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**Texas Works Bulletin Number: #14-04**

**To:** Eligibility Services – Regional Directors  
Program Managers  
Eligibility Services Supervisors  
Regional Attorneys  
Hearings Officers  
All TIERS Users

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**Subject: Returned Mail Policy and Procedure Changes - REVISED**

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This bulletin is being sent to supervisors and other regional managers. Supervisors must share this information with all Texas Works staff. Please ensure copies are provided to staff that do not have access to e-mail. If you have any questions regarding the policy information in this bulletin, follow regional procedures. Active bulletins are posted on the Texas Works Handbook (TWH) website at <http://www.dads.state.tx.us/handbooks/TexasWorks/>.

Texas Works Bulletin (TWB) #14-04 is revised. Instructions for pending for residence verification when the head of household is a disqualified individual are clarified. Please discard the previous version of TWB #14-04 and replace it with this version.

## **Returned Mail Policy and Procedure Changes - REVISED**

### **Background**

In June of 2013, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) conducted a State Program Access Review of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to ensure that HHSC is in compliance with federal regulations, to ensure HHSC operates the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in an effective and efficient manner, and to ensure no program access barriers exist for applicants and recipients.

As a result of this review, it was determined that Texas Works policy and procedures do not comply with federal regulations in one area. FNS has clarified that federal regulations prohibit the denial of SNAP benefits due to the receipt of returned mail without requesting and allowing the household to provide new information or verification regarding the household's address.

## Current Process and Policy

When HHSC receives mail that has been returned with no forwarding address, the advisor sends a Form TF0001, Notice of Case Action, denying the household without first mailing the household Form H1020, Request for Information or Action, and allowing the household 10 days to provide information or verification of an address.

## New Process and Policy

When mail is returned staff must follow the steps listed below:

### If the case includes an active SNAP EDG:

1. Review the address indicated on the returned mail, the case record, and the State Portal to determine if the household has reported a new address. If a new address was reported, staff must process the address change and any related changes in shelter expenses. Otherwise, go to Step 2.
2. If the new address was not reported nor was a forwarding address provided, make one attempt to contact the household via telephone to confirm the address and document the attempt. If able to contact the household and the household provides a new address, process the change and any related changes in shelter expenses. Otherwise, go to Step 3.
3. If the returned mail is a SNAP redetermination packet and there are no other active Eligibility Determination Groups (EDGs), document these facts in Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) Case Comments and take no further action. Otherwise, go to Step 4.
4. For households with no individuals receiving Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (RSDI) or Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI), go to Step 5. For households with individuals receiving RSDI or SSI, use the State Online Query (SOLQ) to verify the household's address. If the address in SOLQ is different from the address in the TIERS case record, use the information in SOLQ to update the address and explore shelter expenses as necessary. If the address in SOLQ matches the address in the TIERS record, document in TIERS Case Comments that the SOLQ inquiry address matches the TIERS address and take no further action. Otherwise, go to Step 5.
5. If unable to contact the household via telephone to obtain an update on their address and no household member receives RSDI or SSI, send Form H1020, Request for Information or Action, to request verification of address and any change in shelter expenses. To pend for address information:
  - In Change Action mode
  - Go to "Individual Demographics"
    - If the head of household is a certified member, edit the record of the head of household.
    - If the head of household is a disqualified member, edit the record of each certified SNAP household member.
  - Edit the **Individual's** record
  - Change the effective begin date appropriately
  - On the "Residency" page, select "not verified" from the residency verification drop down menu
  - Complete the Logical Unit of Work (LUW)
  - Document all attempts to contact the household by telephone
  - Run Eligibility
6. If the household fails to provide information as requested on Form H1020, deny the household for failure to provide information. Send Form TF0001, Notice of Case Action, to deny the case using the denial reason "**Failed to Provide Information.**"

7. If the household is denied for failure to provide information and provides a correct address within the advance notice of adverse action period, reopen the EDG using the original certification period and process any related changes in shelter expenses. Please refer to the [TIERS Advance Notice of Adverse Action Reference Guide](#) in the ASK IT Knowledge Base for instructions.

**If the case does not include an active SNAP EDG:**

1. Review the address indicated on the returned mail, the case record, and the State Portal to determine if the household has reported a new address. If a new address was reported, staff should process the address change. Otherwise, go to Step 2.
2. If the new address was not reported nor was a forwarding address provided, make one attempt to contact the household via telephone to obtain an update on their address and document the attempt. If the household provides a new address, process the change. Otherwise, go to Step 3.
3. For households with individuals receiving RSDI or SSI, use SOLQ to verify the household's address. If the address in SOLQ is different from the address on file, use the information in SOLQ to update the address. If the address in SOLQ matches the address in the TIERS record, document in TIERS Case Comments that the SOLQ inquiry address matches the TIERS address and take no further action. Otherwise, go to Step 4.
4. If unable to contact the household by telephone to obtain an update of their address and no household member receives RSDI or SSI, use the following steps to deny the EDG(s) using the denial reason "**Unable to Locate**" as stated in TWH [A-2344.1](#), Form TF0001 Required (Adequate Notice).
  - o In Change Action Mode
  - o Go to "Household Information" and select "Yes" for the question "Is the worker unable to locate the household?"
  - o Document all attempts to contact the household by telephone
  - o Run Eligibility

**Automation**

This change does not require any automation changes.

**Effective Date**

Staff must begin using the new process and policy effective December 2, 2013.

**Handbook**

These changes will be included in the April 2014 handbook revision.

**Training**

There is no additional training requirement.