H. Reporting and Acting on Changes

1. Reporting requirements

Clients must report changes within 10 days of their occurrence. They may report the changes by phone, office visit, report form or other written notice. For REF, these changes include the following:

- Changes in members of the household group and any resulting changes in income;
- Change in membership of the filing group;
- Getting a new job or changes in employment separation;
- When a member of the filing group becomes pregnant. The report must be received by the branch not later than the 10th day after the client becomes aware of the pregnancy;
- Changes in source of income;
- Changes in earned income of more than $100 per month;
- A change in unearned income of more than $50;
- The acquisition or change in ownership of nonexcluded vehicles;
- The sale or receipt of resources that cause total resources to exceed program resource limits;
- Change in residence or who pays shelter costs, including changes in shelter costs resulting from the move.

For REFM, these changes include:

- When a member of the filing group becomes pregnant. The report must be received by the branch not later than the 10th day after the client becomes aware of the pregnancy; or
- Change in residence; or
- Any change in the membership of the household group.

Example: Tanya is receiving REF. Tanya gets married to Joe. Joe is now in the filing group. Tanya must report this change within 10 days.
2. What to do when an individual reports a change

Ensure that the person reporting the change is authorized to do so for the case. Determine if the change impacts the family’s eligibility for benefits. If the change does not impact eligibility, document the change in the case file. If it does impact eligibility, determine how the change would impact the case.

Document the change and the action that needs to be taken because of the change. For any action that adversely affects the client, a decision notice must be sent before the date of action.

3. Effective date for all changes except adding a new person to an open case

For changes that occurred and were reported in the same month but do not continue, regardless of whether the change would cause an increase or decrease in benefit, document the change in the case record; no CMS action is needed.

**Example:** Maddie reports on 6/14 that she has a temp job for one week working at the fair. She will get her only check in June. Since it was reported and occurred in the same month but will not continue, there is no need to change the case or supplement REF.

**Example:** Noah reports on 7/16 that he missed a week of work in July due to illness. He has already returned to work at his regular hours but his 7/15 check was $100 less than normal. Since the change occurred and was reported in the same month but is not expected to continue, no supplement is made and income remains the same.

When an anticipated change is reported before the payment month and the change will continue and cause an increase in benefits, the effective date is the first of the payment month in which the change will occur.
Example: Peyton reports on 3/21 that she is no longer working. She stopped working and will receive her final check in March. The effective date for the change is 04/01.

If the change is not reported until the month it occurs or later, the effective date is the first of the month following the month in which the change was reported.

Example: Lily reports on 11/06 that she stopped working in October. The change was reported later than the month it occurred. The effective date for removing the income is 12/1. No supplement is made.

**COMPUTE INCOMING CODE**

When adjusting a case for the following month, use a COMPUTE incoming code.

For an anticipated change reported in a timely manner that will continue and causes a decrease in benefits, the effective date is the first of the month following the month in which a timely continuing benefit decision notice period ends.

Example: Logan reports timely on 8/24 that he is now getting SSB benefits. Since there is not time to give timely notice, the effective date is 10/01.

**CLOSE INCOMING CODE**

If a reported change makes a benefit group ineligible for REF or REFM, use a CLOSE incoming code.

For an anticipated change reported before the payment month and the change will continue and causes an increase in benefits, the effective date is the first of the payment month in which the change will occur.

Example: Sierra reports that on 01/18 that her unemployment benefits have ended on 01/14. Since this change will continue and cause an increase in benefits, the effective date is 02/01.
Adjust CMS using a COMPUTE incoming code to reflect the change in income before the End of Month (EOM) deadline; use an SUPL action, if after.

Effective Dates; Changes in Income or Income Deductions That Cause Increases
Rule 461-180-0020 — Effective Dates; Changes in Income or Income Deductions That Cause Increases

Effective Dates; Changes in Income or Income Deductions That Cause Reductions
Rule 461-180-0030 — Effective Dates; Changes in Income or Income Deductions That Cause Reductions

Effective Dates; Suspending or Closing Benefits and JOBS Support Service Payments
Rule 461-180-0050 — Effective Dates; Suspending or Closing Benefits and JOBS Support Service Payments

4. Effective date for adding a new person to an open case

When adding a new person to an open case, a new application or an addendum must be received, if we want to establish a filing date.

