

Chapter 2

Application Processing

200 General Purpose

The application process includes filing and completing an application form, being interviewed, and having certain information verified.

The county department shall act promptly on all applications and provide food assistance benefits retroactive to the month of application to those households that have completed the application process and have been determined eligible. Expedited service shall be available to households in immediate need.

Specific responsibilities of households and county departments in the application process are detailed in this chapter.

201 Food Assistance Application Form

1. DHR-FSP-2116, Food Assistance Application form is used to begin the food assistance process. This form is also available through the internet. Households can download this form from the DHR web page, complete, and submit it to the county office.

202 Filing an Application

A. Household's Right to File

Households must file food assistance applications by submitting the forms to the county department either in person, through an authorized representative, by mail, by facsimile (fax) or other electronic means.

The length of time a State agency has to deliver benefits is calculated from the date the applicant returns a signed application form with his name and address on it to the food assistance office (or public assistance office) designated to accept the application, except when a resident of a public institution is jointly applying for SSI and food assistance prior to his/her release from an institution. When a resident of an institution is jointly applying for SSI and food assistance prior to leaving the institution, the filing date on the application is the date of release of the applicant from the institution.

Applications signed with an "X" should also contain a witness' signature. The day after the application is filed is counted as day one for processing standards. An adult household member must sign the perjury statement on the application form. If there is no adult a minor (under age 19) not under parental control may sign as an adult. The signed perjury statement is not required when the application is filed, but must be obtained during the application process.

Each household has the right to file an application form the same day it contacts the food assistance office during business hours. The household shall be advised that it:

1. Does not have to be interviewed before filing the application.
2. May file an incomplete application as long as the form contains the applicant's name and address, and is signed by a responsible member of the household or the household's authorized representative.

County departments shall document the date the application was filed by recording on the application the date it was received by the county department.

B. Contacting the Food Assistance Office

County departments shall encourage households to file an application form the same day the household or its representative contacts the county department in person or by telephone and expresses interest in obtaining food assistance. The household should be given the application form that is appropriate to the household's circumstances (See [Section 201](#)). The household will not be penalized in any way regardless of which application form is received. Submission of either form containing the minimum information in [Section 202A](#) begins the application process. The appropriate form can be obtained by mailing or giving the household such form prior to or at the interview.

1. If a household contacting the office by phone does not wish to come to the appropriate office to file the application that same day and instead prefers receiving an application through the mail, the county department shall mail an application form to the household on the same day the phone request is received.
2. An application shall also be mailed on the same day a written request for food assistance is received.
3. Where a project area a project area has designated certification offices to serve specific geographic areas within the project area, households may contact an office other than the one designated to service the area in which they reside. When a household contacts the wrong certification office within a project area in person or by telephone, the certification office shall, in addition to meeting the requirements in Section B, above, give the household the address and telephone number of the appropriate office. The certification office shall also offer to forward the household's application to the appropriate office that same day if the household has completed enough information on

the application to file, or forward it the next day by fax or any means that ensures the application arrives in the appropriate office the day it is forwarded.

4. The household shall be informed that its application will not be considered filed and the processing standards shall not begin until the application is received by the appropriate office.
5. If the household has mailed its application to the wrong office within a project area, the certification office shall mail the application to the appropriate office on the same day, or forward it the next day by fax or any means that ensures the application arrives in the appropriate office the day it is forwarded.

C. Availability of the Application Form

The county department shall make application forms readily accessible to anyone who requests the form.

D. Notice of Right to File

The county department shall post signs in the certification office which explain the application processing standards, and the right to file an application on the day of initial contact.

E. Withdrawing an Application

The household may voluntarily withdraw its application at any time prior to the determination of eligibility. The county department shall document in the case file the reason for withdrawal, if any was stated by the household, and that contact was made with the household to confirm the withdrawal. The household shall be advised of its right to reapply at any time subsequent to a withdrawal.

203 Household Cooperation

A. Cooperation with the County Department to Determine Eligibility

To determine eligibility:

1. The application form must be completed and signed.
2. The household or its authorized representative must be interviewed.
3. Certain information on the application must be verified.

