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107.1 Purpose

This section describes the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) and the Maryland Senior Nutrition Assistance Program (MSNAP).

107.2 General Information

- A. Maryland has approved waivers to operate two projects for the elderly (defined as age 60 and over):
 - MSNAP, a Combined Application Project in effect since July 1, 2010, simplifies the application process for elderly and disabled people approved for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits; and,
 - ESAP, which simplifies the application and verification processes for elderly applicants who have no earned income and do not receive SSI, began November 1, 2016.
- B. Both MSNAP and ESAP have 36 month certification periods.
- C. MSNAP requires no interview and verification is accomplished through computer matches. ESAP requires an interview at application for applicants who are not already receiving FSP, but no interview at redetermination.

107.3 MSNAP Policy and Procedures

- A. MSNAP is a demonstration project approved by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). See FSP Manual Section 107 for a complete description of MSNAP.
- B. MSNAP improves the way food assistance is delivered to elderly individuals, age 60 or older, who receive Supplement Security Income (SSI).
- C. MSNAP simplifies the application process for both participants and local department staff.

107.31 MSNAP Household Composition

An MSNAP household is an individual who the Social Security Administration has determined is eligible for SSI, and:

- A. Is age 60 or older
- B. Is not currently receiving Food Supplement Program (FSP) benefits

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107.31 MSNAP Household Composition (continued)

- C. Is living alone or if living with others is purchasing and preparing meals alone
- D. has no earned income
- E. is a Maryland resident

107.32 Operating Procedures

- A. The Family Investment Administration (FIA) identifies these individuals through a match with (SSA's) SDX files from the SDX/SVES system.
- B. This match identifies eligible individuals by matching specific:
 - 1. Living arrangement codes, and
 - 2. Determines that the applicant is not a Food Supplement Program recipient.
- C. The FIA central office sends the identified individuals an application.

107.33 Application Procedures

- A. The database records the dates of application mailings. If the customer does not return the application, a second application is sent.
- B. If there is no response to the second application, no further applications are sent.
- C. Current FSP recipients are not converted to MSNAP. Only customers identified in the match can apply for the program.
- D. Applicants who wish to enroll in MSNAP complete and sign the simplified application and return it to the designated office.
- E. Applicants are alerted to the fact that they may be eligible for a higher benefit under the regular FSP program.
- F. Benefits begin the first day of the month the application is received from the applicant. If there is an agency delay in completing the application, the local department must issue restored benefits.
- G. The certification period for these households is for 36 months. CARES generates notices to inform applicants of their eligibility.

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107.33 Application Procedures (continued)

- H. The applicant receives an EBT card in the mail.
- I. There is no expedited FSP processing for this project.
- J. The case manager processes all applications without an interview unless information is unclear, in which case a telephone interview is completed.
- K. MSNAP applicants can apply for the regular Food Supplement Program if they believe they will receive a greater benefit. Please be sure to inform applicants who have high medical expenses or shelter costs that they may receive greater benefits under the regular FSP.

107.34 Allotment

- A. Households with shelter costs at or above \$506 receive the higher amount of \$144. Households with shelter costs below this amount receive the lower benefit amount of \$60.
- B. Shelter costs include all ongoing shelter expenses, including the appropriate utility allowances.

Examples:

- #1 Mr. A receives SSI and lives by himself in public housing. His rent is \$50 and he is responsible for his heating bill. His shelter cost total \$464 (\$50 + \$414). He would receive an \$60 allotment.
- #2 Mrs. B receives SSI and although her daughter lives in the home, she purchases and prepares her food separately. The rent for the house is \$800, which they split and they share utilities. Mrs. C's shelter cost of \$814 (\$400 + \$414), she will receive a \$144 allotment.

NOTE: Mrs. B also has a large out of pocket medical expense for an item not covered under Medicaid. Although this expense will not change the MSNAP benefit, her case manager helped her determine that she would still receive more under MSNAP than under the regular FSP.

107.35 Verification Process

- A. MSNAP verification is fulfilled by using SDX data verified under SSI regulations. Any household that meets the verification criteria for SSI and additional State criteria meets the verification requirements for MSNAP.
- B. Verification of shelter is done only in questionable situations.

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107.36 Recertification and Change Reporting

Recertification:

- A. The certification period for MSNAP participants is 36 months.
- B. During the 34th month, a mail in recertification form is mailed to each household.
- C. The household must complete and return the form by the end of the 36th month or benefits will stop.
- D. If the household returns the form in the 37th month, the case is reopened with no proration of benefits.

