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The following are written responses to questions raised in the recent training sessions on the Disaster Food Stamp Program (DFSP) policy.

1. **Question:** If the applicant does not have identification at the time of application, do we have to give him an OFS 18C?

Answer: Identity must be verified per policy outlined in Chapter 4, [C-320-FS](#). If identity cannot be verified at the time of the application, an OFS 18C should be given to the applicant. The case cannot be certified until identity is verified.
2. **Question:** If the applicant does not have his social security number (SSN), but states that he can provide it, how long should the application be held and should we utilize an OFS 18C?


Answer: Yes, an OFS 18C should be given to the applicant requesting his SSN, but the 3 workday deadline for application processing still must be met. In this situation, the application must not be rejected if the applicant fails to provide the SSN.
3. **Question:** "When Possible" verifications include verifying the loss or inaccessibility of income/liquid resources. Does this also include verifying income/liquid resources when there is not a loss or it is accessible?

Answer: The loss or inaccessibility of income and liquid resources must be verified when the client reports that there is a loss of income or that resources are inaccessible. There is no requirement to verify the amount of income or liquid resources.
4. **Question:** If an applicant was disqualified for IPV for one DFSP, does that disqualify the applicant from receiving benefits in another DFSP?

Answer: No, prior disqualifications in either the regular Food Stamp Program or a prior DFSP would not make an applicant ineligible for a subsequent DFSP.
5. **Question:** Are the fleeing felon or drug-related felony disqualifications applicable in DFSP?

Answer: No, these disqualifications are not applicable.
6. **Question:** An ineligible student resides in a household that is receiving regular Food Stamp benefits. A disaster is declared and a DFSP is implemented, but because the household is already receiving regular Food Stamp benefits, they are not eligible for DFSP benefits. Since student status is not a disqualifying factor for DFSP, if the student applies for DFSP, is he certified as a separate household if otherwise eligible? What if the student is 21 or younger and living with his parents? Can he still be a separate household?

Answer: Yes, the student would be certified as a separate household, if otherwise

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eligible. The age of the student does not matter for the DFSP.

7. **Question:** If the head of household is the ineligible student, will the DFSP sub-system allow us to certify the case in the head of household's SSN? If not, would we use a pseudo number?

Answer: Because student policy is not applied in DFSP, the L'AMI subsystem allows us to certify the student as the head of household using the student's SSN. A pseudo number would not be used for the student if a valid SSN is available. The DFSP sub-system will only consider individuals who have an inclusion code 01 as receiving regular Food Stamp benefits.

8. **Question:** Please refer to page 9 of the training packet, Example #2, which states that the three children who move in with their grandmother following a disaster would be a separate DFSP household. The example doesn't state whether the grandmother is residing in the disaster area herself. If she is, and she was not already receiving regular Food Stamp benefits, she could be certified along with the three children for DFSP if otherwise eligible. However, if the grandmother was not eligible for DFSP for some reason, under whose name would the application be opened on the DFSP sub-system? Would it be under the name of the oldest child?

Answer If the grandmother was residing in the disaster area when the disaster occurred, she could get DFSP benefits, but it would still be separate from the grandchildren since they did not all live together prior to the disaster. The DFSP case for the grandmother would be in her name and the DFSP case for the grandchildren would be in the name of the oldest child.


9. **Question:** If a paycheck is automatically deposited into a client's bank account and funds are inaccessible, is the amount of the paycheck still counted as income?

Answer: No, the paycheck should not be counted as income unless the funds are reasonably expected to become accessible within the disaster benefit period.

10. **Question:** Could DFSP rejection/closure codes be consistent with regular FSP denial/closure codes?

Answer: These codes are already programmed. Since there are only five codes, there are no plans to change them to be consistent with the regular L'AMI codes.

11. **Question:** When taking an application for DFSP on a household previously unknown to the agency, and the applicant cannot remember the SSN of his child, do we assign the child a pseudo number? Page 4 of the training package (L'AMI Matches) states that we

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are required to submit the social security numbers for all household members.

Answer: Yes, a pseudo number should be assigned for any household member for whom the SSN is not known.

12. **Question:** Will it be permissible to complete group interviews?

Answer: Group interviews will be permitted only to provide general information. Individual interviews must be conducted.

13. **Question:** Will it be permissible for the person "walking the line of applicants" to discuss rights and responsibilities with a group of people at one time?

Answer: Yes.

14. **Question:** Would it be possible to have DFSP forms printed by State Office and shuttled to parish offices? Massive amounts of printing caused problems in past disasters with forms appliance machines, copiers, and lack of sufficient copy paper.

Answer: The DFSP forms are stocked and can be ordered now from DOA through normal procedures.


15. **Question:** Would it be possible to include the client's phone number on the Disaster Case Register Screen? It would be easier for the local office to get in touch with clients who leave messages regarding problems and don't leave a return phone number.

Answer: We will consider this recommendation for future system enhancements.

16. **Question:** A DFSP recipient's gross pay is \$1500, of which \$500 is "deducted" for taxes, retirement, and insurance. This leaves a net amount of \$1000, which is what is shown as his "net" on his pay stub and which is what is directly deposited into his checking account. However, as soon as the \$1000 is deposited into his checking account, the financial institution transfers \$200 of this \$1000 into the recipient's savings account and transfers \$200 to a loan payment. In this example, would the recipient's "take home pay" be \$1000 since that was his net pay directly deposited into his checking account, or would it be \$600 since that is what he was left with after receiving his net pay and making the two transfers?

