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**FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES CERTIFICATION**  
**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**  
**Authorized Representative**

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**FNS 220 Authorized Representative**  
**Change #5-2009**  
**August 1, 2009**

**220.01 AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE REQUIREMENT**

An authorized representative is an individual designated by the Food and Nutrition Services unit (FNS unit) to apply for, obtain, and/or use Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits on behalf of the FNS unit. The authorized representative designated by the household to apply for FNS benefits for the household must be an adult who is not included in the FNS unit. However, another adult household member (such as the spouse) can be an authorized representative for using FNS benefits. In addition, an individual who is currently disqualified for an Intentional Program Violation can be an authorized representative for using FNS benefits. Enter the individual into the SLAR System as an authorized representative.

Complete a DSS-1688, Designation of Authorized Representative, at application, recertification, and SSI mail-in recertification. The form is also required every time the household changes its authorized representative. The FNS unit is responsible for all information provided by its authorized representative. Do not complete the DSS-1688 for FNS unit members designated as authorized representative to use the benefits. Complete the SLAR Screen.

The FNS unit can have no more than two active authorized representatives for the case; however, an authorized representative may represent more than one FNS unit at the same time. Any FNS unit that resides in an Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center (ADTC) may only have one authorized representative.

Unless approved in writing on the DSS-1688 by the county director, the following persons cannot serve as an authorized representative.

- A. An agency employee who is involved in the FNS certification and/or issuance process.
- B. A retailer who is authorized to accept FNS benefits. If allowed to be an authorized representative, the decision must be based on a determination that no other suitable authorized representative is available for the FNS unit. Document the situation in the case file.
- C. A person who is currently disqualified for an Intentional Program Violation can not make application or be responsible for reporting changes. If allowed to be an authorized representative in this capacity, the decision must be based on a determination that there is no other suitable applicant/recipient to represent the FNS. The county director can determine that these individuals can represent the FNS to make application and to be responsible for reporting changes. Document the situation in the case file.

**NOTE:** Authorized homeless meal providers cannot serve as authorized representatives for homeless food stamp recipients.

**220.02 AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Explain to the authorized representative applying on behalf of the FNS unit that:

- A. He is certifying that the information provided is true and complete; **and**

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- B. He is responsible for reporting changes in the FNS unit's circumstances when the FNS unit is unable to report the change. Give the authorized representative the, DSS-8550, Change Report Form.

**NOTE:** An authorized representative with only the authority to purchase food for the FNS unit does not have the responsibilities listed in this section.

**220.03 CLAIMS AGAINST AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES**

The household and authorized representative are equally responsible for any erroneous issuance as a result of incorrect or incomplete information provided by the authorized representative, except when benefits are trafficked or misused by the authorized representative without the FNS unit's knowledge. The authorized representative is responsible for an erroneous issuance while acting as the representative for an alcoholic/drug treatment center, or when found guilty of trafficking EBT benefits.

**220.04 CERTIFYING AN AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE**

Complete in triplicate the DSS-1688, Designation of Authorized Representative, by checking all appropriate boxes and obtaining signatures at application, full recertification, and when the FNS unit changes its authorized representative. Distribute a copy to the FNS unit the authorized representative, and the case file. The information contained on the DSS-1688 is tracked through a subsystem of the Food Stamp Information System (FSIS). The subsystem is called the Authorized Representative System.

- A. The head of household's signature is required on the DSS-1688 when:
1. The FNS unit designates an authorized representative who does not have Power of Attorney.
  2. The Power of Attorney authorization is limited to a specific purpose that does not include applying for and/or using FNS benefits.
  3. The Power of Attorney authorization is time-limited and will expire within 30 days.
- B. The head of household's signature is not required on the DSS-1688 when:
1. The authorized representative is a person employed by and designated to act on behalf of residents of an ADTC or a group home. Document this designation on the application form.
  2. The authorized representative has full Power of Attorney for the FNS unit. File a copy of the Power of Attorney document in the case file, and document the application form.
  3. The authorized representative has legal guardianship of a disabled person who is not capable of signing the DSS-1688. Use prudent judgment to determine if an authorized representative is appropriate. Document the case file and include legal guardianship documentation.
  4. The head of household of a Simplified Reporting case is deceased and the remaining household members are minors. Due to Simplified Reporting requirements, there may be other situations in which the HOH is not available to sign the DSS-1688. Use prudent judgment to determine if an authorized representative is appropriate.

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**220.05            REMOVING AN AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE**

If you have evidence that an authorized representative provided false information, misrepresented the FNS unit's circumstances, or improperly used FNS benefits, prohibit the authorized representative from serving as a representative for any household for one calendar year.

**NOTE:** Representatives designated to act on behalf of residents of an ADTC or group home are exempt from this provision.

- A.        Document the situation in the case file or on the application form.
- B.        Notify the FNS unit and the authorized representative in writing 30 calendar days prior to the date of removal. Include the proposed action, the reason, the FNS unit's right to a fair hearing, and the name and telephone number of the person to contact for additional information.

**220.06            STATUS OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE IF FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES CASE CLOSSES**

Evaluate the need of deactivating an authorized representative's EBT card when a Food and Nutrition Services case terminates. FSIS does not automatically deactivate the authorized representative. Use the SLAR screen to reactivate an authorized representative when necessary.