Use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for Individuals Residing in Group Living Arrangements (GLAs)

ODP Communication Number: Packet 015-12

Audience: Individuals who live in GLAs and their family members and Providers of Group Living Arrangements

Purpose: To encourage eligible GLAs of the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) to utilize SNAP and to follow the process as outlined in this communication.

Background:

As of October 1, 2008, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program. The new name reflects the changes made to meet the needs of individuals, including a focus on nutrition and an increase in benefit amounts. SNAP is the federal name for the program. Here in Pennsylvania (PA), it is still sometimes referred to as the Food Stamp Program. These benefits are used to buy food and help eligible low-income households in PA obtain more nutritious diets by increasing their food purchasing power at grocery stores and supermarkets. There are income level eligibility requirements and an application process. To learn more information, please go to this Department of Public Welfare website at: http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/foradults/supplementalnutritionassistanceprogram/index.htm or contact your local County Assistance Office (CAO).

Discussion:

RESIDENTS OF GROUP LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Residents of GLAs who receive SSI or RSDI, chronically Needy General Assistance or veteran’s or railroad retirement disability and individuals who are blind or disabled may be a food stamp household. This includes:

- Residents who receive SSI or RSDI based on blindness or disability; and
 Residents who receive SSI or RSDI based on age and who are blind or disabled. A doctor’s statement is acceptable proof of blindness or disability; or

 Residents who receive disability benefits as a veteran and the surviving spouse or child of a veteran receiving death benefits, and has a disability considered permanent; or

 Resident who receive a railroad retirement annuity and have filed an application for disability benefits.

**The provisions for determining household composition for GLA residents are:**

- A resident may be a one-person household; or
- A group of residents who purchase and prepare meals together may be a household.

**CERTIFIED GROUP LIVING ARRANGEMENTS**

To be considered a GLA, a site must serve over 50% of three meals daily, not be authorized to accept food stamps, and be certified by the Department of Public Welfare as meeting ALL of the following requirements:

- Serve no more than 16 residents.
- Be located in a residential setting. It must be a small, free-standing, community-based living unit not on the grounds of, or next to, a large institution.

  **NOTE:** An apartment building could contain several GLAs.

- Be a nonprofit operation. Verification may be obtained from the Commonwealth's Revenue Department or the Internal Revenue Service.
- Be certified by the Department (CAO) as meeting the requirements of Section 1616(e) of the Social Security Act.

The GLA must give the CAO a list of currently participating residents on a periodic basis. An official from the GLA must sign a statement attesting to the accuracy of the list. The CAO will make random on-site visits to the center to assure the accuracy of the list.

**GROUP LIVING ARRANGEMENT APPLICATION**

A resident or group of residents (with assistance of the GLA staff) may apply for themselves, through an Authorized Representative (AR) of their choice, or through an AR employed and designated by the GLA. The GLA will decide whether a resident may apply for themselves based on the physical and mental ability of the resident to handle his/her own affairs. If residents apply using an employee designated by the site as an authorized representative (AR), they are considered to be one member households,
regardless of the composition of the group. If the site is the AR, it may receive and spend the allotment for the resident's meals. The site may also permit the eligible resident to use any or all of the SNAP allotment. If residents apply for themselves, they may use the food stamp benefits to purchase their own food. They may also use benefits to buy meals from the site or give their benefits to the site to purchase food for meals provided to the household. If the GLA has its status as an authorized representative suspended by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), residents applying on their own behalf will still be able to receive food stamps if otherwise eligible.

GROUP LIVING ARRANGEMENT HOUSEHOLD ELIGIBILITY

Households in a GLA must meet the same income, resource and eligibility requirements as any other household. Residents of a GLA have the same rights to notices of adverse action, fair hearings, and entitlement to restored benefits as all other households. The service contract between the resident and the site may refer to the resident's payment as a "room and board" payment. For food stamp purposes, the resident is not considered a boarder, but simply a resident of the site. The CAO worker will note in the individual's CAO record that the resident is not a boarder. Residents are entitled to a shelter expense if the facility's contract with the resident specifies the charge for rent and utilities. If the contract does not separate the charge for rent and utilities from the charge for food, the household is entitled to only the shelter expense that exceeds the maximum benefit allotment for the number of individuals in the household. EXAMPLE: A resident of a GLA is a one person household. The contract between a resident and the site shows a single charge of $290 for rent, utilities and meals. The shelter expense is $290 minus the maximum coupon allotment for the one-person household.