Establishing a filing date with the Application for Services (DHS 415F) or Additional space for other people living with you (DHS 415X) will ensure that the REF supplement will start on the filing date once the new person clears eligibility.

REMEMBER

The REF Program is for single and childless couples. If the person that is being added is a child, then you will need to review for TANF eligibility. If it does result in the case needing to change to the TANF Program, then a new application will need to be completed and the REF case will need to be closed at the end of that month so that a TANF case can be opened if eligible.
NOTE

Completing the DHS 415F or DHS 415X is not mandatory.

(A) Determine if this person must be added to the filing group, and change the number in the household on CMS to reflect the correct figure.

If the person is in the filing group, determine the eligibility factors that the new person must meet.

If adding this person will increase benefits, add this person effective the date when all eligibility requirements are met and verified, unless an application was submitted and a filing date established. If a filing date was established and all eligibility was cleared within 45 days of the date of request, then add the individual effective the filing date.

If a new application is not received and amendments to the current Application for Services (DHS 415F) combined with an addendum, including the Change Report (DHS 943) or Additional space for other people living with you form (DHS 415X) were used, determine if all eligibility factors are cleared. Send a Notice of Information or Verification Needed (DHS 210A) to request any additional information needed.

Use new person’s actual current income to determine eligibility and amount of supplement when adding.

(B) If benefits have been issued for the month and adding the new person would reduce benefits, the person is added the first of the month following the month in which the notice period ends (see OAR 461-175-0050).

The effective date for adding an individual (other than an eligible newborn) to the benefit group is the date on which all eligibility requirements are met and verified (or filing date, if a filing date has been established).

Example: Cameron reports 10/4 that his wife, Maria, has moved back into the home. Cameron and Maria turn in the DHS 415F on 10/6. Maria clears all eligibility on 10/10. Maria is added to the case as of 10/6 the filing date.
Prospective or Retrospective Eligibility and Budgeting; ERDC, REF, REFM, SNAP, TANF Rule

461-150-0060 — Prospective or Retrospective Eligibility and Budgeting; ERDC, REF, REFM, SNAP, TANF

Effective Dates; Adding a New Person to an Open Case Rule

461-180-0010 — Effective Dates; Adding a New Person to an Open Case

For REFM:

Adding an eligible newborn

In some very rare instances, a child could be on an REFM case. This could only happen if she was determined ineligible for Medicaid and was receiving REFM. If this is the case, the effective date for adding an eligible newborn to an open case is:

- The date of birth, if all eligibility requirements are met and verified within 45 days after the birth; or
- The date all eligibility factors are met and verified, if the verification is completed more than 45 days after the date of birth.

When adding a newborn child born in an Oregon hospital to a case, proof of birth is not required.

Example: Dawn reports on 12/2 that her daughter was born 11/26. She was on REFM and continued to be ineligible for Medicaid due to earnings, even with the newborn. For REFM, all eligibility is cleared 12/2. The child is added to the case effective 11/26.

Effective Dates; Adding a New Person to an Open Case Rule

5. Removing a person

Removing a person from their grant means either reducing or terminating the benefits of the benefit group. A timely continuing benefit decision notice is required.

Example: Crystal reports that her husband is no longer in the household. Removing him from the case will reduce her REF benefits. A timely notice is needed.
6. **Late, incomplete or nonreporting**

If it is discovered that a client has failed to report changes they were required to report and, as a result, the benefit group received benefits to which they were not entitled, the Department of Human Services (DHS) must file an overpayment against the filing group.

If the client fails to report a one-time unanticipated change, no overpayment exists. This is because the grant amount is calculated based on the best information available to the client and to SSP at the time the determination is made.

If the client fails to report the change that has occurred and continues, there is no overpayment for the month in which the change first occurred. This is because benefits could not have been adjusted in time to prevent the overpayment. However, overpayments exist in the following months in which the change in income has not been correctly adjusted and reflected in the monthly grant amount.

**TIMELY CONTINUING BENEFIT NOTICE**

Send a timely continuing benefit decision notice to the client before reducing or terminating benefits.

