

MISSOURI'S
STRATEGIES
OF
SUCCESS
(SOS)
FFY 2001

December 2000

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Missouri's Food Stamp payment accuracy rate through year-to-date FFY 2000 (July 2000) is 91.8%. This is an improvement over the FFY 1999 payment accuracy rate of 91.42%.

We attribute this increase in payment accuracy to continued application of our quality service delivery plan initiated in FFY 1998 in combination with continued use of key payment accuracy strategies. This plan depicts the interaction of the Vision Team with Quality Assurance staff, county office staff, Program and Policy staff and Staff Training.

Data shows the error element of earned income remains the most significant problem area. Other elements include shelter errors, including standard utility allowance, as the second most common error and household composition errors are the third most frequent type of errors.

Key causes of client errors include client non-reporting and client willful withholding of information. Agency errors are more often attributable to disregarding information and failure to follow-up on information.

Missouri's goal remains to achieve enhanced funding with a statewide error rate below six percent. We are particularly concerned about maintaining our error rate while moving the Food Stamp Program to FAMIS. We plan to focus much of our attention in the area of preparing staff to work in FAMIS to facilitate continued payment accuracy and quality service delivery.

As we strive to reach this goal, renewed emphasis will be placed on using information available to the worker, correct projection of earned income, and good interviewing techniques. We also are targeting improved supervisory skills.

An additional focus will be on reducing negative errors. Data analysis indicates that an overwhelming majority of negative errors are a result of early rejections (prior to 61st day). Efforts are already underway to address this area of concern.

DATA ANALYSIS

The statewide data for the following analysis was taken from Quality Control (QC) final error reports for FFY 1997, FFY 1998, FFY 1999, and YTD 2000.

Missouri is divided geographically into seven administrative areas. Areas 5, 6, and 7 are mainly urban areas, with the remainder of the areas, 1 through 4, representing mostly rural areas of the state.

Quality Control data is collected by area. The following chart shows the breakdown of payment error rates by area:

Chart 1: OVERALL FOOD STAMP PAYMENT ERROR RATES
BY AREA AND STATEWIDE*

AREA	OCT. 1996- SEPT. 1997	OCT. 1997- SEPT. 1998	OCT. 1998- SEPT. 1999	OCT. 1999- July 2000
1	6.7	9.3	4.8	5.7
2	11.4	5.5	8.0	8.8
3	8.9	5.4	7.1	3.8
4	11.6	5.2	5.4	2.9
5	18.6	5.8	12.0	13.5
6	11.3	11.9	10.3	11.2
7	18.0	12.1	9.6	12.1
STATEWIDE	12.0	8.0	8.2	8.2

*This is the State figure without including federal regression data.

CHART 2: FOOD STAMP ERROR RATES BY AREA - FFY 1997

Area	#Cases Reviewed	Food Stamp \$ Issued	# Errors	FS Issued in Error	Case Error Rate %	Average \$ Error
1	137	\$21,455	24	\$1,444	17.5	\$60.16
2	132	\$20,157	29	\$2,289	22.0	\$78.93
3	235	\$36,330	57	\$3,232	24.3	\$56.70
4	255	\$37,978	65	\$4,388	25.5	\$67.51
5	163	\$26,780	55	\$4,994	33.7	\$90.80
6	228	\$39,348	56	\$4,455	24.6	\$79.55
7	107	\$18,492	30	\$3,330	28.0	\$111.00

FOOD STAMP ERROR RATES BY AREA - FFY 1998

Area	#Cases Reviewed	Food Stamp \$ Issued	# Errors	FS Issued in Error	Case Error Rate %	Average \$ Error
1	111	\$17,373	23	\$1,610	20.7	\$70.00
2	130	\$18,257	15	\$1,005	11.5	\$67.00
3	236	\$35,225	39	\$1,905	16.5	\$48.85
4	250	\$38,667	36	\$2,025	14.4	\$56.25
5	123	\$23,582	26	\$1,366	21.1	\$52.54
6	240	\$43,884	62	\$5,233	25.8	\$84.40
7	127	\$23,999	25	\$2,903	19.7	\$116.12

