Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Changes and Miscellaneous Cleanup (Revised)

Background
Congress passed Public Law 110-246, the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) which contains provisions that impact the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system for Food Stamps.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has elected to implement the EBT provisions of the Farm Bill for the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program to keep the timeframes for the CalWORKs and Food Stamp programs aligned.

Under the EBT contract, all cash assistance programs must use the same timelines. Therefore, since CalWORKs changed their timeframes, all other cash assistance programs using the EBT system are also impacted by this change. This includes Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), Entrant Cash Assistance (ECA), California Assistance Program for Immigrants [CAPI], and General Assistance (GA).

Changes

Farm Bill
The Farm Bill changed the EBT timeframes before EBT benefits become dormant or are expunged effective October 1, 2008. The new timeframes are as follows:

- The EBT account becomes dormant when a household has not accessed its benefits for 180 days.

- Benefits are expunged from an EBT account when the benefits have not been accessed after 365 days from the date benefits were posted to an EBT account.
CDSS also changed the timeframe for sending the initial notice of inactivity which informs clients their account may become dormant. The notice of inactivity will now be sent 135 days from the date that the EBT account was last accessed. This extended time frame will continue to provide clients with approximately 45 days advance notice to access their benefits before their account becomes dormant.

Destruction of EBT Cards

CDSS requires that a record be kept of each EBT card that is destroyed. When the EBT card is returned or is issued and not picked up, the EBT card number must be recorded on a log before the card is destroyed.

[Refer to “EBT Card and/or PIN is Returned,” page 33-30 for detailed policy information.]

Implementation

The Farm Bill changes are effective October 1, 2008. All other changes, including the change in the policy for the destruction of EBT cards, are effective upon receipt of this Update.

EBT System

JPMorgan completed reprogramming of their computer system on October 14, 2008 to comply with the new Farm Bill EBT timelines for placing benefits into a dormant status or expunging benefits.

CalWIN

The CalWIN project is in the process of revising the preprinted section of the Notices of Action (NOAs) to comply with the new Farm Bill timelines. JPMorgan notifies CalWIN through an interface of the date benefits are placed in a dormant status or expunged. CalWIN uses this date in the variable field on the Notice of Action (NOA) as the date of dormant or expunged status.

CalWIN expects to have the notices revised in November before cases will require a notice to be issued under the new extended timelines.

Forms/Notices

The following forms and notices are revised to reflect the new timeframes for dormant accounts and expunged benefits.

TEMP 2214

The “Additional Information About EBT” (TEMP 2214) form is a mandatory informing notice that must be provided to CalWORKs, RCA, ECA, GA, CAPI and/or Food Stamp applicants. This form must be included in the Intake Packets for these programs.
The English version of the TEMP 2214 (07/08) is available in the warehouse. The Spanish version is on order and will be available in the warehouse by the end of October. The English, Spanish, Chinese and Russian versions of the form are available on the SSA intranet. Other language translations will be posted to the SSA Intranet as soon as they are available from CDSS.

All previous revisions of this form (all languages) are to be recycled per district office policy as soon as the current version is available.

**TEMP NA 1232**

The “Food Stamp EBT Notice” (TEMP NA 1232) is a multi-purpose form used to notify clients when their EBT Food Stamp account:

- Will be deactivated if the account has not been accessed after 135 days;
- Has been deactivated when the account has not been accessed for 180 days; or
- Has been reactivated upon client contact with the county.

The TEMP NA 1232 (08/08) is available on the SSA Intranet in English, Arabic, Armenian, Cambodian, Chinese, Farsi, Hmong, Korean, Lao, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Other language translations will be posted to the SSA Intranet as soon as they are available from CDSS. This notice will not be stocked in the warehouse. All previous revisions of this notice (all languages) are to be recycled as per district office policy.

**Note:** This notice is automatically generated by CalWIN when JPMorgan notifies CalWIN through the interface that the EBT benefits have not been accessed for 135 days or have been placed in a dormant status.

