

Department of Social and Health Services

Olympia, Washington

**EAZ Manual**

Revision	#1307
Category	Eligibility Reviews/Recertifications - Requirements for Food and Cash Programs
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**Summary**

Updating the clarifying information section under [WAC 388-434-0010](#) (How do I get Basic Food benefits after my certification period has ended?) to explain duplicate ERs and the action required by federal rules for duplicate ERs.

Updated October 31, 2024  
See below for edited text:

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**Purpose:**

This section explains how often we review an Assistance Unit’s (AU) eligibility based on the type of benefits they receive, their circumstances, and when ACES sets a review period to match the review end date or certification end date of other programs.

## WAC 388-434-0005 How often does the department review my eligibility for benefits?

- [Clarifying Information](#) and [Worker Responsibilities](#)

## WAC 388-434-0010 How do I get Basic Food benefits after my certification period has ended?

- [Clarifying Information](#) and [Worker Responsibilities](#)

## WAC 388-434-0015 Extension of certification periods and waiver of eligibility reviews and mid-certification reviews during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**NOTE:** As noted in [WAC 388-434-0015](#), certification periods were extended for the following periods:

- November 2020 is extended two months, to January 2021;
- December 2020 is extended two months, to February 2021;
- January 2021 is extended 4 months, to May 2021;
- February 2021 is extended 4 months, to June 2021.

[Mid-Certification Reviews for cash and food are waived that are due from November 2020 to June 2021. See Mid-Certification Reviews.](#)

## WAC 388-493-0010 Working family support

- [Clarifying Information](#)

## Clarifying Information - [WAC 388-434-0005](#) and [WAC 388-434-0010](#)

Our eligibility system sets a review period for cash benefits based on the AU's circumstances and other benefits the AU receives from the department. The table below shows the length of certification period the system will set if not matching a review period to another program.

AU Circumstances	Default Review Period
ABD cash	12 months
Refugee Cash Assistance	Up to 12 months
TANF/ SFA	12 months

AU Circumstances	Default Review Period
Working Family Support	6 months

When possible, the system automatically matches the cash review periods with Basic Food certification periods to minimize the number of reviews.

- For Basic Food certification periods, see EAZ Manual Chapter - [Certification Periods - Basic Food](#).

### 1. Equal Access:

Someone who needs [Equal Access](#) accommodations has more time to meet certification requirements. If a person receives these services and meets the requirements to be certified within 20 days after the end of their previous certification period, their food and cash benefits start on the first of the month of the new certification period. See [Equal Access](#).

### 2. Forms / processes a person can use to recertify food and cash programs:

Someone can recertify benefits by:

- Completing [DSHS 14-001 \(X\)](#) Application for Benefits;
- Completing [DSHS 14-078\(X\)](#) Eligibility Review;
- Completing an ACES Interactive Interview Declaration (IID); or
- Completing the online application or review form.

### 3. Adding a request for assistance to an eligibility review:

See CLARIFYING INFORMATION #3 under [WAC 388-406-0010](#).

### 4. Interview Requirements:

An interview is required at cash and food Eligibility Review or recertification if we have not interviewed the household in the last twelve months. Exceptions to this rule are for households qualifying for the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) Basic Food (see Clarifying Information #2 under [WAC 388-452-0005](#)), and ABD cash recipients residing in a public institution per [WAC 388-452-0005](#).

### 5. Duplicate Eligibility Review Forms:

A duplicate ER form is an additional form(s) received in the 13<sup>th</sup> month after an ER form was received in the last month of the certification. Under reinstatement rules the client has until the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> month to complete an interview and provide verification without losing benefits.

However, staff must screen in the duplicate ER form as a new request in case the client completes the interview in the 14<sup>th</sup> month but still in the first 30 days for the new request. Under federal application rules a date of request must be established and the client must receive required notices.

**EXAMPLE ER Reinstatement:** Loretta provides an ER form on 1/10 for an ER due on 1/31. Staff triage submitted ER form. Loretta submits a duplicate ER form on 2/10. Staff screen in a new AU with an application date of 2/10. Then Loretta calls to compete an interview on 02/20, Staff will reinstate the previous AU and complete the ER. Staff will deny the new AU.

**EXAMPLE New Application:** Baylor provides an ER form on 1/10 for an ER due on 1/31. Staff triage submitted ER form. Baylor submits a duplicate ER form on 2/10. Staff screen in a new AU with an application date of 2/10. Then Baylor calls to compete an interview on 03/05, Staff will complete the new application with the request date of 2/10.

## **6. Notice of expiration:**

If we certified a household for three or more months, we send them a letter to tell them that their food and cash benefits are ending by the first day of the last month of their certification period.

## **7. Verification at recertification:**

- If someone does not give us verification we ask for by the end of their certification period or within 10 days of the date we asked for it, we count the verification as late.
- For food benefits, a person has until the end of the month after the month their certification ended to give us any late or missing verification without losing benefits.
- For cash benefits, a person has until the end of the month after the month their certification ended to give us any late or missing verification. If verification is provided in the month after their certification ended, benefits should be prorated from the date that verification is received.
- If someone gives us an application or verification to finish a recertification after the end of the month following the certification end month, the person must reapply for benefits.

**EXAMPLE:** John's cash certification period ends on May 31st. On May 15th, he turns in an eligibility review. On May 23rd, John's worker asks for proof of income and gives him until June 2nd to give us the information. On June 12th, John turns in his proof of income. If John is still eligible for cash benefits, his worker reopens cash benefits back to June 12th.