FOOD STAMP ERROR RATES BY AREA - FFY 1999

Area	#Cases Reviewed	Food Stamp \$ Issued	# Errors	FS Issued in Error	Case Error Rate %	Average \$ Error
1	128	\$19,767	24	\$951	19.5	\$39.62
2	132	\$22,208	20	\$1,771	15.2	\$88.55
3	253	\$37,576	38	\$2,664	15.0	\$70.11
4	265	\$41,687	51	\$2,256	19.2	\$44.24
5	153	\$28,506	36	\$3,431	23.5	\$95.30
6	233	\$40,525	48	\$4,174	20.6	\$86.95
7	126	\$24,626	24	\$2,376	19.0	\$99.00

FOOD STAMP ERROR RATES BY AREA - FFY 2000 THRU July 2000

Area	#Cases Reviewed	Food Stamp \$ Issued	# Errors	FS Issued in Error	Case Error Rate %	Average \$ Error
1	83	\$13,154	12	\$749	14.5	\$62.42
2	95	\$15,201	8	\$1331	8.4	\$166.64
3	156	\$22,019	10	\$842	6.4	\$84.20
4	175	\$27,458	14	\$785	8.0	\$56.07
5	100	\$17,860	23	\$2416	23.0	\$105.04
6	169	\$31,053	32	\$3473	18.9	\$108.53
7	111	\$20,396	22	\$2478	19.8	\$112.64

PAYMENT ERROR ELEMENTS

For the FY 2000 review period the three main error elements in order of their impact on Missouri's payment error rate are:

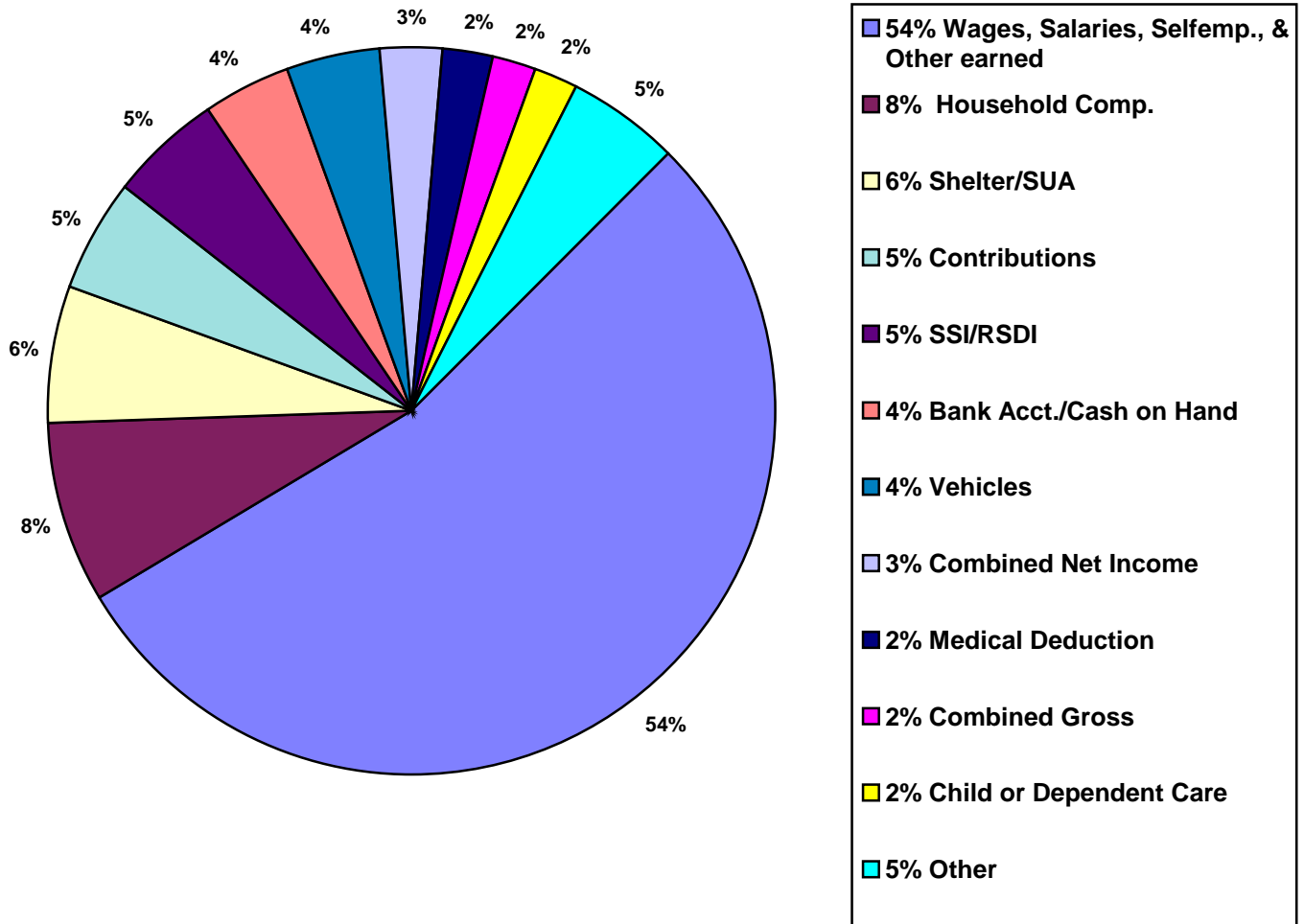
- earned income (includes wages and salaries, self-employment, and other earned income),
- shelter deduction (includes standard utility allowance), and
- household composition.

