United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

Mountain Plains Region

1244 Speer Boulevard
Denver, CO
80204-2581

Reply to Attn of: CACFP-750
SP 05-15
SFSP-512

JAN 28 2005

Subject: Military Families and Eligibility in the Child Nutrition Programs

To: STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS - (Special Nutrition Programs) Colorado ED, Colorado DPHE, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri ED, Missouri DH, Montana OPI, Montana DPHHS, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming

We have recently received questions regarding the child nutrition policy on the treatment of income from deployed military personnel engaged in long-term military campaigns overseas.

On February 5, 2003, we issued a tri-numbered memorandum, CACFP-688, SFSP-467, SP 03-06, and on February 28, 2003, another tri-numbered memorandum, CACFP-691, SFSP-473, SP 03-10. These memoranda addressed the issues related to the treatment of military income for the military campaign Operation Enduring Freedom/Noble Eagle. This memorandum conveys a more detailed statement of the same policy as do these two previous memoranda, so this memorandum replaces those memoranda.

Prompted by the deployment of US military forces in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, we are issuing this memorandum to establish policy as it applies to this and all like military deployments in recognition that, by definition:

- military deployments are initiated with little or no advance warning, and
- each deployment receives a unique designation to distinguish it from any other deployment or campaign.

This policy will remain in effect until rescinded or replaced by legislation, regulation, or future policy and affects households by making special accommodations for:

- free and reduced price meal eligibility determinations,
- tier I day care home determinations, and
- meal benefits for children temporarily residing with their day care home provider.

Current Policy

Under current policy (pages 32-33 of the Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual, issued August 2001), household members who are *temporarily absent* from their household are to be considered household members, and their income is included with other household income when making an eligibility determination. Household members not living with the household for an *extended period of time* or living overseas are not included as members of the household for eligibility purposes, and only that portion of their income made available by them or on their behalf to the household is counted as income to the household.

Policy for Deployed Service Members

Until further notice, we are continuing the exception to current policy on determining household income and size for deployed service members. For the purpose of determining household size, deployed service members should be considered family members living apart on a temporary basis and considered a household member. However, only that portion of the deployed service member's income made available by them or on their behalf to the household will be counted as income to the household.

School Nutrition Programs

Schools are to instruct families completing their meal benefit forms to include the names and that portion of income of deployed service members made available to the household. The determining official would count the service member as part of the household in establishing a child's eligibility for free and reduced price meals.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

An institution would instruct families to include the names of deployed service members and that portion of their income made available to the household on their meal benefit forms. The determining official would count the service member as part of the household in establishing a day care home provider's eligibility for tier I reimbursement rates.

Deployment of a parent or guardian may also affect the eligibility of a child who temporarily resides with a day care home provider to receive meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Although the child may live with the provider while the service member is deployed, the child would not be considered a "provider's own" child. In this special situation, the child would continue to participate in the meal service as a nonresidential participant. To claim reimbursement for program meals, the day care home provider must have power of attorney, custody, or an agreement established by the military to provide residential care to the child.

Summer Food Service Program

Sponsors that are required to collect income eligibility data must instruct families completing the meal benefit form to include the names and that portion of income the deployed service members made available to the household. The determining official would count the service member as a part of the household when establishing a child's income eligibility.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this please contact one of our staff at (303) 844-0354.

Darlene Sanchez

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Special Nutrition Programs