



SNAP 103-5 Verification

References:	7 CFR 273.2(f); 7 CFR 273.2 (b)(1)(i); 7 CFR 273.14(b)(4); Federal Register/Vol. 77, No. 156
Overview:	<p>GENERAL RULE -- Verification is the use of documentation or a contact with a third party to confirm the accuracy of statements or information. Households must be given at least 10 days to provide verification. If the last day to provide verification falls on a weekend or holiday, households are allowed through the next business day to submit the verification.</p> <p>NOTE: Requests for verification listed on application and recertification approval notices are not considered 10-day request for verification notices. Also, the notice, SNAP Benefit Notice of Expiration (with required interview information) is not considered a 10-day request for information notice. A separate notice after the interview but prior to authorizing benefits must be sent allowing the household at least 10 days to provide verification.</p> <p>At application, when adding a new household member and at recertification, the CSC must query available computer systems. These systems are eDRS (nationwide list of disqualified individuals), SEARCHS (child support), MISTICS (wages and unemployment), SOLQ (social security), property search, etc. to establish the accuracy of statements on the application/recertification. At the Simplified Report, the CSC must query computer systems for information that is available and is pertinent to the case.</p> <p>If there is a match in the eDRS, the CSC must contact the originating state and allow the state 20 days to return the verification of the disqualification. If the verification is not received within 20 days, the CSC Supervisor needs to notify the SNAP Policy Specialist.</p> <p>NOTE: This requirement does not change the process for expedited benefits. The only required verification for an expedited case is still only identity. CSC must continue to process expedited benefits timely; however, for ongoing benefits the eDRS match must be conducted prior to eligibility determinations.</p> <p>If the originating state fails to provide documentation within the 20 day timeframe, the CSC must determine eligibility if otherwise eligible. If the origination state later verifies the eDRS match, the CSC is required to apply the SNAP disqualification and provide the household a notice of adverse action (1503-1) and establish an overpayment.</p> <p>If the CSC could have known information at Application, Recertification, Simplified Report, or when adding a household member via a query but does not query or does not correctly query the other computer systems, it is considered an agency caused error.</p>
Policy:	<p>DUE DATES FOR VERIFICATION</p> <p>If an application is being processed as expedited, the CSC must send a notice allowing the household at least 10 days or to the end of the expedited issuance period, whichever is longer to provide requested verification.</p> <p>If an application is being processed under regular processing procedures, after the interview the CSC must send a notice requesting verifications, allowing the</p>



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	<p>household until the 30th day following the date of application or a minimum of 10 days, whichever is longer to provide requested verification.</p> <p>When a Recertification, Simplified report, or an ongoing case is processed, the CSC must send a notice allowing the household at least 10 days to provide requested verification.</p>
	<p>TYPES/SOURCES OF VERIFICATION</p> <p>Types of verification include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Documentary evidence is written confirmation of a household's circumstances. It is used as the primary type of verification. Although documentary evidence is the primary type of verification, acceptable verification is not limited to any single type of document and may be obtained through the household or other source. The CSC must document in case notes the source of the documentary verification, the information verified, and the date the verification was received.2. Collateral contact is an oral confirmation of a household's circumstances by a person outside the household. The collateral contact may be made either in person or by telephone. The CSC may choose a collateral contact if the household does not designate one or designates one that is not acceptable. The CSC should only disclose the information that is absolutely necessary to obtain the needed information. When talking to a collateral contact, the CSC should try to avoid disclosing that the household is applying for SNAP benefits and try to avoid disclosing any information supplied by the household. If a collateral contact is used to verify information, the CSC must document the name and phone number of the collateral contact, the information verified, and the date the information was verified.3. A home visit may be used as verification only when documentary evidence is insufficient or cannot be obtained to make an accurate eligibility determination. A home visit must be scheduled in advance with the household.
	<p>RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROVIDING VERIFICATION</p> <p>The household has the primary responsibility for providing documentary evidence to support statements on the application and to resolve any questionable information. Households may provide verification in person, through the mail, fax, e-mail, or through an authorized representative. The CSC will assist the household as long as the household is cooperating with the application process.</p> <p>NOTE: A participant has authorized federal, state, and local agencies to verify information if needed to determine eligibility by signing the 'Application for Assistance'. The 'Release of Information' is NOT required but is a useful tool when businesses, agencies, etc. will not release information without a signed release of information statement by the participant.</p>

VERIFICATION AT APPLICATION

For households applying for SNAP benefits, the following information must be verified prior to the eligibility determination and issuance for non-expedited processing of applications.

