

## Worker Guide Returned Mail

### Processing Returned Mail

There are several steps offices take to ensure clients receive notices and other mail from the department in a timely manner. All clients must provide a valid mailing address. Do not use a department office address as the client's mailing address. Even though we take steps to ensure a valid mailing address, the post office sometimes returns mail marked "undeliverable," "unable to forward," or "unclaimed," etc. This returned mail needs to be handled carefully.

*Note: This policy does not apply to cases in TBA. Take no action on TBA cases with mail returned for these reasons. However, you may still need to take action on companion cases for other programs.*

- Check TRACS, UCMS, FCAS, incoming mail that has not been processed and the case file to be sure there is not a more up-to-date address.
- Check U.S. Postal Service Website <http://usps.com> or use hzip on the DHS mainframe to verify accuracy of address.

*Note: Other screens such as DMV, SMUX, etc., are not required to be checked as information is not always up to date.*

- If updated address is located and certification or APR is not expiring at the end of month, update the mailing address on open CM and FS cases, narrate and resend the mail to the correct address. If the returned mail has an Oregon address, but it is outside of your service area, transfer the case to the appropriate branch office following local procedure.
- If there is no updated address available and you have followed the above steps, close the case for the end of the current month and narrate the exact wording on the return label. Use these program-specific procedures:

### Food Stamps

- For mail returned as unclaimed, or as undeliverable, use reason code RM.

*Note: Narrate only and do not take the close action if the case is expiring at the end of the month.*

- If the client contacts the department before the case closes, gather the new address information and any other information that affects the case such as household comp. Act on any changes necessary following the applicable notice requirements.
- If the client contacts the local office during the first month of closure, gather necessary information and reopen the case with a ROP back to the first of the

current month. Do not prorate benefits. Do not take a new application or do a REC action – this is not a recertification. Use the IJ or EJ Rel-ATP codes to issue FS.

- Act on other changes for the following month. If benefits will be reduced, send a *timely continuing benefit decision notice* before making the changes.
- If a client contacts the department more than a month after the closure, they have to reapply.

**Note:** *SEE FS EXAMPLES OF MAIL RETURNED AS UNDELIVERABLE AT THE END OF THIS WORKER GUIDE.*

### **All Programs Except FS**

- End benefits by sending a *basic decision notice* to the last known address.
- Use reason code “OM – Unable to Locate” to close the case and “OM” code in the Ntce field to send notice.
- If the client contacts the department before the case closes, gather the new address information and any other information that affects the case such as household comp, and act on the information.
- If a client contacts the department after the closure, the case will remain closed until the client chooses to reapply for benefits. Establish a new date of request when the client reapplies.

OAR 461-175-0210

### **Moved Out of State**

When the Post Office returns mail and the address listed on the return label is out-of-state, this returned mail is handled differently. This information is considered reported to the department and we have to act on it appropriately

- For FS, send a *basic decision notice* to end benefits. Close the case using reason code OS.
- For all other programs, send a *timely decision notice*. If the client becomes eligible for benefits in another state, send a *basic decision notice*.
- Use reason code “OS – Moved out of State” to close the case
- To send notice, use Notice Writer “CMC0NSB – Moved to Other State – Close” or DHS 456 form and narrate.

Responsibilities of Clients: 461-105-0020

Residency Requirements: 461-120-0010

Notice Situation: Client Moved or Whereabouts Unknown: 461-175-0210

## **FS Examples of Returned Mail**

*Example 1: An FS case has a certification period of September 1 through August 31. Mail is returned by the post office on January 5 marked undeliverable, no forwarding address. The same mailing address is coded on the OHP case. The FS case is closed effective January 31 using the RM reason code. On February 12, the client comes to the office because there are no FS benefits in the EBT account. The worker gathers the new information about residence, rent, and household composition. There is no change in the benefit amount so all new information is coded on FCAS. The FS case is reopened using ROP effective February 1.*

*Example 2: An FS case has a certification period of September 1 through August 31. Mail is returned by the post office on January 5 marked undeliverable, no forwarding address. The same mailing address is coded on the OHP case. The FS case is closed effective January 31 using the RM reason code. On March 5, the client contacts the office because there are no FS benefits in the EBT account. The FS case has been closed for more than one month. The client will need to reapply for FS benefits.*

*Example 3: FS case has a certification period of September 1 through August 31. Mail is returned by the post office on January 5 marked undeliverable, no forwarding address. There is a different mailing address on the OHP case. The address on the OHP case was changed on November 9. Update the address on FCAS and resend the notice to the new address.*

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