If the household refuses to cooperate with the county department in completing the above process, the application shall be denied at time of refusal. For a determination of refusal to be made, the household must be able to cooperate, but clearly demonstrate that it will not take actions that it can take and that are required to complete the application process. For example, to be denied for refusal to cooperate, a household must refuse to be interviewed not merely failing to appear for the interview.

If there is any question as to whether the household has merely failed to cooperate, as opposed to refused to cooperate, the household shall not be denied, and the agency must assist the household in obtaining required verification provided the household is cooperating with the state agency. The household shall also be determined ineligible if it refuses to cooperate in any subsequent review of its eligibility, including reviews generated by reported changes and applications for recertification.

Once denied or terminated for refusal to cooperate, the household may reapply but shall not be determined eligible until it cooperates with the State agency.

B. Cooperation with Quality Control

In addition, the household shall be determined ineligible if it refuses to cooperate in any subsequent review of its eligibility as a part of a quality control review. If a household is terminated for refusal to cooperate with a quality control reviewer, the household may reapply, but shall not be determined eligible until it cooperates with the quality control reviewer.

1. If a household is terminated for refusal to cooperate with a State quality control reviewer reapplies after 95 days from the end of the annual review period (September 30 is the end of the annual review period), the household shall not be determined ineligible for its refusal to cooperate with a State quality control reviewer during the completed review period, but must provide verification in accordance with [Section 205](#).
2. The disqualification shall not follow any household members who leave and become members of a new household.
3. If a household is terminated for refusal to cooperate with a Federal quality control reviewer reapplies after seven months from the end of the annual review period (September 30), the household shall not be determined ineligible for its refusal to cooperate with a Federal quality control reviewer during the completed review period, but must provide verification in accordance with [Section 205](#).

204 Interviews

All applicant households are entitled to an interview as specified in A. or B. below.

A. Office Interview

Applicant households, including those submitting applications by mail, shall have face-to-face interviews in a food assistance office or other certification site with a qualified eligibility worker prior to initial certification and all re-certifications, unless such interview is waived as discussed in [Section B](#) below.

1. The individual interviewed may be the head of household, spouse, any other responsible member of the household, or an authorized representative. The applicant may bring any person he or she chooses to the interview.

2. The interviewer shall not simply review the information that appears on the application, but shall explore and resolve with the household unclear and incomplete information.
3. Households shall be advised of their rights and responsibilities during the interview, including the appropriate application processing standard and the household's responsibility to report changes.
4. The interview shall be conducted as an official and confidential discussion of household circumstances. The applicant's right to privacy shall be protected during the interview. Facilities shall be adequate to preserve the privacy and confidentiality of the interview.

B. Waiver of the Office Interview

The office interview shall be waived if requested by any household which has no earned income, all members are elderly or disabled and the household is unable to appoint an authorized representative.

The county department shall also waive the office interview on a case-by-case basis for any household which is:

1. Unable to appoint an authorized representative and which has no household members able to come to the food assistance office because of hardships, which the county department determines warrant a waiver of the office interview. These hardship conditions include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Illness
 - b) Transportation difficulties.
 - c) Care of a household member.
 - d) Hardships due to residency in a rural area.
 - e) Prolonged severe weather.
 - f) Work hours which preclude an in-office interview.
 - g) Training or school hours which preclude an in-office interview.
2. The county department shall determine if the hardship reported by a household warrants a waiver of the office interview and shall document in the case file why a request for a waiver was granted or denied.

The county department has the option of conducting a telephone interview or a home visit for those households for whom the office interview is waived. Home visits shall be used only if the time of the visit is scheduled in advance with the household.

Waiver of the face-to-face interview does not exempt the household from the verification requirements, although special procedures may be used to permit the household to provide verification and thus obtain its benefits in a timely manner, such as substituting a collateral contact in cases where documentary verification would normally be provided. Waiver of the face-to-face interview shall not affect the length of the household's certification period.

C. Scheduling Interviews for Applications with 30-Day Processing Standards

The county department shall schedule all interviews as promptly as possible to ensure eligible households receive an opportunity to participate within 30 days after the application is filed. See How do I look for appointment?

