How to read the Combined Manual (CM)

The Combined Manual (CM) was developed to provide a complete, authoritative, concise set of program provisions. It gives financial workers a single policy reference for MFIP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), MSA, GA, and GRH. Also included are emergency programs.

The CM was designed to be an efficient reference manual for trained financial workers in all programs. It was NOT designed to be used as a training tool. It assumes workers will have program training before they use the CM. Because it is intended for county financial workers, the CM omits some material contained in previous manuals which was intended for people other than financial workers (for example, accounting procedures).

Sometimes topic areas are split into related sections or sub-sections. Because of this, the CM makes extensive use of cross-referencing. This replaces much of the repetition of past manuals and reduces inconsistencies.

The 1st page of each chapter gives a general overview of the chapter's contents. It provides an introduction to the chapter and outlines the material covered by the sections in the chapter.

Many sections have general provisions at the beginning which apply to all programs (unless program headings say "No provisions", as noted below).

There may also be separate program headings which contain:

- Additions to the general provisions.
- Exceptions to the general provisions. The word EXCEPT or EXCEPTION will be in capital letters.
- "Follow general provisions." This means the general provisions fully describe the provisions of the individual program and there are no additional provisions for that program.
- "Follow (name of another program above)." This means the program’s provisions are the same as the other program named. This is done mostly for the on-line manual so that when reading from the top down, you can see that the provisions of 1 program also pertain to other program(s) which follow.

Where a program's provisions say to follow the provisions of another program, the CM may say "this program" to indicate it refers to the program for which you are reading the provisions. For example, GA says "Follow MFIP", and the MFIP provisions say "a person receiving assistance from this program...". "This program" means MFIP if you are reading it for MFIP provisions, but it means GA if you are reading it for the GA provisions.

- "No provisions." This indicates that the section topic (including the general provisions) does NOT apply to that program.

ALWAYS read BOTH the general provisions and the program provisions to understand the complete policy on that topic for any program.