**NA 290 M16-120A**

The “EBT Dormant Account” (NA 290 M16-120A) notice is used to inform the client that his/her EBT cash benefit account has not been accessed for over 135 days and he/she needs to access their cash EBT account before the date indicated or the account will become dormant. This message has been revised to change the period before the notice of inactivity is issued from 45 days to 135 days.

The NA 290 M16-120A (10/08) form is available on the SSA Intranet. Translations will be posted to the SSA Intranet as soon as they are updated. This notice will not be stocked in the warehouse. All previous revisions of this notice (all languages) are to be recycled as per district office policy.

**Note:** This notice is automatically generated by CalWIN when JPMorgan notifies CalWIN through the interface that the EBT benefits have not been accessed for 135 days.
The "EBT Dormant Account:Suspend" (NA 290 M16-120B) notice is used to inform the client that access to their cash benefits EBT account has been stopped because of account inactivity for 180 days.

The NA 290 M16-120B (10/08) version is available on the SSA Intranet. Translations will be posted to the SSA Intranet as soon as they are updated. This notice will not be stocked in the warehouse. All previous revisions of this notice (all languages) are to be recycled as per district office policy.

Note: This notice is automatically generated by CalWIN when JPMorgan notifies CalWIN through the interface that the EBT benefits have been placed in a dormant status.

County Forms

All of the agency’s forms will be posted online in the coming year by their respective departments. In preparation for this change, a new numbering convention is established for County forms.

All Department of Employment and Benefit Services (DEBS) County forms will begin with SCD except for General Assistance forms.

As forms are revised, their number will be changed to reflect the new numbering convention. In most cases, this simply means adding a “D” to the current number. For example, the SC 50 will become an SCD 50.

In the few cases, such as those below, where the current form number did not follow the previous standard numbering convention, a new form number will be assigned.

SCD 2201 The “Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Miscellaneous On-line Request” (SC EBT 1) form is revised effective 10/08 and renumbered as SCD 2201. Section 1 of this form is revised to add a line to record the date an EBT card is sent to the Benefit Issuance Unit at Julian to be destroyed.

The SCD 2201 form is on order and will be available in the warehouse within a few weeks. The SC EBT 1 form is to be used until the SCD 2201 is received. The SCD 2201 is also available on the SSA intranet website.

SCD 2202 The “Client Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Request” (SC EBT 7) form is renumbered as SCD 2202 effective 10/08.

The SCD 2202 form is on order and will be available in the warehouse within a few weeks. The SCD 2202 is also available on the SSA intranet website. The SC EBT 7 form is to be used until the supply is exhausted.
A new form, “Returned EBT Cards to be Destroyed” (SCD 2203 [10/08]) has been developed to meet the CDSS requirement for destruction of EBT cards. The SCD 2203 is available on the SSA intranet and will not be stocked in the warehouse. The following procedure is to be followed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the EBT card is to be destroyed…</th>
<th>Then…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| In the District Office (DO),        | • The DO staff member must enter the information about the card on the SCD 2203 log form.  
• After the EBT card is destroyed, the DO staff member must enter the date of destruction and initial the log. |
| By a Benefit Issuance (BI) staff member at Julian, | • The DO staff member who is sending the card to the BI unit must enter the information about the card on the SCD 2203 log form.  
• A copy of the log form must be sent with the deactivated EBT card to the BI unit.  
• The BI staff member who is destroying the card must enter the date of destruction and initials the SCD 2203 log. |

Reminder:  
If the EBT card is being sent to the Benefit Issuance Unit for destruction, the District Office Fiscal Clerk must complete an SCD 2001 form.

Other Programs  
These changes impact all programs using the EBT system including Food Stamps, CalWORKs/RCA/ECA, CAPI and GA.

Clerical  
Refer to “Forms” above. Office Management Coordinators (OMCs) must ensure all previous versions of the forms are recycled as per District Office policy. OMCs must also ensure that the SCD 2203 log form is available in a central location and is kept up-to-date.

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