If a household fails to appear for the first interview, the county department must notify the household that it is responsible for requesting a second appointment. Form DHR-FSP-2100, Notice of Missed Appointment, shall be used. If the household does not appear for their first scheduled interview, their application cannot be denied until the 30th day even if the household does not contact the agency for a second appointment.

1. If the household contacts the county department on or before the 30th day from the date of application, the county department must schedule a second appointment.
2. If the second appointment cannot be scheduled to allow the household at least 10 days to provide all requested verifications, the application must not be denied on the 30th day. A DHR Form 660, Notice of Pending Status, must be sent to the household on the 30th day.
3. If the household keeps the second appointment and provides all required verifications on or before the 10th day from the date of the interview, benefits are prorated from the original date of application.
4. If the household misses the second scheduled appointment scheduled in the 2nd 30 days, the application must be denied and the household must reapply.
5. If the household does not provide all required verifications on or before the 10th day, the application must be denied for failure to provide verification. The household has until the 60th day from the original date of

application to provide all required verifications without a new application. A DHR Form 660, Notice of Denial, must be sent notifying the household of the denial for failure to provide required verification. The household must also be informed that it has 60 days from the original date of application to return all requested required verifications.

If the household requests a second appointment on or before the 30th day from the date of application, but the interview cannot be scheduled until after the 30th day (county office delay), the application must not be denied on the 30th day. A DHR Form 660, Notice of Pending Status, must be sent to the household. If the household attends the second interview and provides the requested verifications by the 10th day from the date of the interview, benefits must be awarded retroactive to the original date of application. If the household does not attend the second interview and makes no further contact with the county office, the application must be denied and the household must reapply.

205 Verification

Verification is the use of third party information or documentation to establish the accuracy of statements on the application. County departments shall verify the following information prior to certification for households initially applying:

A. Mandatory Verification

Gross Nonexempt Income

Gross nonexempt income shall be verified for all households prior to certification. However, where all attempts to verify the income have been unsuccessful because the person or organization providing the income has failed to cooperate with the household and the State agency, and all other sources of verification are unavailable, the eligibility worker shall determine an amount to be used for certification purposes based on the best available information.

Alien Eligibility

Eligibility workers must inform applicant non-citizen households that household members may choose not to seek benefits and that they will not be required to answer questions about citizenship/immigration information for those who choose not to seek benefits. Applicant non-citizen households must be informed that they must supply information about citizenship or immigration for household members seeking benefits; that the amount of benefits will depend on the number of people requesting benefits; that eligible household members who apply will be able to get benefits even though some members in the household are not seeking benefits; and that household members who are not seeking benefits must provide their financial information to determine the eligibility for household members who are seeking benefits. The applicant should then be allowed to

identify which household members are seeking benefits and which members are not seeking benefits (known as "opting out").^[2]

1. The eligibility worker must verify the eligible status of applicant aliens. If an alien does not wish the county to contact INS to verify immigration status, the eligibility worker must give the household the option to withdraw its application or participate without that member. One adult household member must attest under penalty of perjury to the citizenship or alien status of each household member. This is to be done at each certification and recertification.
2. If an applicant is not a citizen and wishes to apply for food assistance benefits, he must provide documentation issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) that contains his Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or other documents that provide reasonable evidence of current immigration status. This documentation must be verified by the county department through the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlement (SAVE) program developed by INS. Verification of alien eligibility should only be done if the applicant appears otherwise eligible for benefits.

The household's written consent to contact INS for verification is not required when the county is using the SAVE system to validate documentation (either INS documentation or other acceptable documentation) which supports the alien's eligible status for the Food Assistance Program.