**EXAMPLE:** Same as above, except John does not submit the outstanding verification until July 5th. Because John missed the one-month window to recertify, he must reapply for benefits.

**EXAMPLE:** Vicky's food certification ends on April 30th. On April 1st, she turns in a review. On April 5th, her worker asks for verification of her circumstances by April 15th. Vicky does not give us the required verification timely, and her worker denies the application to recertify her food benefits. On May 4th, Vicky turns in the required verification. If Vicky is still eligible for food benefits, her worker reinstates the food benefits back to May 1st.

**EXAMPLE:** Bill's food certification period ends July 31st. He turns in the ER form July 28th, but doesn't contact the CSO for an interview. His benefits terminate July 31st.

On August 25th, Bill contacts the CSO and completes his recertification interview that same day. The worker must pend completion of the ER because Bill hasn't provided proof of income. Bill has until the end of August to provide the income verification in order to have benefits reinstated back to August 1.

The worker should send an information request letter on August 25 to Bill giving the him until August 31 to provide the information. If Bill doesn't provide the income verification by August 31st, the case remains closed and Bill must reapply.

**NOTE:** People have 10 days to provide information or verification we need to determine if they are eligible. The denial letter we send if they do not give us the verification we ask for informs them what they must do to have us reconsider the denied recertification.

## **8. Letters:**

- See [Letters](#) for information on what to include in approval and denial letters.
- See [Limited English Proficiency](#) (LEP) for information on what we must translate in letters.

## **9. Primary source of information for medical:**

If the customer stated they'd like to continue to receive CN Medical, we don't need the actual review form DSHS [14-078\(X\)](#) to determine eligibility for medical if during the past six months, the assistance unit completed:

- An application;
- An eligibility review;
- A Basic Food application or recertification;
- An in-person or telephone interview.

**Worker Responsibilities** - [WAC 388-434-0005](#) and [WAC 388-434-0010](#)

## **Acceptable forms and Interviews**

### **1. Electronic or Paper Application / Eligibility Review Form**

- a. Ensure the household has completed and signed one of the following as part of the process if they aren't completing a Telephonic Signature:
  - i. Online application or eligibility review;
  - ii. Application for Benefits ([DSHS 14-001](#));
  - iii. Eligibility Review ([DSHS 14-078](#)); or
  - iv. ACES Interactive Interview Declaration (IID) after reviewing the information for accuracy.
- b. Accept any of the above forms to complete the recertification process if received after the ER notice was mailed to the customer, but prior to the system allowing initiation of the review.

### **Completing the Review**

#### **1. Review of current circumstances:**

- a. As part of the review ensure that:
  - i. The customer answered all questions clearly and completely; and
  - ii. For cash assistance, they signed and dated the application or ER. Both spouses, or both parents of a child in common must sign when the parents live together.
- b. Complete an [Equal Access \(EA\)](#) Screening.
  - i. Guidance on completing an EA Screening can be found in the CSD Procedures Handbook.
- c. Review the record to see if earlier actions or changes may have an impact on eligibility.
- d. Review for eligibility factors, especially:
  - i. Income:
    - A. Review income to see if net income meets expenses for rent, utilities, and other expenses the assistance unit pays. See [EA-Z Manual – Verification](#) for more information on living above means (LAM).

- ii. Resources: (**Except for:** Basic Food AUs that are [Categorically Eligible](#))
    - A. Review resources the household claims to see if there are any changes to resources we earlier excluded or decided were not available.
    - B. Review funds in joint checking accounts that we excluded earlier.
    - C. Review the plan to exclude business property of a self-employed person to decide if the property leads to full or partial self-support.
    - D. Review the value of liquid and non-liquid resources. Look for an increase in the value of real estate, cash value of life insurance, and securities that can be sold such as stocks, bonds, and certificates of deposit (CD).
    - E. Review and get proof of eligibility factors that have changed.
    - F. Review and document previous proof to ensure that:
  - iii. Previously verified factors are clear and complete in the case file; and
  - iv. Do not asking for duplicate or unneeded proof.
    - A. Document proof we received.
    - B. Take action on any incorrect payments you discover. Send the person a letter about the actions you took.
  - v. Work Registration:
    - A. Check the work registration status of each customer to see if it matches their current circumstance. Take any action to update the status if there are changes.
2. **Referrals:** Review all mandatory and voluntary referrals and complete referrals as needed.
3. **Incomplete and late reviews:** A household is ineligible for benefits if they don't complete a required interview, complete a review form (if asked to do so), or give us proof we ask for.
- a. See [Equal Access](#) (EA) for additional actions required when the household has an EA plan.
  - b. If the person does not take the needed actions or give us the proof we need to decide if they are eligible for benefits by the end of the review month, cash and food assistance will auto close.

## Clarifying Information – [WAC 388-493-0010](#)

Working Family Support recertification occurs every six months and align with the Basic Food Mid-Certification (MCR) and Eligibility Review (ER) periods. See the CSD Procedures Manual section *Working Family Support* for WFS recertification procedures at Basic Food MCR and ER.

For information about medical certification periods and Eligibility Reviews, see [HCA Manual Chapters – Eligibility Review](#) and [Certification Periods](#).

## **ACES Procedures (Staff Only)**

- Eligibility Review
- Certification Period