Note: (Percentages are percent of the total dollar error amount)

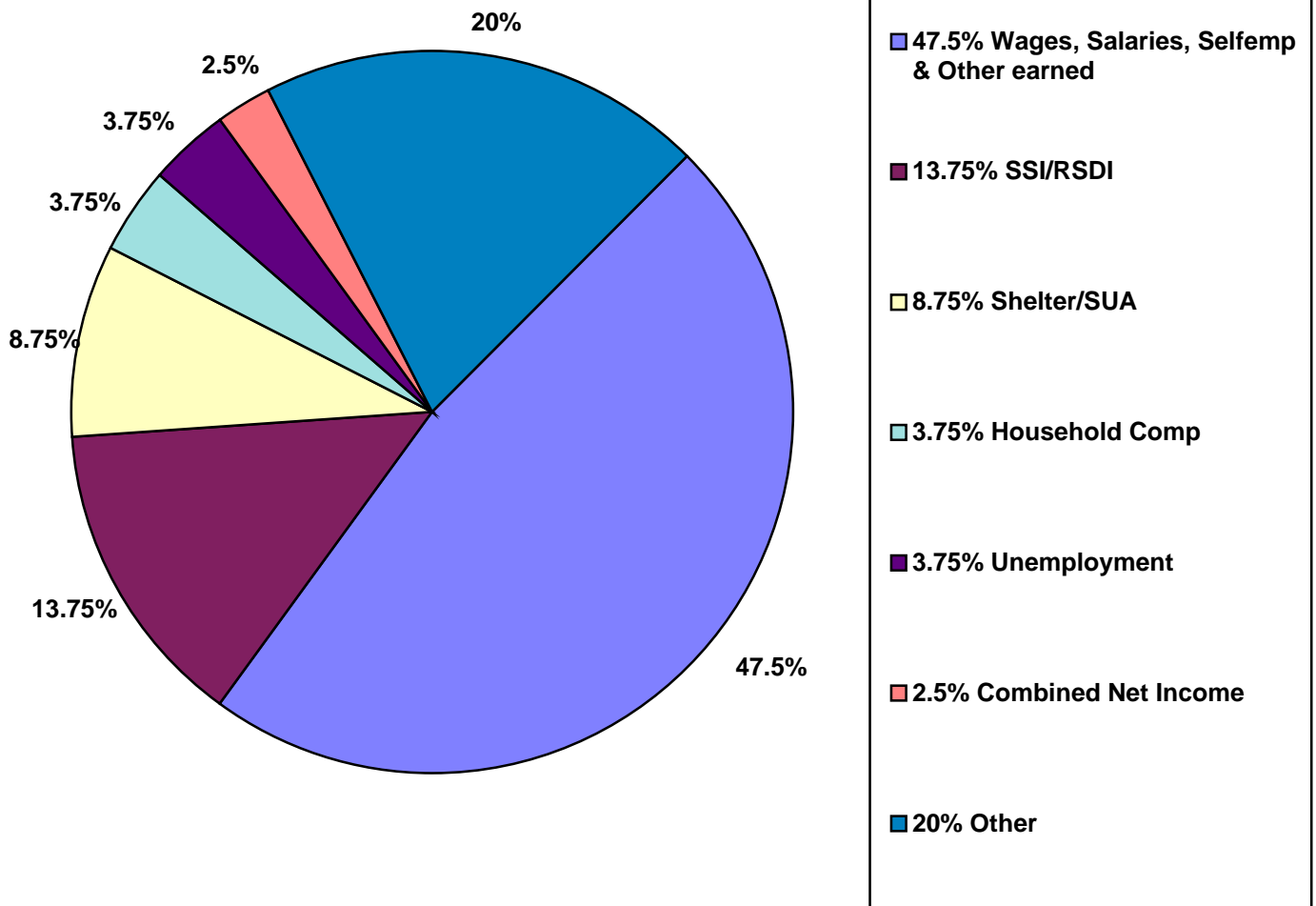
Error Element	FFY 1997	FFY 1998	FFY 1999	FFY 2000 YTD
Earned Income	54.17%	47.5%	41.4%	52.5%
Shelter Deduction	5.8%	8.75%	7.3%	10.8%
Household Comp.	7.5%	3.75%	6.0%	8.9%
SSI/RSDI		13.7%	12.1%	6.8%

The following pages contain more detail on payment error elements.

