



Public Health Care Eligibility Determination for Noncitizens Update to 2006 Evaluation Report

Problems Identified

- **Frequent Eligibility Determination Errors.** Over 70 percent of the eligibility determination cases we reviewed contained errors; 18 percent had errors that affected eligibility for benefits. Errors included case workers not validating applicants' immigration status, entering an incorrect immigration status in MAXIS, and not requiring current immigration documents.
- **Sponsors' Income Not Considered.** In over 10 percent of all cases we reviewed, county case workers did not properly identify or count sponsors' income when determining eligibility. This error affected eligibility in every case.
- **Inadequate Training and Resources.** The Department of Human Services (DHS) did not provide a noncitizen eligibility specialist for county staff to contact with questions regarding noncitizen eligibility determination. In addition, DHS' published noncitizen eligibility guidelines, the "Guide to Non-Citizen Eligibility," contained known inaccuracies and had not been updated for several years.
- **Unclear Requirements.** County staff with whom we met had different understandings about when they were required or allowed to conduct electronic validation of noncitizens' immigration status.

Changes Implemented

- **Improved Training and Resources.** By the end of 2006, DHS published updated noncitizen eligibility guides for cash, food support, and health care programs. DHS also provided additional training on electronic validation of noncitizens' immigration status.

Action Needed

- **Clarify Requirements.** DHS or the Legislature should develop specific guidelines regarding when county human services staff should electronically validate a recipient's immigration status. Consistent with our recommendations, the Governor's 2008-09 budget proposes requiring electronic validation of a recipient's immigration status at each annual eligibility recertification.
- **Provide Resources.** DHS should designate a noncitizen eligibility specialist to assist county staff with eligibility determinations.
- **Continue Oversight.** Given the high error rate we found for the eligibility determination cases included in our review, DHS should closely monitor counties' eligibility determination of noncitizen recipients.

Public Health Care Eligibility Determination for Noncitizens is available at <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us>. For more information, contact Judy Randall at 651-296-1227 or judy.randall@state.mn.us.
