

#### § 274.4

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not transact its authorization document, or obtain the benefits directly from an issuance point during the issuance's validity period, shall lose its entitlement to the benefits, and the State agency shall not issue benefits to such a household for such a period.

(2) State agencies experiencing excessive issuance losses may develop systems that have authorization documents that expire in shorter time frames than those set forth in paragraph (e) of this section. However, such systems shall include methods that allow households the opportunity to obtain their benefits for the full validity period of a month's issuance.

[54 FR 7004, Feb. 15, 1989, as amended at 54 FR 51351, Dec. 15, 1989; 57 FR 11249, Apr. 1, 1992; 60 FR 20183, Apr. 25, 1995; Amdt. 390, 65 FR 59110, Oct. 4, 2000]

#### § 274.4 Reconciliation and reporting.

(a) *Reconciliation.* State agencies shall account for all issuance through a reconciliation process. The manner in which this is done varies depending on the type of issuance system being used.

(1) Described below are the required reconciliation procedures for each type of system.

(i) In all issuance systems coupon issuers shall reconcile their issuances daily using daily tally sheets, cashiers' daily reports, tapes or printouts.

(ii) In systems where a record-for-issuance is used, all issuances authorized for the month shall be merged into one record-for-issuance at the end of each month. All issuances made during the month shall then be posted to the record-for-issuance. The record-for-issuance shall then be compared with the master issuance file. Findings from this comparison shall be reported on the Form *FNS-46* as prescribed in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(iii) In systems where no record-for-issuance is used, issuances made during each month shall be reconciled to the master issuance file. Findings from this reconciliation shall be reported on the Form *FNS-46* as prescribed in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(iv) In addition to the reconciliation activity prescribed in the paragraphs (a)(1)(i), (a)(1)(ii) and (a)(1)(iii) of this section, the following steps shall be

followed in authorization document systems:

(A) The State agency shall determine and verify the transacted value of authorized coupon issuances.

(B) Any batches of transacted authorization documents that do not reconcile shall be maintained intact by the State agency until the discrepancy is resolved with the coupon issuer and/or a review of the case files.

(C) The State agency shall compare all transacted authorization documents with the record-for-issuance or master issuance file as appropriate. Any documents that do not match with the record-for-issuance or master issuance file shall be identified and reported as required in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(b) *Required reports.* The State agency shall review and submit the following reports to FNS on a monthly basis:

(1) Form *FNS-250*, Food Coupon Accountability Report.

(i) This report, executed monthly by coupon issuers and bulk storage points, shall be signed by the coupon issuer or appropriate official, certifying that the information is true and correct to the best of that person's knowledge and belief.

(ii) Coupon issuers and bulk storage points shall submit supporting documentation to the State agency which will allow verification of the monthly report. At a minimum, such documentation shall include documents supporting coupon shipments, transfers, issuances, and destruction.

(iii) For those State agencies which use an authorization document issuance system, coupon issuers shall submit transacted authorization documents batched according to each day's activity in accordance with a schedule prescribed by the State agency, but not less often than monthly.

(iv) All mail issuance activity, including the value of mail issuance replacements, shall be reported. Original allotments (first benefits issued for a particular month to an ongoing household) subsequently recovered by the issuance office during the current month shall be returned to inventory and noted on the mail issuance log.

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When the original allotment is returned to inventory and the replacement issuance is issued during the current month (month in which original benefits were issued), the "replacement" shall not be reported.

(v) The Form *FNS-250* shall be reviewed by the State agency for accuracy, completeness and reasonableness. The State agency shall attest to the accuracy of these reports and shall submit the reports so they will be received by FNS by the 45th day after the report month. Any revisions to the Form *FNS-250* for a given month shall be submitted to FNS within 105 days after the end of the report month.

(vi) FNS shall review each form, submitted through the State agency, for completeness, accuracy and reasonableness and shall reconcile inventory with shipping records, and shall review State agency verification of coupon issuer and bulk storage point monthly reports. FNS may supplement the above reviews by unannounced spot checks of inventory levels and coupon security arrangements at coupon issuers and at bulk storage points.

(2) Form *FNS-46*, Issuance Reconciliation Report, shall be submitted by each State agency operating an issuance system. The report shall be prepared at the level of the State agency where the actual reconciliation of the record-for-issuance and master issuance file occurs.

(i) The State agency shall identify and report the number and value of all issuances which do not reconcile with the record-for-issuance and/or master issuance file. All unreconciled issuances shall be identified as specified on this reporting document.

(ii) The report shall be received by FNS no later than 90 days following the end of the report month.

(3) Form *FNS-259*, Food Stamp Mail Issuance Report.

(i) Form *FNS-259* reports shall be submitted by State agencies for each unit using a mail issuance system as specified in the Mail Issuance Loss Reporting Plan required in § 272.2(d)(1)(iv). The State agency shall submit the Form *FNS-259* reports so that they are received in FNS by the 45th day following the end of each quarter.

