



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
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November 5, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

Informational Briefing: Wednesday, November 5, 2009
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is planning to implement the following new strategies to expedite the SNAP application process and provide expanded eligibility and access for SNAP benefits.

Telephone Interviewing: DHS recently obtained for the State of Hawai'i a waiver of the face-to-face interview requirement and effective August 1, 2009, we are able to and will conduct all SNAP initial and recertification interviews by telephone. Telephone interviewing training was conducted statewide in October 2009. Our eligibility staff will use this new process to expedite the approval of SNAP benefits.

Expanded Categorical Eligibility (ECE): Households where all members are receiving benefits from a means-tested cash assistance program are categorically eligible for SNAP. States have the option of expanding this designation to non-cash

households by providing all SNAP applicants with a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funded service (which can be as little as providing an informational brochure paid by the TANF program). The household's gross income must not exceed 200% FPL. ECE also eliminates the requirement for asset valuation and the application of the resource test. Families with low incomes and modest assets will be eligible for benefits. It can extend food assistance to families with high expenses but gross incomes slightly higher than the normal gross income test. For eligible households of one or two individuals, the minimum SNAP benefit is \$25 per month.

Transitional Benefits Alternative (TBA): TBA allows states to help support families as they move off TANF cash assistance by providing continued SNAP benefits for up to 5 months in an amount equal to the amount received by the household prior to the termination of TANF with adjustment for loss of TANF income.

We are planning to implement the ECE and TBA programs by July 2010.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information regarding SNAP.