

(4) The Department shall not accept liability under any circumstances for the overissuance of benefits due to the utilization of manual vouchers, including those situations when the host computer is inaccessible or telecommunications lines are not functioning. However, the State agency, in consultation with authorized retailers and with the mutual agreement of the State agency's vendor, if any, may accept liability for manual purchases within a specified dollar limit. Costs associated with liabilities accepted by the State agency shall not be reimbursable.

(5) The State agency shall be strictly liable for manual transactions that result in excess deductions from a household's account.

(n) *Ownership rights and procurement requirements.* (1) The State agency shall comply with the software and automated data processing equipment ownership rights prescribed under §277.13 and §277.18(l) of this chapter.

(2) The State agency shall comply with the procurement standards prescribed under §277.18(j) of this chapter. Under service agreements, the procurement of equipment and services which will be utilized in a Food Stamp EBT system shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions set forth under §277.18(f) of this chapter.

[57 FR 11249, Apr. 1, 1992; 57 FR 44791, Sept. 29, 1992; Amdt. 378, 64 FR 48938, Sept. 9, 1999; 65 FR 10678, Feb. 29, 2000; Amdt. 385, 65 FR 33439, May 24, 2000; Amdt. 378, 65 FR 41325, July 5, 2000; Amdt. 384, 65 FR 49724, Aug. 15, 2000; Amdt. 390, 65 FR 59110, Oct. 4, 2000]

PART 275—PERFORMANCE REPORTING SYSTEM

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EDITORIAL NOTE: OMB control numbers relating to this part 275 are contained in §271.8.

Subpart A—Administration

§275.1 General scope and purpose.

(a) Under the Food Stamp Act, each State agency is responsible for the administration of the Food Stamp Program in accordance with the Act, Regulations, and the State agency's plan of operation. To fulfill the requirements of the Act, each State agency shall have a system for monitoring and improving its administration of the program. The State agency is also responsible for reporting on its administration to FNS. These reports shall identify program deficiencies and the specific administrative action proposed to meet the program requirements established by the Secretary. If it is determined, however, that a State has failed without good cause to meet any of the program requirements established by the Secretary, or has failed to carry out the approved State plan of operation, the Department shall suspend and/or disallow from the State

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such funds as are determined to be appropriate in accordance with part 276 of this chapter.

(b)(1) The Food Stamp Act authorizes the Secretary to pay each State agency an amount equal to 50 percent of all administrative costs involved in each State agency's operation of the program. The Act further authorizes the Secretary to increase the percentage share if:

(i) The State agency's payment error rate is less than or equal to 5.90 percent, and

(ii) The State agency's negative case error rate is less than the national weighted mean negative case error rate for the prior fiscal year.

(2) If a State agency qualifies for an increased percentage share, the amount of increase will be an additional percentage point for each full tenth of a percentage point by which the payment error rate is less than six percent, up to a maximum of 60 percent of administrative costs. Those State agencies not receiving the increased share of funding shall develop and implement corrective action plans to reduce payment errors. Corrective action shall be completed as required in subpart E of this section.

[Amdt. 160, 45 FR 15898, Mar. 11, 1980, as amended by Amdt. 266, 52 FR 3407, Feb. 4, 1987; Amdt. 328, 56 FR 60051, Nov. 27, 1991]

§ 275.2 State agency responsibilities.

(a) *Establishment of the performance reporting system.* (1) The State agency shall establish a continuing performance reporting system to monitor program administration and program operations. The method for establishing each component of the system is identified and explained in subparts B through F of this part. The components of the State agency's performance reporting system shall be:

(i) Data collection through management evaluation (ME) reviews and quality control (QC) reviews;

(ii) Analysis and evaluation of data from all sources;

(iii) Corrective action planning;

(iv) Corrective action implementation and monitoring; and

(v) Reporting to FNS on program performance.

(2) The State agency must ensure corrective action is effected at the State and project area levels.

(b) *Staffing standards.* The State agency shall employ sufficient State level staff to perform all aspects of the Performance Reporting System as required in this part of the regulations. The staff used to conduct QC reviews shall not have prior knowledge of either the household or the decision under review. Where there is prior knowledge, the reviewer must disqualify her/himself. Prior knowledge is defined as having:

(1) Taken any part in the decision that has been made in the case; (2) any discussion of the case with staff who participated in the decision; or (3) any personal knowledge of or acquaintance with persons in the case itself. To ensure no prior knowledge on the part of QC or ME reviewers, local project area staff shall not be used to conduct QC or ME reviews; exceptions to this requirement concerning local level staff may be granted with prior approval from FNS. However, local personnel shall not, under any circumstances, participate in ME reviews of their own project areas.

[Amdt. 160, 45 FR 15898, Mar. 11, 1980, as amended by Amdt. 266, 52 FR 3407, Feb. 4, 1987]

§ 275.3 Federal monitoring.

The Food and Nutrition Service shall conduct the review described in this section to determine whether a State agency is operating the Food Stamp Program and the Performance Reporting System in accordance with program requirements. The Federal reviewer may consolidate the scheduling and conduct of these reviews to reduce the frequency of entry into the State agency. FNS regional offices will conduct additional reviews to examine State agency and project area operations, as considered necessary to determine compliance with program requirements. FNS shall notify the State agency of any deficiencies detected in program or system operations. Any deficiencies detected in program or system operations which do not necessitate long range analytical and evaluative measures for corrective action