Product Reviewer Income

This section includes information about the income or merchandise a participant receives from reviewing products.

Policy

When paid to review products, the income is countable. See Provider of Services for more information.

When merchandise is received in exchange for reviewing products, ***all*** of the following apply:

- When the merchandise is kept, the value of merchandise is not considered income. (See Example 1.)
- When the merchandise is sold, the money received is considered income. (See Merchandise Sales for more information.)
- When merchandise is not expected to be sold, the merchandise is not a resource unless it is considered a luxury item. (See Luxury Items for more information.)
- When the merchandise is expected to be sold, the merchandise is considered a marketable resource. (See Marketable Resources for more information.)

Procedures

When the participant is present, have them sign the Authority to Release Information (FAA 1765A) form to contact any companies or businesses involved. The FAA-1765A can be faxed or emailed to the companies or businesses when it is not possible to use the Application for Benefits (FAA-0001A) or the HEAplus Authority to Release signed statement.

When paid to review products, discuss with the participant to determine whether the income is considered self-employment(g) or Wages and Salaries. (See Provider of Services for more information.)

When merchandise is received in exchange for reviewing products, discuss with the participant whether they sell the merchandise or intend to sell the merchandise. Complete ***one*** of the following:

- When the merchandise is sold, request verification. (See Merchandise Sales for more information on how to budget.)
- When the merchandise is kept, determine whether the merchandise is a luxury item. (See Luxury Items for more information about basic household items and furnishings.)
- When the merchandise is expected to be sold, request verification for the value of the merchandise. (See Marketable Resources for more information on how to budget.)

Documentation must support determinations of eligibility and benefit level. Document in sufficient detail to ensure that any reviewer can assess whether the determination is reasonable and accurate. Include specific information regarding the reason the income is determined to be reasonably expected to continue. (See Budgeting Income Documentation Requirements for additional information.)

Verification

System interface and the case file(g) must be reviewed before verification is requested. No additional verification is needed when AZTECS interface or HEAplus hubs have verified the information.

The participant has the primary responsibility for providing verification. (See Participant Responsibilities – Providing Verification for additional policy.)

When self-employment expenses are not verified, eligibility is determined without the 40% Self-Employment Expense deduction.

For NA, income is required to be verified for ***all*** of the following before eligibility is determined:

- When reported on a new application, during the interview of a new application, or changes reported before the eligibility determination of a new application.
- For changes reported after an eligibility determination of a new application (e.g., a renewal application, mid approval contact, etc.) and ***any*** of the following apply:

  The source of the income has changed.

  The income is questionable(g) or unclear(g).

  The reported income amount has changed by $51 or more.

  The previous verification in the case file is more than 59 calendar days(g) old.

For CA, all income is required to be verified before determining eligibility.

Examples of verification that can be used for product reviewer income include, and are not limited to, ***any*** of the following:

- Contracts for work
- Current paycheck stubs reflecting gross income
- Signed statement from the agency or payer providing the income

- Statements from companies listing the value of merchandise received

AZTECS Keying Procedures

When the participant keeps the merchandise, ***all*** of the following apply:

- The value of merchandise is not keyed in AZTECS as income.
- See Luxury Items for more information about keying the merchandise as a resource.

When the participant is paid for reviewing products, sells, or intends to sell the merchandise, see ***one*** of the following for more AZTECS keying information:

- Provider of Services
- Merchandise Sales
- Marketable Resources

Document the case file(g).

Examples

1) James reviews products for the Amazon Vine Program. James keeps the products he reviews. The reviewed products are not luxury items.

   The value of merchandise is not considered income or a resource.

Legal Authorities

7 CFR 273.9(b)(1)

AAC R6-12-501

Prior Policy

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