

January 18, 2008

SUBJECT: Servicepersons' Bank Accounts

TO: All Regional Directors
Food Stamp Program

Servicepersons being deployed overseas may provide their parents, or other individuals, access to their bank accounts allowing them to pay bills and otherwise handle the servicepersons' affairs while they are gone. Section 273.8(d) of Food Stamp Program regulations specifies that resources owned jointly by separate households are to be considered available in their entirety to each household for program eligibility purposes, unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant household that such resources are inaccessible to that household. If the household can demonstrate that it has access to only a portion of the resource, the value of that portion of the resource must be counted toward the household's resource level. Under this policy some persons in West Virginia, who have been provided access to resources of deployed military personnel, have been rendered ineligible for program participation

We wish to emphasize that if an applicant household, with access to a deployed serviceperson's bank account, can document to the satisfaction of the certification office that it can access the account, or a portion thereof, solely for the purpose of paying the serviceperson's bills, etc., and the household cannot use the funds for itself, the funds would be excluded as an inaccessible resource. It is the responsibility of the applicant household to provide documentation concerning such an arrangement. This could be in the form of a written statement from the serviceperson to this effect, a statement from the involved financial institution, or other means attesting to the fact.

If it is determined that the applicant household can access a serviceperson's bank account for its own purposes, the funds must be considered a resource for program purposes under Section 273.8(d).

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact John Knaus at (703) 305-2098.

/s/
Arthur T. Foley
Director
Program Development Division

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