

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION	SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) MANUAL	
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408.1 Purpose

This section provides the general policy on verification. It describes the kinds of information that must be verified at application, recertification, and interim change. It also provides a definition of documentary evidence and collateral contacts and details the household's and local department's responsibility in the verification process. It does not provide details regarding verifying specific eligibility factors. Information about verifying specific eligibility factors is in the section dedicated to each specific eligibility factor.

408.2 Definition

Verification is the use of documentation or third-party information to establish the accuracy of statements on the application. The local department will provide the household with written notice of the required verifications. The State agency must give households at least 10 days to provide required verification(s). The local department is responsible for helping the household secure verification and for using verification resources, such as SOIQi, BEACON, and SAVE.

408.3 Responsibility for Providing Verification

The household has the primary responsibility for giving the local department written proof to support statements on the application. They are also responsible for resolving any questionable information. **The eligibility worker must assist the household in getting the verification as long as the household is cooperating with the local department.**

The household may supply documentary evidence:

- In-person,
- Through the mail,
- By facsimile, email, or other electronic means, or
- Through an authorized representative.

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The eligibility worker **cannot** require the household to present verification in person at the local department.

The eligibility worker must accept any reasonable documentary evidence provided by the household and must be primarily concerned with whether the verification proves the statements on the application.

408.3 Responsibility for Providing Verification (continued)

Reminder: Do not close or deny a SNAP case because the household does not provide verification of expenses such as dependent care, medical, or shelter costs. Instead, certify the household without the deduction.

408.4 Verification at Application, Normal Processing

- A. Verify the following information prior to certification for households initially applying. Do not verify the factors listed in section 408.12 for categorically eligible households.
 - a. Identity;
 - b. Gross, non-excludable income;
 - c. Social Security Number (verify once, SS card is not necessary);
 - d. Household composition, if questionable;
 - e. Immigration status for non-citizen applicants if questionable (for further clarification see Sec 120.2 of this manual, Immigrants);
 - f. Disability, if the determination of disability affects the household's eligibility or benefit level (e.g. eligibility for uncapped shelter, medical expenses, student status, or exemption from work registration);

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g. Hours worked by an ABAWD and the 3 ABAWD time limit countable months in another state, if applicable.

h. Amount of non-excluded resources (do not request verification of resources for categorically eligible applicants);

i. Residency (except in the case of customers experiencing homelessness, households newly arrived in the area, and some migrant farm workers);

i. Verification of residency may be impossible to obtain in certain situations. Some households, such as migrant farm workers and people experiencing homelessness, may find it impossible to provide documentary proof of residency.

408.4 Verification at Application, Normal Processing (continued)

ii. If it proves impossible to verify residency, certify the household for SNAP if they are otherwise eligible.

iii. No specific document is required to verify residency.

NOTE: Verifying residency and identity in the regular application process are not intended to result in a change in procedure or a need for additional verification. Documents used to verify other factors of eligibility normally suffice to confirm residency and identity.

B. The following information is required to apply a deduction. Verification must be requested if the household reports paying these expenses, but failure to provide this verification does not result in ineligibility for SNAP.

a. Shelter expenses (including shelter costs for a homeless household claiming shelter expenses that would result in a shelter deduction in excess of the \$198.99 allowance);

b. Medical expenses (including reimbursed amounts);

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- c. Dependent care expenses;
- d. Legally obligated child support to or for an individual living outside the household, and the amount of the actual payment.

408.5 Verification at Application, Expedited Processing

Identity is the only mandatory verification when processing an application for expedited service. When processing an application for expedited service the local department must:

- A. Verify the identity of the applicant in all cases through a collateral contact or other readily available documentary evidence.
- B. Make reasonable efforts to verify the household's residency, income, liquid resources, and other factors of eligibility within the expedited processing time frames.
- C. Do not delay certification beyond the expedited processing timeframes if eligibility criteria other than identity cannot be verified.

408.6 Verification of Questionable Information

- A. Local departments must verify all other factors of eligibility if they are questionable and affect the household's eligibility or benefit level.
- B. Information in the application is only questionable when:
 - a. statements made by the applicant are inconsistent; or
 - b. information on the application or on previous applications is inconsistent; or
 - c. information received by the local department is inconsistent.
- C. These guidelines cannot target groups such as migrant farmworkers or American Indians for more intensive verification under this provision ([273.2\(f\)\(2\)\(i\)](#)).