GROUP LIVING ARRANGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

If an employee of the GLA is an authorized representative, the site must report changes in the household's income and circumstances and notify the CAO when the resident leaves the site.

When a resident leaves the GLA, the center must:

1. Give the resident a Change Report Form, PA 239-SP.

2. Tell the resident to report a new address and any changes in circumstances to the CAO within 10 days.

3. Give the resident the PA EBT Access Card.

4. Give the individual any unused benefits.

If the benefit has already been cashed, the site must:

- Give the individual the full allotment if no benefits have been spent on his/her behalf;

- Give the resident one-half the monthly allotment if any benefits have been spent and the resident leaves the center before the 16th of the month;

- Give the resident no benefits if the resident leaves the center on or after the 16th of the month and the center has already spent the benefits.
COUNTY ASSISTANCE OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

The CAO has the responsibility to certify facilities applying for GLA certification. The CAO must work with the applicant site to inform them of the requirements and assist with the certification process. Upon request from a site, the CAO must send the GLA Declaration form to the site for completion. The GLA Declaration should be processed without delay, as this insures that resident applicants of the site may be certified timely for SNAP benefits. The GLA Declaration form (PA 1869) is attached to this informational packet. The CAO must ensure that the site has provided documentation of their non-profit status. The applying site makes an oath of the listed requirements with their signature on the GLA Declaration form. The CAO must review the returned documentation provided by the facility to determine if the facility has met the provisions for GLA certification. The GLA Institution Status Notice (PA1870) must be completed by the CAO and sent to the site notifying them of the eligibility for certification. It is the responsibility of the CAO to keep a list of certified and non-certified sites located within their county. This list will assist Income Maintenance Caseworkers to determine who residents of certified GLAs are for future SNAP applicants. The GLA Institution Status Notice is attached to this informational packet.

Questions: Please direct your questions related to SNAP eligibility to your local County Assistance Office.
GROUP LIVING ARRANGEMENT DECLARATION

I do hereby make application for the below mentioned facility under Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, provisions relating to Group Living Arrangements. I understand that, if the site meets the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare's SNAP Group Living Arrangement definition:

- this site may qualify for those certain special SNAP provisions relating to Group Living Arrangements as set forth in Title 7 Code of Federal Regulations §§ 273.1 and 273.11; and
- residents of this site may be eligible for SNAP benefits if such residents are recipients of Title II or Title XVI Social Security blindness or disability benefits.

I swear and affirm that this site:

- serves prepared meals (50% of three meals daily) to residents,
- serves no more than sixteen (16) residents,
- is not being operated with the intention of making a profit, and
- meets the requirements of section 1616(e) of the Social Security Act.

I understand that it is my responsibility to report to the county assistance office any change in the above factors relating to the status of the site and individuals it serves. I further understand that if I do not agree with the decision made by the Department of Public Welfare regarding this application that I may request a fair hearing.

(Name of Facility)

[Street Address]

[City] [County] [Zip Code]

(Signature of Authorized Site Representative) [Date]

Title

Service provider. Submit this form to the county assistance office, CAO, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, serving the county in which the provider site is located. The service provider must supply the CAO with either of the following statements of its non-profit status:

- The IRS section 501(c)(3) statement; or
- The commonwealth Non-profit Articles of Incorporation.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 226 Wilber Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to communicate with the Office of Civil Rights, may call the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 (English) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
GROUP LIVING ARRANGEMENT INSTITUTION STATUS NOTICE

To: ____________________________________________

(Service Provider)

From: ____________________________________________

(Executive Director)

(County Assistance Office)

Facility/Residence:

(Name)

(Address)

☐ has been approved by the ________________________ County Assistance Office
as having met the requirements of a Group Living Arrangement for purposes of the
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP.

Effective __________________, the county assistance office will accept applications from
residents for SNAP benefits under the special provisions set forth in the SNAP regulations,
relating to this type of facility.

☐ has not met the SNAP definition of a Group Living Arrangement because

__________________________________________________________________________

As a result, residents are ineligible for SNAP benefits.

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