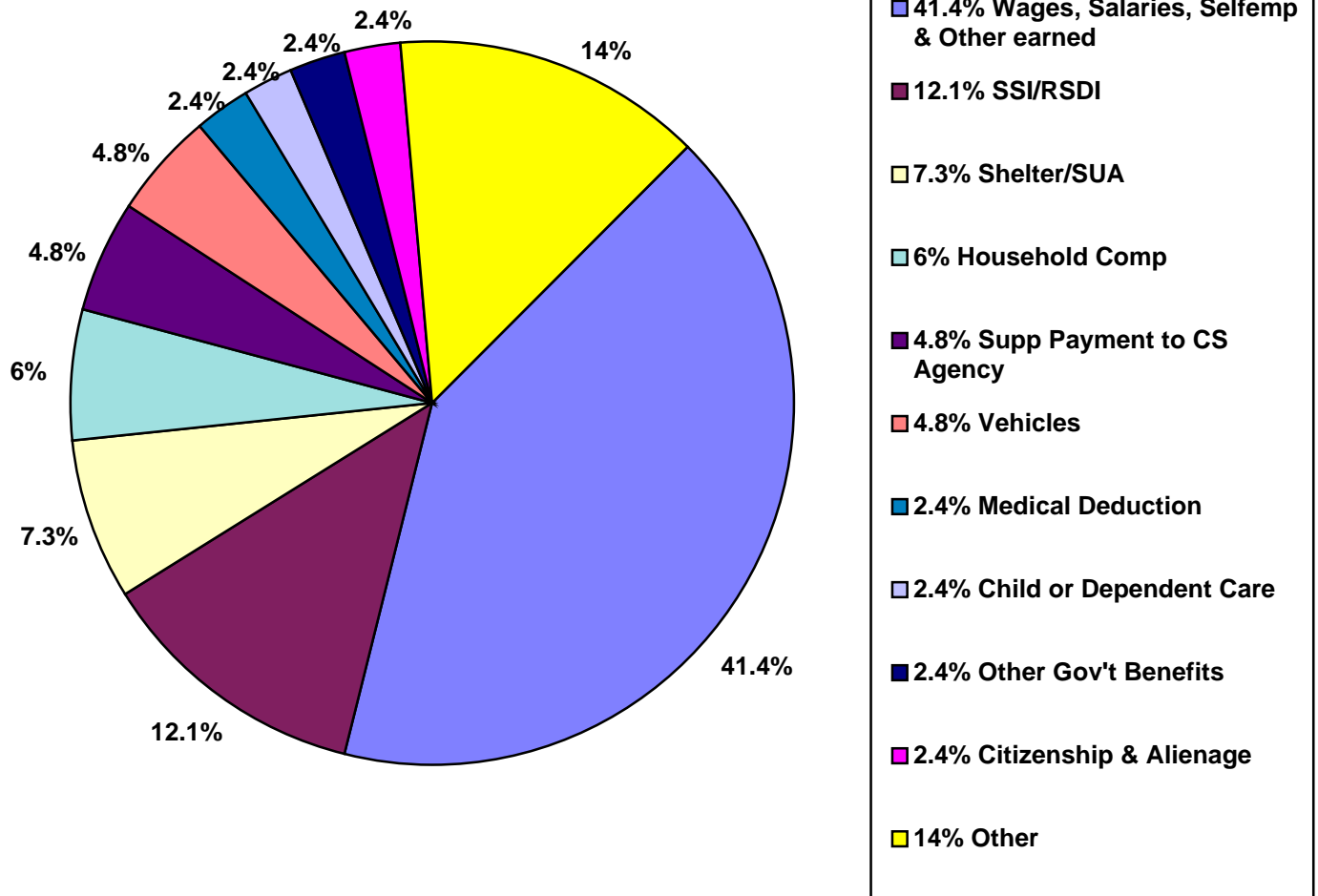
1997 BREAKDOWN OF ERROR RATE



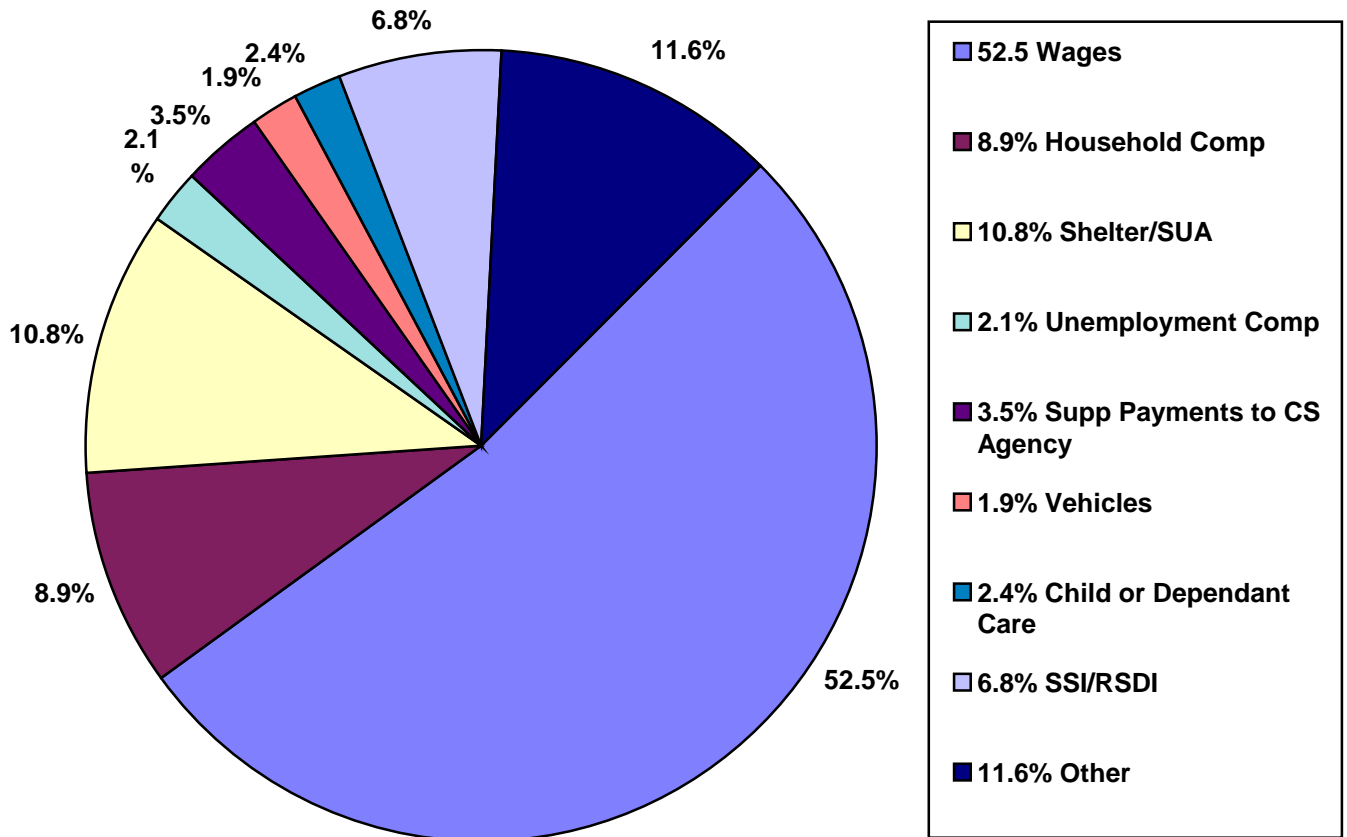
1998 BREAKDOWN OF ERROR RATE



1999 BREAKDOWN OF ERROR RATE



YTD 2000 BREAKDOWN OF ERROR RATE



CLIENT AND AGENCY ERROR CAUSES A COMPARISON

Quality Control data shows that client caused errors contribute more to Missouri's error rate than agency caused errors. This is due to client errors being a larger dollar amount.

The charts below break down client vs. agency caused errors in the top three error elements for FFY 1997, 1998, 1999, and YTD 2000.

A breakdown of the reasons for the errors is included.

FFY 1997

Error Element	Earned Income*		Household Comp		Shelter/ SUA	
Responsibility	Agency	Client	Agency	Client	Agency	Client
# of cases having payment error	36	86	8	13	35	16
Total FS \$ issued in error	\$2,202	\$10,829	\$603	\$1,166	\$996	\$400
Avg. Error	\$61.17	\$125.92	\$75.37	\$89.69	\$28.46	\$25
Total underpaid	\$776	\$2,479	\$332	\$508	\$517	\$193
Total overpaid/ ineligible	\$1,426	\$8,350	\$271	\$658	\$479	\$209
Reason for error	Misapplied Policy-42% Information disregarded-39% Other-19%	Not reported 75% Willful incorrect or not reported-16% Other-9%	Inf. disregarded 75% Policy misapplied 12.5% Other- 12.5%	Not reported 92% Willful not reported 8%	Inf. disregard 46% Policy misapplied 17% Other-37%	Not reported 56% Willful 31% Other-13%