1. **Residency** - verify to the extent possible in conjunction with verification of other information. If verification cannot be accomplished in conjunction with the verification of other information such as rent/mortgage payment, a utility expense, identity, etc., the CSC may use a collateral contact or other readily available documentary evidence. There is no durational residency requirement. The household is not required to reside in a permanent dwelling, or have a fixed mailing address, or demonstrate intent to reside permanently in the state. Applicants living anywhere in Montana for any purpose other than a vacation, regardless of the length of time they have been in Montana or plan to stay, meet residence requirements. Persons living in tents, vehicles, campers, under bridges, campsites, etc. meet residence requirements. An application must not be denied if the CSC and the household have made a reasonable effort to verify residency but verification is difficult to obtain.
2. **Identity** - verify the identity of the person making application. If an authorized representative applies on behalf of a household, the identity of both must be verified. Identity may be verified through readily available documentary evidence, or through a collateral contact. Acceptable verification may include but is not limited to: driver's license, work or school I.D., I.D. for health benefits or for another assistance or social services program, birth certificate, Social Security card, and wage stub. Any documents reasonably establishing the identity must be accepted and no requirement for a specific type of document such as a birth certification can be required. Only one document that establishes identity can be required.
3. **Eligible alien status** - verify the eligible status for each alien applicant. Alien status is normally verified through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) Forms I-94, I-151, I-551, Passport, G-641, or I-688 (SNAP 301-2). If an individual chooses not to provide verification of his/her alien eligible status and does not want the CSC to contact USCIS to verify his/her immigration status, the household may choose to withdraw the application or to participate without that member's needs included in the benefit determination.
4. **Social Security Number (SSN)** - verified through the agency system interface with the Social Security Administration. Hard copy verification of a SSN is not required. Providing a Social Security number (SSN) for each household member is voluntary. However, if a SSN is not provided, the individual cannot participate in SNAP unless the individual meets good cause (SNAP 303-1). The determination of eligibility or issuance of benefits must not be delayed to an otherwise eligible household solely to verify the SSN of a household member. Once a SSN is verified the CSC must make a

permanent notation in its file to prevent the unnecessary re-verification of the SSN in the future. If an individual does not have or is unable to provide a SSN and wants to participate in SNAP, the individual must apply for a SSN. If the household is unable to provide proof of application for a SSN for a newborn, the household must provide the SSN or proof of application at its next recertification or within six months following the month the baby is born, whichever is later. If the household is unable to provide a SSN or proof of application for a SSN within those time frames, the CSC will determine if good cause is applicable (SNAP 303-1). Generally, the SSN application process begins while the mother is still in the hospital. If a SSN application is made for a newborn prior to the mother leaving the hospital, the application for a SSN from the hospital is acceptable verification.

