

Quarterly and Semi-Annual Reporting

The panel members of this workgroup were: Lynn Pugsley, Senior Analyst, Michigan Family Independence Agency; Jody Cornwell, Assistant Deputy Director, Missouri Department of Family Services; and Gary Terpstra, State Director, Bureau of Food Stamps, Illinois Department of Human Services.

Michigan and Missouri are now moving to a semi-annual reporting requirement. Illinois has had quarterly reporting since 1995.

Michigan used waivers to implement semi-annual reporting (SR). All households with earned income except migrant households and ABAWDs are included in SR. Households are assigned six month certification periods. The waiver Michigan obtained allows it to process all changes that are reported by the household rather than sorting changes as required in the regulation. The waiver also allows households to report when income exceeds 130% of the poverty standard within 10 days after the end of the month, instead of when they “become aware” of the change. To establish the system, Michigan identified households that would be included in SR and sent notices informing them of the new system and their income reporting requirement. Michigan implemented SR in August 2001. The only problem with SR is that the requirement has not been adopted for all programs.

Missouri implemented three-month certifications in October 1996 for earned income and zero net income households. This implementation lowered the error rate and increased food stamp applications, but had a negative impact on participants. Missouri implemented six-month reporting with no waivers in May 2001. Earned income households are certified no longer than six months while three-month certifications still applied to zero net income cases.

With Illinois’ quarterly reporting, they tell participants “you don’t have to report anything in between the quarterly reports” and they are to “answer the questions on the report”. Only earned income households participate. Reporting requirements are consistent with TANF and medicaid requirements. During the first quarter following implementation, caseloads decreased. They increased in the second quarter.

The states were encouraged by the simplified reporting requirements involving quarterly and semi-annual reporting.