FFY 1998

Error Element	Earned Income*		Household Comp		Shelter/SUA	
Responsibility	Agency	Client	Agency	Client	Agency	Client
# of cases having payment error	27	44	15	17	36	13
Total FS \$ issued in error	\$2,250	\$5,474	\$687	\$1,496	\$987	\$420
Avg. Error	\$83.33	\$124.41	\$45.80	\$88	\$27.42	\$32.30
Total underpaid	\$263	\$481	\$80	\$117	\$247	\$66
Total overpaid/ineligible	\$1,987	\$4,993	\$607	\$1,379	\$740	\$354
Reason for error	Misapplied Policy -22% Information disregarded-44% Other-34%	Not reported 70% Willful incorrect or not reported 20% Other-10%	Inf. disregarded 53% Policy misapplied 13% Other-34%	Not reported 88% Willful not reported 6%	Inf. disregard 42% Policy misapplied 25% Other-67%	Not reported 38% Willful 31% Other 31%

*Includes wages, salaries, self-employment and other earned income.

FFY 1999

Error Element	Earned Income*		Household Comp		Shelter/ SUA		SSA/SSI	
Responsibility	Agency	Client	Agency	Client	Agency	Client	Agency	Client
# of cases having payment error	39	34	7	3	31	13	18	11
Total FS \$ issued in error	\$3,232	\$4,110	\$631	\$341	\$837	\$523	\$969	\$1,075
Avg. Error	\$82.87	\$120.88	\$90.14	\$113.66	\$27.00	\$40.23	\$53.83	\$97.72
Total underpaid	\$655	\$767	\$481	\$270	\$471	\$55	\$200	\$59
Total overpaid/ ineligible	\$2,577	\$3,343	\$150	\$71	\$366	\$468	\$769	\$1,016
Reason for error	Misapplied Policy-24% Information disregarded-68% Other-8%	Not reported-83% Willful incorrect or not reported-17%	Inf. disregarded 62.4% All Others-37.6%	No reported 100%	Failure to follow up on info disregarded-62% Incorrect info-37% Other-1%	Not reported-42% Willful-44% Other-14%	Info disregarded 86% Failure to follow up-14%	Not reported - 73% Willful-27%

*Includes wages, salaries, self-employment and other earned income.

FFY 2000 YTD

Error Element	Earned Income*		Household Comp		Shelter/ SUA		SSA/SSI	
Responsibility	Agency	Client	Agency	Client	Agency	Client	Agency	Client
# of cases having payment error	16	30	05	06	11	13	04	04
Total FS \$ issued in error	\$2,234	\$4010	\$385	\$686	\$431	\$874	\$490	\$328
Avg. Error	\$139.63	\$133.67	\$77.00	\$114.33	\$39.18	\$67.23	\$122.50	\$82.00
Total underpaid	\$337	\$411	\$340	\$0	\$105	\$124	\$98	\$0
Total overpaid/ ineligible	\$1,897	\$3599	\$45	\$686	\$326	\$750	\$392	\$328
Reason for error	Disregarded 49.9% Failed to Verify 14.5% Failed to follow up 20.5% Policy Misapplied 15.1%	Info not reported 68.2% Will-failed to report 30.2%	Info disregarded 69.6% Policy Misapplied 30.4%	Info not reported 60% Will-failed to report 40%	Failed to follow up 33.6% Policy misapplied 25% Info disregarded 25% Info incorrect 16.2%	Info incorrect 44.2% Info not reported 25.9% Will-failed to report 30%	Info disregarded 25% Failed to verify 13.5% Policy misapplied 61.4%	Info incorrect 77.7% Info not reported 9.5% Willful failed to report 12.8%

*Includes wages, salaries, self-employment and other earned income.

The chart below shows client vs. agency error for all error elements in the past three years and year-to-date for FFY 2000. The trend for FFY 1998 through present is a greater number of agency caused errors. This could be in part due to our three-month certification policy. The larger amount of benefits issued in error is due to client error.

