

CHAPTER 90
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DEBT RECOVERY UNIT
[Prior to 4/7/10, see 481—Ch 71]

PREAMBLE

These rules define the department's policies regarding the recovery of public assistance debts. See also Iowa Administrative Code 441—Chapter 11, "Collection of Public Assistance Debts."

481—90.1(10A) Definitions. For the purposes of this chapter, the following definitions apply:

"Active case" means a household that is receiving public assistance.

"Allotment reduction" means an amount withheld from a financial or supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefit. More specifically, "grant reduction" refers to the family investment program (FIP) and to refugee cash assistance (RCA), and "benefit reduction" refers to SNAP.

"Debt" means the dollar amount of public assistance, by program, received by or on behalf of a person or provider in excess of that allowed by law, rules, or regulations for any given month(s); or the dollar amount of public assistance unlawfully transferred or obtained in violation of program rules; or the dollar amount of unpaid IowaCare personal financial responsibility obligations.

"Debtor" means any person who has been determined by DHS or by the department to be responsible for the repayment of a particular public assistance debt.

"Department" means the department of inspections and appeals.

"DHS" means the department of human services.

"Economic assistance fraud bureau" means the economic assistance fraud bureau of the department of inspections and appeals.

"FIP" means the family investment program described in 441—Chapters 40 to 46.

"Notice of debt" means a notice that informs the debtor that a debt in a public assistance program has occurred. The notice identifies the debt amount, the dates on which the debt was incurred, the cause of the debt, and the options the debtor has to repay the debt. (See 441—Chapter 11.)

"Offsetting" means the repayment of a debt by setoff of a state warrant or setoff of state income tax refunds or federal tax refunds and federal payments.

"Public assistance" means any program that DHS administers that confers a financial, medical, or SNAP benefit.

"RCA" means refugee cash assistance described in 441—Chapter 60.

"Recovery" means the repayment of a debt by direct cash payment from the debtor, by allotment reduction, by offsetting, or by garnishment of wages or assets.

"Repayment agreement" means an agreement entered into voluntarily between the department and the debtor for the repayment of a debt. Agreements are made on Form 470-0495, Agreement to Pay a Debt, or on a notice of debt listed in 441—subrule 11.2(2). The repayment agreement, whether Form 470-0495 or a notice of debt, tells the amount and program(s) overpaid and gives the debtor a choice of repayment methods. Failure to return the repayment agreement may result in further collection actions.

"SNAP" means the supplemental nutrition assistance program and refers to the benefits provided by the federal program administered through 7 CFR Parts 270 through 283 as set forth in rule 441—65.1(234).

"Title XIX divestiture" means a debt against a person who receives transferred assets from a Medicaid applicant or recipient within five years prior to an application for medical assistance if the applicant is approved for medical assistance (Medicaid) or a transfer impacting the recovery or payment of a medical assistance (Medicaid) debt.

[ARC 8656B, IAB 4/7/10, effective 5/12/10; ARC 6518C, IAB 9/7/22, effective 10/12/22]

481—90.2(10A) Recovery process. The recovery process begins when data is successfully entered on the designated overpayment recovery system and a notice of debt is issued to the debtor. The data specifies which public assistance program(s) is owed a debt.

[ARC 8656B, IAB 4/7/10, effective 5/12/10; ARC 6518C, IAB 9/7/22, effective 10/12/22]

481—90.3(10A) Records. The recovery unit maintains an account for each debt that has occurred for a debtor. The account is filed under the debtor's name and includes information maintained pursuant to rule 441—11.2(217).

[ARC 8656B, IAB 4/7/10, effective 5/12/10]

481—90.4(10A) Review. Rescinded ARC 6518C, IAB 9/7/22, effective 10/12/22.

481—90.5(10A) Debt repayment. A notice of debt or Form 470-0495, Agreement to Pay a Debt, is used to initiate payments of a debt. The minimum rate of payment is determined by each program unless set by a court order or otherwise negotiated by DHS. All recoveries are transmitted to the DHS cashier. Payments are made directly by cash, check, or money order or through an online payment portal by the debtor except as otherwise provided in this rule. The amount of allotment reduction for a FIP overpayment caused by an agency error shall be different from the amount of allotment reduction for a client error, as determined by DHS.

90.5(1) Active cases—PROMISE JOBS program. For payment reduction for the PROMISE JOBS program, the debtor must provide written permission to effectuate a FIP reduction.

90.5(2) Active cases—FIP, RCA, SNAP. Allotment reduction shall be used, except that cash payment pursuant to a repayment agreement may be used when the repayment amount exceeds the amount that may be collected by allotment reduction. For SNAP, debt repayment may also be made in accordance with subrule 90.5(3).

90.5(3) SNAP with electronic benefit balances. SNAP payments may be made by returning electronic benefits to pay the debt.

[ARC 8656B, IAB 4/7/10, effective 5/12/10; ARC 6518C, IAB 9/7/22, effective 10/12/22]

481—90.6(10A) Further collection action. If complete repayment has not been received by the methods described in rule 481—90.5(10A), further collection action may be taken. This action includes, but is not limited to, the following:

90.6(1) For all debts.

- a. Debts of \$5,000 or less, small claims court action.
- b. Debts of more than \$5,000, referral to the attorney general for district court action.
- c. State income tax refund offset in accordance with 441—Chapter 11 and Iowa Code section 8A.504.
- d. The filing of a claim in a debtor's estate or bankruptcy proceedings.
- e. Garnishment of wages or assets.
- f. Setoff of a state warrant.
- g. Distress warrants.
- h. Liens.

90.6(2) For SNAP debts. In addition to the above actions, federal offsets (taxes, federal payments) may be used for the collection of SNAP debts in accordance with rule 441—11.5(234).

[ARC 8656B, IAB 4/7/10, effective 5/12/10; ARC 6518C, IAB 9/7/22, effective 10/12/22]

481—90.7(10A) Appeal rights. If a notice of debt or other notice of adverse action is received by the debtor and the debtor wishes to contest the debt, an appeal is submitted to the recovery unit or to DHS. If an appeal is submitted, the recovery process is suspended until conclusion of the appeal process outlined in 481—Chapter 9 and 441—Chapter 7.

[ARC 8656B, IAB 4/7/10, effective 5/12/10; ARC 3523C, IAB 12/20/17, effective 1/24/18]

481—90.8(10A) Data processing systems matches. The recovery unit compares information with other data processing systems to identify the location, resources, or income of a debtor. Part or all of a data processing system is used. The recovery unit uses, but is not limited to using, the data processing systems of the following entities:

1. Social Security Administration,
2. Department of workforce development,
3. Department of revenue,

4. Department of administrative services,
 5. Department of transportation (driver's license and motor vehicle registration), and
 6. Department of human services.
- [ARC 8656B, IAB 4/7/10, effective 5/12/10]

481—90.9(10A) Confidentiality. The confidentiality of records is in accordance with 441—Chapter 9, “Public Records and Fair Information Practices.”

[ARC 8656B, IAB 4/7/10, effective 5/12/10]

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 10A.108 and 10A.402.

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