Procedures for Verification of Immigration Status

Primary verification is made through the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlement (SAVE) program by submitting information/documentation to the Food Assistance Policy Desk from documents issued by INS to the non-citizen. The county office must send an e-mail to the Food Assistance Policy Desk with the name, date of birth, country of birth (if known) and the A-number of the individual(s) for whom verification is requested. The county office must maintain copies of all immigration documents provided by the household in the food assistance case record and submit a copy of these documents (scan or fax) to the Food Assistance Policy Desk. Upon receipt of verification through the SAVE Program, an e-mail response will be sent providing the county office with the information obtained. In addition, SAVE verification is available through a manual process, known as secondary verification when primary verification reveals material discrepancies or when the user is directed to do so by SAVE.^[3]

Primary Verification Process

Documentation of immigration status presented by an applicant includes, but is not limited to the following forms. Unless indicated, each shows the A-Number of the bearer. Some forms have expiration dates which must be checked and noted during the worker's visual examination of documentation, and any supporting documents shall be placed in the case record. Documents that demonstrate lawful status include the following:

1. Alien Lawfully Admitted for Permanent Residence
 - a) I-551 (Alien Registration Receipt Card, commonly known as a "green card") or
 - b) Unexpired temporary I-551 stamp in foreign passport or on I-94.
2. Asylee
 - a) I-94 annotated with stamp showing grant of asylum under Section 208 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the "INA").
 - b) I-688B (Employment Authorization Card) annotated "274a.12 (a) (5).

- c) I-766 (Employment Authorization Document) annotated "A5".
 - d) Grant letter from the Asylum Office of INS or
 - e) Order of an immigration judge granting asylum.
3. Refugee
- a) I-94 annotated with stamp showing admission under Section 207 of the INA.
 - b) I-688B (Employment Authorization Card) annotated "274a.12 (a) (3).
 - c) I-766 (Employment Authorization Document) annotated "A3" or
 - d) I-571 (Refugee Travel Document)
4. Alien paroled Into the U. S. for at least one year.
- a) I-94 with stamp showing admission for at least one year under Section 212(d) (5) of the INS.
5. Alien whose deportation or removal was withheld.
- a) I-688B (Employment Authorization Card) annotated "274a.12 (a) (10)"
 - b) I-766 (Employment Authorization Document) annotated "A10" or
 - c) Order from an immigration judge showing deportation withheld under Section 243(h) of the INA as in effect prior to April 1, 1997, or removal withheld under Section 241(b) (3) of the INA.
6. Alien granted conditional entry.
- a) I-94 with stamp showing admission under Section 203(a) (7) of the INA
 - b) I-688B (Employment Authorization Card) annotated "274a.12 (a) (3)" or
 - c) I-766 (Employment Authorization Document) annotated "A3"
7. Cuban/Haitian entrant.
- a) I-551 (Alien Registration Receipt Card, commonly known as a "green card") with the code CU6, CU7, or CH6.
 - b) Unexpired temporary I-551 stamp in foreign passport or on I-94 with the code CU6 or CU7 or
 - c) I-94 with stamp showing parole as "Cuban/Haitian Entrant" under Section 212(d) (5) of the INA.

Note that some forms have been released in several editions so that valid documentation presented by different individuals may not be identical. Any questions about specific cases should be directed to Food Assistance Division.

Under most circumstances, the eligibility worker should proceed with the primary verification process. However, if alien status cannot be established through the primary verification process initiate the secondary verification process immediately.

If there are no material differences between the data obtained through SAVE and the information in the alien's immigration documentation and if the eligibility worker is not instructed by SAVE to initiate secondary verification, no further check is required. The county department must make certain, however, that biographical data given matches the alien applicant/recipient. If not, secondary verification must be initiated. Benefits will not be denied

or terminated or reduced because of the alien's immigration status without first receiving a response to the secondary verification process.^[4]

Secondary Verification Process

The secondary verification process provides a more extensive validation process, including a search of all automated and paper INS files, when problems arise during the visual verification of documentation on the primary check. Secondary verification must be completed prior to the delay, denial, reduction, or termination of benefits to any alien applicant/recipient for reasons of immigration status. Secondary verification in most cases can be accomplished through SAVE. If not, the county office must follow the instructions below.

To obtain secondary verification, the county department must forward a completed Document Verification Request, Form G-845, with full readable photocopies of original immigration documents to the following INS File Control Office (FCO) for review:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
10 Fountain Plaza, 3rd Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202
Attn: Immigration Status Verification Unit

A separate G-845 and the G-845 supplement (if required) must be completed for each applicant/recipient and should include copies of the documents for that individual only. If a family unit has applied, each member will require a separate G-845.