	FFY 1997		FFY 1998		FFY 1999		FFY 2000	
	Agency	Client	Agency	Client	Agency	Client	Agency	Client
# of error cases	139 (44%)	177 (56%)	128 (57%)	98 (43%)	148 (61%)	94 (39%)	68 (56%)	53 (44%)
FS benefits issued in error	\$7481 (31%)	\$16651 (69%)	\$7221 (45%)	\$8826 (55%)	\$8611 (49%)	\$9008 (51%)	\$5297 (44%)	\$6777 (56%)
Total dollar error	\$24,132		\$16,047		\$17,619		\$12,074	

The chart below depicts the benefit amounts identified as underissuance vs. overissuance/ineligible for the past three years and year-to-date for FFY 2000. The ratio of type of error has remained fairly constant.

FFY 1997		FFY 1998		FFY 1999		FFY 2000	
Under-issuance	Over-issuance/ineligible	Under-issuance	Over-issuance/ineligible	Under-issuance	Over-issuance/ineligible	Under-issuance	Over-issuance/ineligible
\$6674	\$17,458	\$2693	\$13,354	\$4355	\$13,264	\$2760	\$9,314

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF PROGRESS STRATEGIES OF SUCCESS (SOS) FFY 2000

The SOS (corrective action plan) for FFY 2000 identified the following problem areas in achieving payment accuracy:

- earned income,
- awareness of payment accuracy issues,
- correct identification of expedited eligibility,
- need for more clearly defined role of supervisors,
- communication, and
- access.

The following outlines our efforts in addressing each of the above issues.

Earned Income

Earned income remains the top error element. A comparison of the reasons for the errors from FFY 1999 to FFY 2000 shows:

- an improvement in the worker disregard of information,
- an improvement in misapplication of policy,
- an increase in failure to verify and
- an increase in failure to follow-up on information.

As a reinvestment project we expanded the time frames for timely processing of timely recertifications. This procedure is intended to give staff an opportunity to better manage their time and to correctly evaluate all information. We are in the process of evaluating its effectiveness on payment accuracy.

Training was again provided to staff on correct projection of earned income. Another reinvestment project is the development of web-based training for earned income budgeting.

We continued to conduct case error conferences on Quality Control errors to ensure the accuracy of the review, to identify program and policy issues and for training purposes.

Awareness of Payment Accuracy Issues/ Communication

We continued to issue monthly Vision Team Gazettes in which we:

- emphasize the current payment error rate,
- highlight troublesome policy and procedure issues, and
- share information.

We conducted our fourth Food Stamp payment accuracy conference in August 2000.

Correct Identification of Expedited Eligibility

We completed as a reinvestment project programming that automatically approves an expedited case that has benefits issued but has not been opened in the system.

We continued to review non-expedited Food Stamp cases to ensure correct policy is being applied. Our focus on correct identification of expedited eligible applications has been effective. The Southside Welfare Rights Organization court order has been amended to require continued monitoring for only Areas 3, 6 and 7. The other state administrative areas were determined to be in compliance with the court ordered requirement.

Need for More Clearly Defined Role of Supervisor

We continued to issue quarterly the Super Vision Team Gazette. This serves as a vehicle to share information pertaining to supervisory techniques and issues.

We developed a number of reinvestment activities targeted at supervisory training. The training is being provided in FFY 2001.

Access

We conducted access reviews in Jackson County and St. Louis City. These reviews did not identify any major problems.

We continued to encourage mail-in food stamp applications. This process was supported by a reinvestment activity that includes mailing food stamp applications with the notice of expiration.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES FFY 2001

Our payment accuracy strategies are outlined in the attached Vision Team Goals, Objectives and Strategies for FY 2001. These strategies combine reinvestment activities and the Special Initiative Review process. The activities that are reinvestment are outlined in the reinvestment plan. The effectiveness of the reinvestment activities will be evaluated and reported in the quarterly reinvestment updates.

