment Compensation
Veteran's Affairs
Community Action Programs

Services are also provided by local counseling and family service organizations, food pantries, immunization clinics, family shelters, community centers, religious organizations, and service clubs such as Lions, Kiwanis and Rotary.

The initial evaluation is an interactive process by which the caseworker and the applicant determine the employability of the applicant. The exact content of the interview questions and the order in which they are asked cannot be dictated. However, the following are some key questions which could be included as applicable in the assessment interview:

What brought you to our agency today?
When and where you were last employed?

If the applicant has previously worked:

What type of work have you done?
What did you like about the jobs you have held?

If the applicant is not currently employed:

What is keeping you from working now?
What can you do to begin looking (or planning, depending on the client's situation) for a job?
What can the Division of Family Resources do to help you in this process?

If the client is currently employed:

What is keeping you from getting a job where you could make more money (work more hours or receive better pay)?

The answers to these questions should assist the caseworker and the applicant in developing a preliminary plan of action for achieving financial independence.

1835.00.00 SCHEDULING THE INTERVIEW

After the inquiry and Application Registration processes have been completed, an interactive interview must be scheduled for the applicant. If the interview is not held on the same day that the application is received, an appointment must be scheduled. The system will generate an appointment notice to the client if an appointment is scheduled at least seven business days in advance for initial applications, five business days for general appointments, six business days for redeterminations, and

ten days for IMPACT appointments. If an appointment is scheduled sooner, a manual notice must be prepared and given to applicant. This can be accomplished by screen printing CSAS.

All SNAP applications must be screened for expedited service. AGs that are potentially entitled to expedited service are given a same day or next day interview. These interviews must be scheduled as a priority, so that an eligibility determination is completed and food stamp benefits made available within seven calendar days following the date the application was filed. Refer to Sections 1825.25.00 and 1825.25.05.

For all other AGs, the initial interview may be held on the same day that the application is received or as soon as possible. The initial interview should be scheduled to give sufficient time to determine eligibility and provide benefits within the timeliness standards.

All individuals must be informed of the conditions under which an out of office interview may be conducted. SNAP assistance groups must be informed of the options for the type of interview that may be conducted. Refer to Section 1835.05.00. The interview method is to be entered on the CSAS screen.

1835.05.00 EXCEPTIONS TO IN-OFFICE INTERVIEW

In-office interviews are not required for SNAP or TANF. Telephone interviews are acceptable in all circumstances. However, for SNAP assistance groups, an in-office interview must be granted upon the request of the household or authorized representative.

A waiver of the face to face interview does not exempt the AG from any verification requirements, although special procedures may be used to permit the AG to provide verification and obtain its benefits in a timely manner. A waiver of the face to face interview also does not affect the length of the AG's certification period.

1835.10.00 INTERVIEW NOTICE

A notice regarding the first interview appointment is generated by the Eligibility System and sent to the ICP if the appointment is more than five business days from the date of application. If the appointment is less than five days from the date of application, a manual appointment notice must be given to the ICP or mailed to an individual who did not request assistance in person. When a client has an application on file for SNAP and misses the appointment, a notice must be sent to the client informing him of the missed appointment. If the individual does not keep an

appointment within 30 days of the application date, the Eligibility System generates an alert to the Eligibility System.

1835.15.00 DENYING AN APPLICATION

If an individual does not keep an appointment within 30 days of the application date, the eligibility System generates an alert to the eligibility Worker. The Eligibility System must then take action to deny the application on the 30th day. The application should not be closed until the 30th day for failure to keep an appointment. If the 30th day falls on a non-business day, the denial action must be taken on the next business day in order to be timely. An entry should be made to explain the denial situation. An applicant may voluntarily withdraw the application at any time.