5. **Household composition** - verify factors affecting the composition of a household, **if questionable**.
6. **Disability** - verify the individual meets the definition of disabled as defined in the glossary (SNAP 0-4). Acceptable verification includes but is not limited to the participant receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security disability/blindness benefits, or Veterans Administration (VA) benefits due to being 100% disabled.
7. **Student status** - verify eligible student status (SNAP 201-5).
8. **Gross non-exempt income** - verify all income that is not exempt. The household's statement is accepted as verification of interest income when the household reports its interest income is \$10 or less per month or \$120 or less per year. Acceptable verification includes but is not limited to: pay stubs, W-2 forms, employer wage verification form, income tax forms and returns, bookkeeping records, sales and expenditure records, award letters (unemployment insurance, Veteran's Administration, pensions, Railroad Retirement); support and alimony payments (court order, divorce decree, or separation papers); contribution checks; benefit warrants, current SDX and BENDEX interfaces, SEARCHS, and MISTICS for Montana unemployment insurance (SNAP 500 through SNAP 503-2). The household must identify a collateral contact for the CSC to contact to obtain the verification if the household cannot provide acceptable documentary proof of income. When all attempts to verify the income are unsuccessful because the person or organization providing the income does not cooperate with the household or the CSC and all other sources of verification are not available, the CSC determines the amount to be prospectively budgeted based on the best available information.
9. **Deductible expenses:** The CSC will assist the household with obtaining verification when required as long as the household is cooperating with the application process. **If the client reports an expense but doesn't submit verification (when required), the expense is removed and eligibility is determined without it.**
 - a. **Child support obligation** - verify the household's legal obligation to pay child support, the obligation amount, and monthly amount of child



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	<p>support the household actually pays. Acceptable verification may include but is not limited to: canceled checks, wage withholding statements, verification of withholding from unemployment compensation, statements from custodial parent, and SEARCHS (SNAP 602-2).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">b. Medical expenses - verify medical expenses including the amount of the reimbursement (SNAP 602-3). When documentary evidence cannot be obtained or is insufficient to make a determination for the amount of the deduction, the CSC should reasonably attempt to verify information with a collateral contact (SNAP 602-3)c. Shelter expenses - all allowable shelter expenses can be verified by using client statement unless the reported shelter expenses are questionable. If questionable, documentation or collateral contact is required. . (SNAP 602-4).d. Utility expenses - the household's obligation to pay for heating, cooling, cooking fuel, electricity, water, sewage, garbage, and telephone expenses including charges for initial installation of the utility will be verified by using client statement unless the reported utility expenses are questionable. If questionable, documentation or collateral contact is required. (SNAP 602-4).e. Dependent care – Client statement can be used to verify payments to the day care provider including reimbursements for the actual costs for the care of children or other dependents when necessary for a household member to accept or continue employment, seek employment, comply with employment or attend training, or pursue education preparing for employment. If reported expense is questionable, documentation or collateral contact is required. (SNAP 602-2). <p>10. Questionable information - verify all information that is inconsistent, incomplete, or outdated information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Inconsistent information - the household's statements on the application or during the interview are contradictory, do not agree with information in the case file/CHIMES, or do not agree with information the CSC knows to be factual. The household must be given at least 10 days to resolve the discrepancy prior to an eligibility determination when information from another source contradicts statements made by the household.b. Incomplete information - gaps in information that are facts.c. Outdated information - is information too old to be considered valid. It depends on the particular piece of information in question whether or not it is considered outdated.
	<p>VERIFICATION AT RECERTIFICATION</p> <p>Unchanged information does not need to be verified at recertification unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent or outdated. The following information is verified:</p>



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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Change(s) in income if the source has changed or the amount has changed by more than \$50. Verification of income is not required if the source has not changed and if the amount is unchanged or has changed by \$50 or less unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent or outdated. NOTE: Generally, income that fluctuates from month to month changes more than \$50 and is verified at recertification.2. Shelter expenses - utility expenses, rent/mortgage, home-owner's insurance, property taxes, can be verified using client statement unless the reported expenses are questionable. If questionable, documentation or collateral contact is required. (SNAP 604-4)3. Previously unreported medical expenses and total recurring medical expenses that changed by more than \$25. Verification of total medical expenses claimed by the household that have not changed or have changed by \$25 or less is not required unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent, or outdated.4. Change(s) in the household's legal obligation to pay child support, the obligation amount, and monthly amount of child support the household actually pays to a non-household member. Verification of reported unchanged information is not required to be verified unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent or outdated.5. An able bodied adult without dependents must have work hours verified if he/she is meeting the work requirement by working, participating in the SNAP Employment and Training program or by participating in a work program that is not operated or supervised by the state.6. Other information that has changed, such as dependent care, student status, fleeing felon, drug conviction, etc. Unchanged information is not required to be verified unless the information is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent or outdated.
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