It is recommended that when the G-845 is completed, a copy of the completed form and all documentation is maintained in the case record. All original documentation must be returned to the alien.^[5]

Additional Information

1. Refer to [Chapter 4](#) for other factors which may be relevant to the eligibility of certain aliens and which should be verified if applicable, such as:
 - a) The date of admission or date status was granted.
 - b) Military connection.
 - c) Battered status.
 - d) If the alien was lawfully residing in the United States on August 22, 1996.
 - e) Membership in certain Indian tribes.
 - f) If the person was age 65 or older on August 22, 1996.
 - g) If a lawful permanent resident can be credited with 40 qualifying quarters of covered work and if any Federal means-tested public benefits were received in any quarter after December 31, 1996.
 - h) If the alien was a member of certain Hmong or Highland Laotian tribes during a certain period of time or is the spouse or unmarried dependent of such a person.
2. An alien is ineligible until acceptable documentation is provided unless one of the following applies:

- a) The county has submitted a copy of a document provided by the household to INS for verification.
- b) The applicant or the county department has submitted a request to Social Security Administration for information regarding the number of quarters of work. If SSA verifies that the individual has fewer than 40 quarters and that they are conducting an investigation to determine if more quarters can be credited, the county department must certify the individual pending the results of the investigation for up to 6 months from the date of the original determination of insufficient quarters.
- c) The applicant or the county has submitted a request to a Federal agency for verification of information which bears on the individual's eligible alien status. The county department must certify the individual pending the results of the investigation for up to 6 months from the date of the original request for verification.

Utility Expenses

1. The county department will accept the household's statement of expenses incurred as verification of entitlement to the appropriate utility standard.
2. If the household is not entitled to the SUA or BUA, actual expenses must be verified if the household wishes to claim these expenses and the expenses would actually result in a deduction.

Medical Expenses

1. The amount of any allowable medical expenses in excess of \$35 (including the amount of reimbursements) shall be verified prior to initial certification.

Households that incur out-of-pocket medical expenses in excess of \$35 are entitled to a standard medical deduction of \$175. These expenses must be verified before a deduction is allowed in the budget.

Households that incur out-of-pocket medical expenses in excess of the standard medical deduction (\$175) must verify the actual amount of these expenses before a deduction for the actual amount in excess of \$175 may be allowed in the budget. If the amount verified is more than \$35 and is equal to or less than \$175, the household would only be entitled to the standard medical deduction.

2. If the verification of the medical expenses and reimbursement may delay the household's certification, the county department shall advise the household that its eligibility and benefit level may be determined without providing a deduction for the claimed but unverified expense.
3. Verification of other factors such as the allowable services provided or the eligibility of the person incurring the cost shall be required if questionable.
4. For households which claim no reimbursement potential (no insurance, non-SSI recipient, etc.), the household's statement that no reimbursement will be received should be accepted, unless there is reason to question this statement, such as it is known that employer provides group medical insurance plan. If the household's statement is not questionable, the deduction would be allowed at that time.

5. Any currently existing bill for allowable medical expenses which is received by a client who has Medicaid shall be accepted by the county department as verification that Medicaid will not cover this bill, and the client is liable for the expense.

If the client has insurance in addition to Medicaid, reimbursement of the expense must be verified from the other insurance before allowing the expense.

6. The county department must verify if an individual (who is entitled to a medical deduction) is covered by Qualified Medicare Beneficiaries Program before allowing a medical deduction. This may be accomplished by:
 - a) The Medicaid card: If the client is a QMB recipient, QMB will be listed on the card in the blank entitled "Scope of Coverage".
 - b) Use of the MSEV screen
 - ❖ Sign onto DHR/CICS.
 - ❖ Clear screen.
 - ❖ Enter MSEV space enter SSN.
 - ❖ Press enter.
 - c) The PSPWB 525-A Pars Referral to Food Assistance, Social Service and ES. This printout is printed down line each day for categories A, B, and D cases.

