Overview of OIAS Standard Eligibility Policy Training for Maine Family Independence Specialists

In order to help you learn about the policies that you’ll be working with in your job, the Office uses a Standard Eligibility Policy Training program for new employees. All new Specialists attend training on basic policy for the three major programs administered by eligibility staff: Food Supplement program benefits, MaineCare, and TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). Training also covers the fundamentals of using Maine’s Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES).

Classroom training is provided during eight weeks of central training in Augusta. In addition to structured classroom training, new employees may have opportunities for independent study during the training; during independent study, trainees can practice what was covered in the classroom, seek one-to-one assistance from a trainer, read policy, or engage in other independent activities that support the training.

During the training cycle, new employees spend several weeks in their local offices; part of that time is spent working on structured Learning-at-Work activities that give them an opportunity to apply what they have learned during classroom training.

Food Supplement Program

> During Food Supplement training, new employees learn all the basics of Food Supplement Program policy. Representative topics include: history and purpose of the FSP program; household composition; specific asset and income limits for the Food Supplement Program; verification requirements; projecting future income; deductions; determining FSP allotments; expedited services; time frames; reviews and certification periods; reporting requirements; changes and supplements; overpayments; and delays and denials. Participants also learn basic ACES functions and navigation, they are introduced to the interactive interview, and they learn how to perform basic tasks in ACES related to the Food Supplement Program.

> Because the Food Supplement program training is the first major topic covered, participants also spend some time learning some general foundation information important to their work (overview of DHHS and OFI and confidentiality).

MaineCare Program

> MaineCare training is sub-divided into two sections: Family Related and SSI Related. Training on relevant ACES applications are incorporated into the MaineCare module. MaineCare policy related topics covered include: assistance unit concept; coverage groups and non-categorical coverage; Medical Review Team role; eligibility requirements; asset and income requirements; income exclusions, deductions, deeming, and allocation; budgeting processes; Medicare Savings Program; temporary coverage; medically needy coverage; reviews; changes; and sanctions.

TANF Program

> The TANF module includes both TANF policy and training on relevant ACES topics. TANF-specific topics addressed during this module include: time limits, deprivation, filing units, paternity and child support, ASPIRE participation, asset and income guidelines specific to TANF, earned income disregards, budgeting, pass through and gap, initial interview, TANF Orientation, time standards, reviews, changes, EBT and direct deposit.