Answer: In this example, the take-home pay would be \$1000. That is the amount after taxes and withholding.

17. **Question:** The instructions on the top of page 34 of the Training Manual say we are to write the client's name and CID number on the front of the EBT card. You do not receive the CID number until you complete the Disaster Card Issuance screen (DC) in the LAMI Disaster Sub-

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System. We were told that at times it may be necessary to give the client an EBT card with no benefits on it as some community sites will not have computer access or phone lines. Can EBT cards be issued with no benefits on them with only the client's name written on the card?

Answer: DFSP EBT cards can be issued with no benefits on them. If there is no computer access at the site where DFSP applications are being taken, an EBT card can be issued with only the client's name written on the card. If there is computer access at the site, the EBT card issuance process should be followed, including writing the client's name and CID on the EBT card.

18. **Question:** The client has the same DFSP card used for Hurricane Rita or Katrina in his possession. Can this card be used for subsequent disasters?

Answer: Each DFSP card is tied to specific DFSPs, so the cards used for Katrina and Rita will not be used for future DFSPs.


19. **Question:** What process will be used for out-of-state evacuees? Will OFS implement the evacuee policy or will FNS approval have to be received to certify these out-of-state applicants for the DFSP?

Answer: The process for out-of-state evacuees will depend on each specific DFSP. The FNS evacuee policy issued for Hurricane Katrina was the first of its kind and it is unknown whether there will ever be another policy like it. There was no FNS evacuee policy for Hurricane Rita, although we did receive a waiver to certify certain Texas evacuees in our DFSP. Without a "special" evacuee policy from FNS, out-of-state evacuees are not eligible for Louisiana DFSP or regular FSP benefits.

20. **Question:** If evacuee policy will be implemented, can the policy and procedures be added to Section O-DFSP policy in Chapter 4?

Answer: Policy and procedures for an evacuee policy cannot be added to Chapter 4 since there is no such existing policy. If such a policy is issued by FNS for a specific DFSP, it will be included in Executive Bulletins that describe implementation of that DFSP. As mentioned in Section O, the new Chapter 4 policy is just a basic description of DFSP policy and more detailed information will be issued at the time of each DFSP implementation.

21. **Question:** There was a delay in the FNS disaster approval for recipients in other states who evacuated to our state. If Louisiana will be certifying residents from other states, can the evacuee be advised that applications cannot be accepted until FNS approval is received and procedures have been provided? Last time it was very difficult to monitor these pending applications and when approval was finally received, it was often impossible to contact or find

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the individuals as they had returned to their homes out-of-state.

Answer: Until FNS issues an evacuee policy in a specific DFSP, evacuees from other states are not eligible for Louisiana DFSP benefits. Like any other individual, these evacuees have the right to apply for DFSP benefits, but they should be told that they are not eligible and cannot be certified unless FNS issues an evacuee policy.

22. **Question:** There is no "pending" status on the system or listed in the Training manual. A pending status would be helpful to track pending applications for timeliness. Although desirable, in certain instances it will not be possible to interview and certify applicants on the same day. A pending status and report would be helpful in tracking and monitoring pending applications.

Answer: Due to the large number of critical system enhancements required and the need to get the system programming done quickly, it was determined that a status of "pending" and associated reports would be considered in future system enhancements.

23. **Question:** At the time of a disaster, can FNS provide a current updated contact person and procedure for all states to allow timely verification of participation status?


Answer: Most states have websites with this information, but at the time of a DFSP, we will try to obtain a current list and issue it to staff.

24. **Question:** It is discovered that through agency error an individual was omitted from a DFSP certification and a supplement is needed. Does the individual have to be added on the DV screen prior to issuing the supplement on the DS screen? If so, does the DS screen automatically populate the 'Revised Number in Household' and 'Supplemental Issue Amount' fields based on the fact that an individual has been added on the DV screen?

Answer: To issue a supplement, the individuals to be added should be added on the DV screen, but do not have to be. A supplement can be issued by simply changing the "Revised Number in Household" on the DS screen. One of the first enhancements that we will do after current programming is complete is to require that the additional household members be added to the DV screen before a supplement is issued.

25. **Question:** When the authorized representative is the one being interviewed, the head of household has to sign the application or give a written statement that we can interview the authorized representative. What if the head of household signs with an X? Can we accept that, and if so, how many witnesses are needed to her signature.

Answer: As long as the picture ID for the Head of Household also shows an 'X' and at least

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one witness has signed the DIS 1, we can accept that as their signature.

26. **Question:** Do disaster-related expenses have to be paid or expected to be paid during the DFSP benefit period in order for them to be subtracted from the total countable income and liquid resources in determining DFSP eligibility?

Answer: Yes. In accordance with O-473-DFSP, allowable disaster-related expenses are defined as disaster-related expenses that the DFSP household has paid or reasonably expects to pay during the DFSP benefit period, minus any reimbursements for these expenses that the DFSP household receives or expects to receive during the DFSP benefit period. Regardless of the extent of damages incurred during the disaster, the expenses for these damages can only be allowed if the household pays them or reasonably expects to pay them during the DFSP benefit period.

Contact the appropriate Regional FS/CCAP Program Specialist if you have any questions.