Social Security Numbers

Verification of social security numbers reported by the household is accomplished through a monthly computer enumeration tape match with the Social Security Administration.

1. The household is not required to verify SSN's provided for each member, but may verbally state the numbers to the worker.
2. The county department shall not delay the certification or issuance of benefits to an otherwise eligible household solely for the monthly enumeration tape match.
3. The county department shall accept as proof of application for a social security number from SSA-2853, Hospital Enumeration at birth or a birth certificate or other documentary evidence which indicates the hospital has submitted the application for a social security number.

These enumerations will not be accomplished by the monthly computer enumeration tape match. Therefore, it is the household's responsibility to verify the number upon receipt. If the household fails without good cause to notify the county office by the next certification period or six months, whichever comes later after the SSA-2853 has been provided, the household member would be disqualified in accordance with procedures in [Chapter 6](#).

Residency

1. The residency requirements of [Chapter 3](#) shall be verified except in unusual cases (such as homeless households, some migrant farm worker households, or households newly arrived in a project area) where verification of residency cannot reasonably be accomplished.

2. Verification of residency should be accomplished to the extent possible in conjunction with the verification of other information such as, but not limited to, rent and mortgage payments, utility expenses, and identity.
3. If verification cannot be accomplished in conjunction with the verification of other information, then the county department shall use a collateral contact or other readily available documentary evidence. Documents used to verify other factors of eligibility should normally suffice to verify residency as well. Any documents or collateral contacts which reasonably establish the applicant's residency must be accepted and no requirement for a specific type of verification may be imposed.
4. No durational residency requirement shall be established.

Identity

1. The identity of the person making application shall be verified. Where an authorized representative applies on behalf of a household, the identity of both the authorized representative and the head of the household shall be verified.
2. Identity may be verified through readily available documentary evidence, or if this is unavailable, through a collateral contract. Examples of acceptable documentary evidence which the applicant may provide include, but are not limited to:
 - a) A driver's license.
 - b) A work or school ID.
 - c) An ID for health benefits or for another assistance or social services program.
 - d) A voter registration card.
 - e) Wage stubs.
 - f) Birth certificate.
3. Any documents which reasonably establish the applicant's identity must be accepted and no requirements for a specific type of document, such as a birth certificate may be imposed.

Disability

The county department shall verify disability as defined in the Glossary Manual as follows:

1. For individuals to be considered disabled due to receipt of SSI, receipt of disability or blindness payments under Titles I, II, X, or XIV, or XVI of the Social Security Act, receipt of State SUP benefits, or receipt of disability retirement benefits from a governmental agency, the household shall provide proof that the disabled individual is receiving these benefits.
2. For individuals to be considered a disabled veteran the household must present a statement from the Veteran's Administration (VA) which clearly indicates that the disabled individual is receiving VA disability benefits for a service connected or non-service connected disability and the disability is rated as total or paid at the total rate by VA.