(ii) The State agency shall verify the issuance by a comparison with issuance on the appropriate coupon issuer's Form *FNS-250*.

(4) Form *FNS-388*, State Coupon Issuance and Participation Estimates.

(i) State agencies shall telephone or transmit by computer the Form *FNS-388* data and mail the reports to the FNS regional office no later than the 19th day of each month. When the 19th falls on a weekend or holiday, the Form *FNS-388* data shall be reported by telephone or transmitted by computer and mailed on the first work day after the 19th. The Form *FNS-388* report shall be signed by the person responsible for completing the report or a designated State agency official.

(ii) The Form *FNS-388* report shall provide Statewide estimated or actual totals of issuance and participation for the current and previous month, and actual or final participation totals for the second preceding month. In addition to the participation totals for the second preceding months of January and July, provided on the March and September reports, non-assistance (NA) and public assistance (PA) household and person participation breakdowns shall be provided. As an attachment to the March and September Form *FNS-388* reports, State agencies shall provide project area breakdowns of the coupon issuance and NA/PA household and person participation data for the second preceding months of January and July.

(iii) State agencies shall submit any proposed changes in their estimation procedures to be used in determining the Form *FNS-388* data to the FNS regional office for review and comment. FNS shall monitor the accuracy of the estimated dollar value of coupons issued as reported on the Form *FNS-388* against the Statewide total dollar value of coupons as reported by the issuance agents on the Form *FNS-250*, Food Stamp Accountability Report, for the corresponding month. FNS shall monitor the accuracy of the Statewide estimated number of households and persons participating as reported on the Form *FNS-388* report against the Statewide actual total participation as reported on succeeding Form *FNS-388* reports and against the semiannual

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project area participation totals attached to the March and September Form *FNS-388* reports. The FNS accuracy standards for the issuance and participation estimates are that estimates for the current month be within (+) or (-) four (4) percent of actual levels, and the estimates for the previous month be within (+) or (-) two (2) percent of actual levels. State agencies shall explain any unusual circumstances that cause coupon issuance and/or participation data to not meet these accuracy standards. If a State agency fails to meet these accuracy standards, FNS shall notify the State agency and assist the State agency in revising its estimating procedures to improve its reporting.

(iv) A participating household is one that is certified and has been, or will be, issued benefits (whether or not the benefits are used), and households that have met the eligibility requirements, but will receive zero benefits.

[54 FR 7004, Feb. 15, 1989, as amended at 54 FR 51351, Dec. 15, 1989]

**§ 274.5 [Reserved]**

**§ 274.6 Replacement issuances to households.**

(a) *Providing replacement issuance.* (1) Subject to the restrictions in paragraph (b) of this section, State agencies shall provide replacement issuances to a household when the household reports that:

(i) Its authorization document was not received in the mail or was stolen from the mail, was stolen after receipt, was destroyed in a household misfortune, or was improperly manufactured or mutilated;

(ii) Its coupons were not received in the mail, were stolen from the mail, were destroyed in a household misfortune, or were improperly manufactured or mutilated;

(iii) Food purchased with food stamps was destroyed in a household misfortune; or

(iv) It received a partial coupon allotment.

(2) State agencies shall not provide replacement issuances to households when coupons are lost, stolen or misplaced after receipt, authorization documents are lost or misplaced after re-

ceipt, when authorization documents or coupons are totally destroyed after receipt in other than a disaster or misfortune, or when coupons sent by registered or certified mail are signed for by anyone residing with or visiting the household. In addition, replacement issuances shall not be made if the household or its authorized representative has not signed and returned the household statement required in paragraph (c) of this section, where applicable.

(3) Where FNS has issued a disaster declaration and the household is eligible for disaster food stamp benefits under the provisions of part 280, the household shall not receive both the disaster allotment and a replacement allotment for a misfortune.

(4) In order for a replacement to be considered non-countable, the replacement must not result in a loss to the Program.

(b) *Replacement restrictions.* (1) Replacement issuances shall be provided only if a household timely reports a loss orally or in writing, and provides a statement of nonreceipt if the original authorization document or allotment has not been returned to the State agency at the time of the request for replacement. The report will be considered timely if it is made to the State agency within 10 days of the date an authorization document is stolen from the household, or an authorization document, coupons, or food purchased with food stamps is destroyed in a household misfortune. In mail issuance (ATPs or coupons), the report must be made within the period of intended use, unless the original issuance was made after the 20th of the month, in which case the period of intended use is 20 days from original issuance, or the last day of the next month (State agency option).

(2) The number of replacement issuances which a household may receive shall be limited as follows:

(i) State agencies shall limit replacement issuances to a total of two countable replacements in six months for authorization documents or coupons not received in, or stolen from, the mail; authorization documents stolen after receipt; and partial coupon allotments. However, no limit shall be put on the