Change Reporting:

- A. MSNAP recipients are not required to report changes during the certification period. The SDX update process satisfies the reporting requirements for this project. If the recipient does report a change, the case manager must take action on it.
- B. MSNAP recipients are not required to report changes in their shelter costs to the local department. If a shelter change is reported and the change would move the household from one allotment to the other, the case manager is required to act on the reported change in shelter.

107.37 Administrative Hearings

Administrative Hearing requests for MSNAP are treated the same as any other request.

107.38 Quality Control

- A. MSNAP cases are included in the Quality Control (QC) sample and reviewed under the rules of the demonstration project. QC reviews the following areas:
 1. Active error rate
 2. Completion rate
 3. Payment error rate
 4. Negative error rate
 5. The amount of any over or under issuance
- B. Any variance exclusions that apply to the FSP apply to this project. Variances arising from incorrect information provided by SSA that the State used to determine household MSNAP eligibility or benefit level are excluded as long as the State processed the information correctly. This exclusion applies even if the household reported incorrect information to SSA.

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107.39 CARES (continued)

- ❖ The Weekly and Monthly Application Compliance Report display a field for 'CAP' in the detail.
- ❖ There is a Food Stamp Combined application Outreach Report that displays customers who were mailed initial MSNAP applications.
- ❖ There is a second Food Stamp Combined Application Outreach Report that displays customers who were contacted, but did not respond within 30 days.

107.4 ESAP Policy and Procedures

The Elderly Simplified Application Project is a five-year demonstration project operated under a waiver from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). It applies to people sixty years old or older who have no earned income.

- A. A team of staff in FIA's Bureau of Local Operations will process ESAP applications filed through *myDHR*. When a customer or a customer's authorized representative comes to a local department to file an application, encourage them to use *myDHR* to apply for FSP. The logic within *myDHR* will automatically screen the customer for ESAP (at least 60 years old with no earned income), and automatically assign the application to district office (DO) 006, the FIA Central team.
- B. If the customer opts to fill out a paper application, use the new ESAP application, which can be found in the Online Forms section of the FIPnet. Customers may also fill out the 9701 application. Using a paper application means that the case manager must process the application in the LDSS. If a customer applies for FSP and another FIA benefit program through *myDHR*, the application will be routed to the local department for handling.

NOTE: The ESAP application signature page is located at the end of the Rights and Responsibilities. Customers must sign the application.

- C. For existing FSP customers who are 60 or older and have no earned income, the local departments are responsible for converting them to ESAP at the next redetermination. These ESAP cases are maintained in the local department.

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107.4 ESAP Policy and Procedures (continued)

- D. Interviews at initial certification are required. Interviews at recertification are not required unless the case is denied. No case may be denied without an attempt to schedule an interview. In all cases telephone interviews are preferred. Simplifying the application process includes NOT requiring the customer to come into the office.
- E. ESAP has reduced verification requirements for customers. Case managers in the central unit and local departments are responsible for obtaining verifications through computer matches and system clearances. The customer may verify required information that is questionable.
- ESAP-eligible customers are not required to verify unearned income, household size, residency, identity, and shelter expenses, unless questionable.
 - Use computer matches to verify information. Systems such as SOLQ, SDX, MABS and the WORK Number verify income, identity, and social security numbers.
 - Verify medical expenses to allow the customer the medical expense deduction. When medical expenses are not verified, request verification from the customer.
- F. ESAP customers have an extended certification period of 36 months.
- G. An annual contact with ESAP households is required.
- The FIA Central team sends out the 12 and 24 month contacts to customers managed in their unit. The contact form must be returned to the Central unit.
 - The local department must send the contact form (which can be found in the Online Forms in FIPnet) to ESAP customers managed in their units.
- H. If an ESAP customer requests a fair hearing, the hearing can be completed by telephone. The customer does not have to appear in person for a hearing. Just like in-person hearings, all required representatives must attend telephonic hearings.
- I. Case managers must complete and mail approval notices (found in the Online Forms on FIPnet) to ESAP customers. The application approval notice and redetermination notice are the only ESAP notices. Existing CARES notices will be issued, if there is a denial, reduction in benefits or case closing.
- J. ESAP cases will be included in the Quality Control (QC) sample and reviewed under regular QC rules, as the demonstration project does not significantly modify the rules for determining households' eligibility or allotment level.