3. For individuals to be considered a veteran determined by the VA to be in need of regular aid and attendance or permanently housebound under Title 38 of the U.S. Code, or a surviving, disabled spouse or child of a veteran, proof by the household that the disabled individual is receiving VA disability benefits is sufficient verification of disability.
4. For individuals to be considered disabled due to receiving disability retirement benefits from a governmental agency because of a disability considered permanent under Section 221(i) of the Social Security Act, or who are surviving spouses or children of a veteran considered by the VA to be entitled to compensation for a service connected death under Title 38 of the United States Code and has a disability considered permanent under Section 221(i) of the Social Security Act, the county department shall use the Social Security Administration's most current list of disabilities considered permanent under the Social Security Act for verifying disability. (See Glossary Manual).
 - a) If it is obvious to the caseworker that the individual has one of the listed disabilities, the household shall be considered to have verified disability.
 - b) If the disability is not obvious to the caseworker, the household shall provide a statement from a physician or licensed or certified psychologist certifying that the individual has one of the disabilities listed.
5. For individuals to be considered disabled due to receipt of Railroad Retirement disability annuity from the Railroad Retirement Board and has been determined to qualify for Medicare, the household shall provide proof that the individual receives these benefits.
6. For disability determinations which must be made relevant to separate household status for an elderly, disabled individual unable to purchase and prepare meals separately, the county department shall use the SSA's most current list of disabilities as the initial step for verifying the disability.
 - a) Individuals who suffer from one of the disabilities mentioned in the SSA list who are unable to purchase and prepare meals because of such disability shall be considered disabled for the purpose of this provision.
 - b) If it is obvious to the worker that the individual is unable to purchase and prepare meals because he/she suffers from a severe physical or mental disability, the individual shall be considered disabled for the purpose of the provision even if the disability is not specifically mentioned on the SSA list.
 - c) If the disability is not obvious to the caseworker, he/she shall verify the disability by requiring a statement from a physician or licensed or certified psychologist certifying that the individual (in the physician's/psychologist's opinion) is unable to purchase and prepare meals because he/she suffers from some other severe, permanent physical or mental disease or non-disease related disability.
 - d) The elderly and disabled individual (or his/her authorized representative) shall be responsible for obtaining the cooperation of the individuals with whom he/she resides in providing the necessary income information about the others to the State agency for purposes of this provision.
7. Recipients of interim assistance benefits pending the receipt of supplemental security income. These are individuals that continue receiving SSI benefits pending an appeals decision by the Social Security Administration. *

8. Recipients of disability-related medical assistance benefits under Title XIX of the Social Security Act which are persons qualified for QMB. *
9. Recipients of disability-based State general assistance benefits. *

* These disability categories which are based upon disability or blindness criteria which are at least as stringent as those used under Title XVI of the Social Security Administration.

Verification for Households Previously Terminated Due to Refusal to Cooperate with Quality Control

1. County departments shall verify all factors of eligibility for households who have been terminated for refusal to cooperate with a state quality control reviewer, and reapply after 95 days from the end of the annual review period.
2. County departments shall verify all factors of eligibility for households who have been terminated for refusal to cooperate with a Federal quality control reviewer and reapply after seven months from the end of the annual review period.

Household Composition

1. County departments shall verify household composition, if questionable.
2. Individuals who claim to be a separate household from those with whom they reside shall be responsible for proving that they are a separate household to the satisfaction of the county department.
3. Individuals who claim to be a separate household from those with whom they reside based on the various age and disability factors for determining separateness shall be responsible for proving a claim of separateness (at the county department's request) in accordance with the verification of disability noted above in the Disability area of this section.

Child Support Deduction

The household shall be responsible for verifying the household's legal obligation to pay child support, the amount of the legal obligation, and the monthly amount the household actually pays.

1. The legal obligation and the obligated amount may be verified by a court order, administrative order, a legally enforceable separation agreement, etc.
2. The household's actual payment of child support may be verified by a canceled check, a statement from the custodial parent, wage withholding statements, verification of withholding from unemployment compensation, etc. Documents that are accepted as verification of the household's legal obligation to pay child support shall not be accepted as verification of the household's actual child support payment.

Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDS)

1. County departments must verify work hours for individuals who are subject to the ABAWD time limit.

Work hours must be verified for ABAWDS who are satisfying the work requirement by working, by combining work and participation in a work program, or by participating in a work or workfare program that is not operated or supervised by the State agency. This may be done in conjunction with verification of earned income.

2. County departments must verify the number of countable months an ABAWD has used in another State within normal processing standards if there is an indication that the ABAWD participated in that State.

The county department may accept another State's affirmation as to the number of countable months the ABAWD used in that state as well as the 36 month time frame used in that state.

B. Verification of Questionable Information

The county department shall verify, prior to certification of the household, all other factors of eligibility which the county department determines are questionable and affect the household's eligibility and benefit level.

Examples of possible questionable information are:

1. When information on the application is inconsistent with statements made by the applicant.
2. When information on the application is inconsistent with the other information on the application.
3. When information on the application is inconsistent with information on previous application.
4. When information received by the county department is inconsistent with information on the application.
5. When a household reports expenses exceeding its income (prior to deductions) or has managed payment of shelter costs, personal needs, and food with no reported income.
6. When a change is reported by the household that is inconsistent with previous statements by the household.