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D. Evaluate each household based on its individual circumstances when determining if information is questionable.

E. Examples of questionable information:

a. A household's report of expenses that exceed its income may be grounds for the local department's request for further verification. This circumstance, in itself, is not grounds for a denial of benefits. In this instance, explore with the household how it meets its expenses. Request further verification based on the household's response to these questions.

b. A roomer or boarder has the same last name as someone in the household.

c. Suddenly there is an absence of medical bills for a household member that has had continuous medical expenses for several years. This could apply to other bills.

408.7 Verification of an Expense or a Questionable Expense

A. Advise the household that its eligibility and SNAP benefit level may be determined without providing a deduction for the unverified expense if obtaining required verification of an expense, including medical expenses, will delay the household's certification.

408.7 Verification of an Expense or a Questionable Expense (continued)

B. Determine the household's eligibility and SNAP benefit level without providing a deduction for an unverified expense when the expense cannot be verified.

C. If the household subsequently provides the missing verification, update the case and recalculate the household's benefits in accordance with the timeliness standards in SNAP Manual Section 420 Reporting Changes.

D. The household is only entitled to SNAP benefits retroactive to the month of application if the expense could not be verified within the 30-day

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processing standard because the local department failed to allow the household sufficient time (see SNAP Manual Section 406 Normal Processing) to verify the expense.

E. Process the household's application as provided in SNAP Manual Section 406 when the household is ineligible without the deduction.

408.8 Verification at Recertification

A. The following information must be re-verified at recertification:

- a. Gross non-excludable income
- b. Previously unreported and total recurring medical expenses;
- c. Shelter and utility expenses;
- d. Newly obtained Social Security Number (changes in Social Security Numbers previously verified must be re-verified);
- e. Legally obligated child support payments to or for an individual outside of the household;
- f. Dependent care expenses;
- g. Changes in immigrant status;
- h. Work hours for ABAWDS;
- i. Changes in residency; and
- j. Changes in household composition, if questionable.

408.8 Verification at Recertification (continued)

NOTE: Re-verify other information that is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent, or outdated, including resources for households that are not categorically eligible.

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408.9 Verification at Interim Change

The same verification requirements that apply at initial application apply to changes reported during the certification period with the following exceptions:

- A. Do not verify changes in earned income if the source has not changed and the amount changed by \$50 or less, unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent, or outdated.
- B. Do not verify changes in utility expenses (households with one utility) if the source has not changed or the amount changed by \$50 or less, unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent, or outdated.
- C. Do not verify changes in medical expenses if the source has not changed or the amount changed by \$50 or less, unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent, or outdated.
- D. Verification is not required until the next recertification if a change results in a decrease in the SNAP benefit amount.

408.10 Documentary Evidence

A. Documentary evidence consists of a written confirmation of a household's circumstances. Some examples of documentary evidence include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Wage stubs,
- b. Copies of checks,
- c. Award letters,
- d. Utility bills,
- e. Bank statements,
- f. Letters from employers, landlords, etc,

408.10 Documentary Evidence (continued)

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- g. Immigration and Naturalization documents,
- h. The following documents that verify Indian status for ABAWD exception purposes ([CFR 273.24\(l\)](#)):
 - i. Tribal enrollment/membership card,
 - ii. (I-872) American Indian Card,
 - iii. Genealogical/Birth/Death records,
 - iv. Community Attestation,
 - v. Land/Trust Records,
 - vi. Reservation Distribution Records,
 - vii. U.S. American Indian/Alaska Native tribal enrollment or shareholder documentation,
 - viii. Document from a tribe declaring membership for an individual,
 - ix. Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) issued by the Board of Indian Affairs or a tribe, if the CDIB includes tribal enrollment information, or
 - x. Letter from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) granting a tribal exemption based on tribal membership or Alaska Native shareholder status.
- i. Obituaries
- j. Searches on Maryland Judiciary Case Search:
<http://casesearch.courts.state.md.us/casesearch/>
- k. Searches on Maryland Inmate Locator:
<http://www.dpscs.state.md.us/inmate/>

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l. Searches on The Work Number:

www.theworknumber.com

m. Searches on Maryland Workers Compensation:

http://www.wcc.state.md.us/WFMS/public_inquiry.html

n. Searches on Maryland Tax and Assessment:

<https://sdat.dat.maryland.gov/RealProperty/Pages/default.aspx>

B. These guidelines cannot target groups such as migrant farmworkers or American Indians for more intensive verification under this provision ([CFR 273.2\(f\)\(2\)\(i\)](#)).

