



COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

SUBJECT: Certification	Chapter: 2
	Section: 2.1
REFERENCES: 7 CFR 247.8 through 247.17	Page: 1 of 4
	Revised: 04-2014

PURPOSE: To provide guidance for the certification process and completion of the CSFP Participant Application, Attachment 2.1.

POLICY: Prior to the issuance of program benefits, trained certifying officials shall verify that each applicant is eligible, determine availability of caseload, make written notifications, and maintain required documentation in accordance with program regulations.

PROCEDURES:

- A. Local agencies shall assure certifying officials are trained and demonstrate understanding of the requirements of the certification process.
- B. All certification data for each applicant shall be recorded on the CSFP Participant Application. Local agencies may choose between two versions of the form. Attachment 2.1A is a one page version. Attachment 2.1B is a two page version with large print.
 - 1. Any individual requesting to apply shall be allowed to complete the CSFP Participant Application. If caseload is not available, eligible applicants shall be placed on the waiting list. See Section 2.6.
 - 2. All completed CSFP Participant Applications shall be retained for a period of three years, including those of applicants determined to be ineligible and all previous applicants and participants.
- C. All qualifying household members may be placed on the same Participant Application. There is space on the form for three household members, the applicant plus two additional qualifying household members. If there are additional qualifying household members the required information may be provided on the back of the form.
- D. To be eligible for CSFP, certifying official must determine applicant meets the following criteria:
 - 1. Can be classified as an elderly person. See Section 2.2.
 - 2. Meets residency requirements. See Section 2.3.
 - 3. Meets the income eligibility. See Sections 2.2, 2.4 and 2.5 and Attachment 2.2.



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- a. Household income must be at or below 130% of federal poverty income guidelines.

E. Applicants must be informed:

1. Certifying officials must assure the sentences located in the double lined boxes on the application are read by, or read to, the applicant or the applicant's parent or caretaker, in the appropriate translation, at the time of certification. The required sentences are located above the Name of Applicant block, to the left of the household income section and above the Signature of Applicant or Guardian.
2. Attachment 12.1 the "Appeals Process" shall be posted at all certification and distribution sites and copies shall be available upon request.
3. Attachment 11.1 the "And Justice for All" poster must be posted in a prominent location at all certification sites. This poster is also available on the web at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cr/justice.htm> including translations into several different languages.

F. At the time of certification, a copy of Attachment 2.4, "Health and Social Services Referral Information" must be provided to each applicant and key points discussed (see Section 4.1). By checking the "Y" box next to "H&SS Handout Given" at the bottom of the Participant Application the Certifying Official affirms the applicant received Attachment 2.4.

G. Certifications shall be established in accordance with the time frames explained in Section 2.8.

H. Certifying officials shall complete the lines under "FOR CERTIFYING AGENCY USE ONLY" on Attachment 2.1, Participant Application.

1. Proof of Identity/Age/Eligibility – Describe the method/document/s used to determine identity, age and population group eligibility. See Section 2.2.
2. Residency Verified – Check when residency has been verified. See Section 2.3.
3. H&SS Handout Given – Check when a copy of Attachment 2.4 has been provided to the applicant.



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4. Applicant Eligible? – Check yes or no based on an assessment of all eligibility requirements including income. See Sections 2.2, 2.4, 2.5 and Attachment 2.2.
 5. Caseload Available – Check yes or no base on an assessment of available caseload. If applicant is eligible but caseload is not available the applicant must be placed on a waiting list.
 6. Indicate the date written notice of eligibility, ineligibility or placement on a waiting list was provided to applicant. See paragraph J. below.
 7. Sign, print name, and title. Complete the “Date Certified” only when applicant is certified to receive CSFP benefits. If applicant is placed on a waiting list they are not certified. See Section 2.6. When an applicant is certified after being on a waiting list they must review and update their Participant Application. They must sign and date the second signature line. Then the certifying official shall complete the “Date Certified” and “Period of Certification.”
 8. Enter the first and last months of the period of certification. See Section 2.8.
- I. **Within 10 days from the date of application**, certifying officials must notify applicants in writing of their eligibility or ineligibility for CSFP benefits, or their placement on a waiting list.
1. **Notification of eligibility must be in writing and must include the length of the certification period, and information on the time, location, and means of food distribution.** Attachment 2.6, Notification of Applicant Status may be used (see Section 2.6). Key points contained in Attachment 2.3, “The CSFP Food Package is.” must be discussed with eligible applicants, (see Section 4.1). **The date written notice was provided to applicant must be entered on the Participant Application.**
 2. **Notification of ineligibility must be in writing on Attachment 2.7, Notice of Adverse Action** (See Section 2.7) and must include the reason the applicant is not eligible. **The date written notice was provided to applicant must be entered on the Participant Application.**



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3. **Notification of placement on a waiting list must be in writing.** Attachment 2.6, Notification of Applicant Status may be used. When applicants exceed available caseload, certifying officials must maintain a waiting list of individuals who apply for the Program. See Section 2.6 and Attachments 2.5 and 2.6. **The date written notice was provided to applicant must be entered on the Participant Application.**

- J. If there is no waiting list, a person determined eligible for program benefits shall receive supplemental foods at the next regularly scheduled distribution after notification of eligibility.

- K. Participant certification periods may be extended using Attachment 2.1C “Participant Extension of Certification Period,” **as long as all of the following conditions are met:**
 1. The person’s address and continued interest in receiving program benefits are verified;
 2. The local agency has sufficient reason to believe that the person still meets the income eligibility standards (e.g. the elderly person has a fixed income);
 3. The certifying official notifies the elderly participant verbally or in writing of the period of the extension. Attachment 2.6, “Notice of Certification Status” may be used for written notice of certification period extension.
 4. The certifying official signs and completes the next extension blocks on the participant’s Attachment 2.1C “Elderly Participant Extension of Certification Period” certifying all conditions are met.

- L. **At least 15 days before the expiration of a certification period** participants must be notified in writing that eligibility for the Program is about to expire using Attachment 2.6 Notice of Certification Status. See Sections 2.6 and Section 2.8. Documentation of the notification shall be maintained on a log, the monthly sign-in sheets or a copy retained in the individual’s file. This notification is not required when an elderly participant’s certification period is extended in accordance with paragraph L. above because the period is not expiring.

Verification of Certification forms shall be available upon request by any participant relocating during the certification period and such forms from other CSFP locations or states shall be honored in accordance with Section 2.9 and Attachment 2.8.