7. **Change in income**

When a change in income occurs, determine how the change will impact the monthly benefit amount. Process the change according to when and how it is reported.
Actions taken when a change of employment is reported

If the Big “3” is reported (weekly hours, hourly wage and the date of the first paycheck) take the participants statement. If the reported information places the family OVI for REF, workers may close REF based on the first pay date. For instance if the first pay check is between the first and 14th of the month, close end of month with timely notice. If the first pay check is received between the 15th and EOM, close the following month. If the reported income does not appear to make the family be over income for REF, then pend the client using the Notice of Information or Verification Needed (DHS 210A) for proof of income.

VERIFYING GROSS INCOME

If eligibility is unclear, verification must be received. Verification includes, but is not limited to: client statement of weekly hours, hourly rate, date of first check, a copy of the paystub, written or oral statement from the employer, print out from the employer, etc.

NOTE

Verifying gross income is different from verifying participation hours.

Example: Judy reports that she was just hired for a full time job with an ongoing salary of $2900.00 per month. She starts her job on the 25th of July, however; will not receive her first monthly check until September 1. Based on Judy’s statement, she will be over the REF income standard and case closes effective 09/30.

Example: On 11/25, Julie reports starting a job working Sundays for eight hours at her church for $9.25 an hour; she will be paid once a month on the 10th and her first check will be received on 12/10. Pend for proof of income to be received by 12/20. Julie submits copy of first check on 12/11. Send a Notice of Decision and Action Taken (DHS 456) to reduce benefits for 1/1.
REMINDER

Issue a notice (DHS 456 or DHS 7822) if the client received ongoing support service payments, to close or reduce.

If any of the Big "3" required information (weekly work hours, hourly wage and the date of the first paycheck) is not reported, pend the client using Notice of Information or Verification Needed (DHS 210A) for weekly work hours, hourly wage and date of the first paycheck. The due date for the pended items will be the 15th of the following month.

If the first pay date is not reported, pend for the actual pay stub. If their income does not place them OVI for REF, the actual pay stub will ensure proper coding on UCMS.

**Example:** On 11/25, Julie reports starting a job working Sundays for eight hours at her church for $9.25 an hour; she will be paid once a month on the 10th and her first check will be received on 12/10. Pend for proof of income to be received by 12/20. Julie submits copy of first check on 12/11. Send a Notice of Decision and Action Taken (DHS 456) to reduce benefits for 1/1.

**Example:** Austin is receiving REF and calls his worker about a new job he started. He reports on the voice message that his first pay date is 5/5 and he is earning 12.50 an hour. The worker needs to send Austin the DHS 210A for his weekly work hours. The due date for the information will be 10 days from the first pay date of 5/5.

**Actions taken when pended items are received**

If the pended items are returned, calculate the ongoing income using prospective budgeting and determine if the income will cause the case to be reduced or closed. A Timely Continuing Benefit Decision is needed when benefits are closed or reduced.

Many times the first pay check is not reflective of ongoing income because it is not for a full pay period. After proof of the gross income is received, determine if the weekly hours are reflective of what the client originally anticipated. If the client reports that the originally reported hours are not reflective, it is not necessary to pend for additional proof of income, simply narrate what income was used and why.
If a REF case is closed for being over income and the family becomes REF-eligible in the month following the closure, a new application is not needed to restore REF.

**Actions taken when pended item are not received**

If pended items are not received timely, close the REF grant giving 10-day notice for failure to return the requested verification.

**Verification; General Rule**

461-115-0610 — Verification; General

**Prospective Eligibility and Budgeting Rule**

461-150-0020 — Prospective Eligibility and Budgeting

**Prospective or Retrospective Eligibility and Budgeting: ERDC, REF, REFM, SNAP, TANF Rule**

461-150-0060 — Prospective or Retrospective Eligibility and Budgeting: ERDC, REF, REFM, SNAP, TANF

**Income and Payment Standards; REF, TANF Rule**

461-155-0030 — Income and Payment Standards; REF, TANF

**How Income Affects Eligibility and Benefits; REF, REFM, and TANF Rule**

461-160-0100 — How Income Affects Eligibility and Benefits; REF, REFM, and TANF

**Changes That Must Be Reported Rule**

461-170-0011 — Changes That Must Be Reported

**Notice Situations; General Information Rule**

461-175-0200 — Notice Situations; General Information