C. The **household is responsible** for providing documentary evidence to support its statements. Households may supply documentary evidence in person, through the mail, by facsimile (fax), email, through [Maryland Benefits Consumer Portal](#), or through an authorized representative. The local department **cannot require** the household to present the documentation in person.

D. The eligibility worker must accept any reasonable documentary evidence as long as it provides adequate verification of the statements provided by the household. Local departments must attempt to assist the household with obtaining documentary evidence if it is difficult or impossible for the household to obtain them on its own.

E. The eligibility worker must be primarily concerned with whether the verification proves the statements on the application. Simply because a household is in an error-prone situation does not mean there is insufficient verification to prove household member statements.

F. Scan/upload all documents to Case Documents in the Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) and return originals to the customer or destroy copies that the customer does not want.

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Reminder: Do not close or deny a SNAP benefit case because the household does not provide required verification of expenses such as dependent care, medical, or shelter costs. Instead, certify the household without the deduction.

408.11 Collateral Contact

A. A collateral contact is a verbal confirmation of a household's circumstances. The collateral contact may be made in person or by telephone. Some examples of acceptable collateral contacts include talking with the following:

- a. Employers
- b. Landlords
- c. Social service agencies
- d. Neighbors of the household

B. Utilize a collateral contact or home visit when otherwise unable to obtain documentary evidence of a required verification.

- a. Home visits **must be scheduled in advance;** and

i. **May be used only** when there is not enough documentary evidence to make a firm determination of eligibility or benefit level.

C. The household is responsible for providing the name of the collateral contact. The household may request the local department's assistance designating the collateral contact.

D. The customer provides consent to release information in multiple DHS documents: by signing the application, the Consent for Release of Information form (704 form), and/or the wage forms (247 and 007 forms).

E. The local department is not required to use the collateral contact named by the household if the collateral contact cannot be expected to provide

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accurate third-party verification. The local department must request the household to name another collateral contact when necessary. The local department is responsible for obtaining verification from acceptable collateral contacts.

F. The local department may only disclose customer information necessary to obtain the required verification.

- a. Do not disclose information provided by the household when verifying customer information with a collateral contact.
- b. Do not disclose that the household applied for SNAP benefits.
- c. Do not suggest the household has done anything wrong.

408.12 Discrepancies

When information from another source contradicts statements made by the household, local departments must give households a reasonable opportunity to resolve discrepancies before determining eligibility.

408.13 Narration

Case records must be narrated to support eligibility, ineligibility, and SNAP benefit level determination. Narration must be in sufficient detail to enable a supervisor or reviewer to determine the reasonableness and accuracy of the determination. The narration must also include any additional information regarding the applicant/recipient relevant to the determining eligibility.

Some examples of narration include:

- A. The reason for the withdrawal of an application, if any was stated by the household, and the withdrawal was confirmed;
- B. Details regarding refusal to cooperate;

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C. The reason information is considered questionable and the verification that was used to resolve the questionable situation;

D. The reason a collateral contact or home visit was necessary;

E. The reason a collateral contact was rejected and an alternate requested;

F. A statement that the household decided to average fluctuating income;

G. A statement that income and/or resources were not verified because the household stated that it did not have any, and there was no reason to question the statement.

H. A statement that a prison or death match was received and that a Notice of Data Match was issued to the household.

408.14 Public Assistance (PA) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Households

A. when a household is categorically eligible as defined in SNAP Manual Section 115 Categorical Eligibility, local departments will accept, without further verification, the following eligibility requirements:

a. Resources;

408.14 Public Assistance (PA) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Households (continued)

b. Gross and net income limits;

c. Social security number information;

d. Sponsored alien information; and

e. Residency.

B. If any of the following factors are questionable, verify that the household:

a. Contains only members that are PA or SSI recipients;

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b. Meets the household definition defined in SNAP Manual Section 100 Household Composition;

c. Includes all persons who purchase and prepare food together, regardless of whether they are separate units for PA or SSI purposes; and

d. Includes no persons who are disqualified as described in Section 115.

C. Verify eligibility requirements that are not verified for PA or SSI purposes.

NOTE: Always check Case Documents in E&E for documentation of eligibility requirements.