Questionable U.S. Citizenship

When a household's statement that one or more of its members are U.S. citizens is questionable, the household shall be asked to provide acceptable verification, which includes:

1. Birth certificates.
2. Religious records.
3. Voter registration cards.

4. Certificates of citizenship or naturalization provided by INS, such as identification cards for use of resident citizens in the United States (INS Form I-79 or INS Form I-197), or U.S. passports.
5. Participation in the AFDC program if verification of citizenship was obtained for that program.

If the above forms of verification cannot be obtained and the household can provide a reasonable explanation as to why verification is not available, the State agency shall accept a signed statement from someone who is a U.S. citizen which declares, under penalty of perjury, that the member in question is a U.S. citizen. The signed statement shall contain a warning of the penalties for helping someone commit fraud, such as: If you intentionally give false information to help this person get food assistance, you may be fined, imprisoned, or both.

Unless the household is entitled to expedited service, the member whose citizenship is in question shall be ineligible to participate until proof of U.S. citizenship is obtained. The member whose citizenship is in question will have his or her income, less a prorated share, and all of his or her resources considered available to any remaining household members as set forth in [Section 1102](#).

If the household is entitled to expedited service, the member whose citizenship is in question, shall be included in the household for the first month of certification only; he cannot participate in the remaining months of the certification period until proof of citizenship is provided. The member's resources shall be counted in their entirety and his or her income, less a prorated share shall be counted while the member is not in the household.

C. Verification of Shelter and Dependent Care Expenses

Shelter and dependent care expenses shall be verified prior to allowing as a deduction. If verification of shelter (rent, mortgage, and taxes and insurance separate and apart from the mortgage) and dependent care expenses may delay the household's certification, the county department shall advise the household that its eligibility and benefit level may be determined without providing a deduction for the claimed but unverified expense.

If the expense cannot be verified within the 30 days of the date of application, the county department shall determine the household's eligibility and benefit level without providing a deduction of the unverified expense. If the household subsequently provides the missing verification, the county department shall handle this as a reported change during the certification period. If the expense could not be verified within the 30 day processing day because the county department failed to allow the household sufficient time (10 days minimum) to verify the expense, the household shall be entitled to the restoration of benefits retroactive to the month of application, provided that the missing verification is supplied in accordance with [Section 207C](#).

D. Sources of Verification

Documentary Evidence

1. County departments shall use documentary evidence as the primary source of verification for all items except residency, household size and interest income, if the household states the interest income does not exceed \$10 per month or \$120 per year and this is not questionable. Residency and household size may be verified either through readily

available documentary evidence or through a collateral contact; without a requirement being imposed that documentary evidence must be the primary source of verification.

2. Documentary evidence consists of a written confirmation of a household's circumstances. Examples of documentary evidence include but are not limited to:
 - a) Wage stubs.
 - b) Rent receipts.
 - c) Utility bills.
3. Although documentary evidence shall be the primary source of verification, acceptable verification shall not be limited to any single type of document and may be obtained through the household or other source.
4. Whenever documentary evidence cannot be obtained or is insufficient to make a firm determination of eligibility or benefit level, the eligibility worker may require collateral contacts or home visits.

For example, documentary evidence may be considered insufficient when the household presents pay stubs which do not represent an accurate picture of the household's income (such as out-dated pay stubs) or identification papers that appear to be falsified.

Collateral Contacts

1. A collateral contact is an oral confirmation (in person or by phone) of a household's circumstances by a person outside of the household.
2. The eligibility worker may select a collateral contact if the household fails to designate one or designates one which is unacceptable. Examples of acceptable collateral contacts may include employers, landlords, social services agencies, migrant service agencies, and neighbors of the household who can be expected to provide third-party verification.
3. The eligibility worker must protect the household's right to confidentiality when talking to collateral contacts. The eligibility worker should disclose to the collateral contact only enough information to obtain the information needed from them. The eligibility worker should not disclose information the household has provided, or disclose that the household is applying for or receiving food assistance benefits or may be suspected of any wrong doing.

Home Visits

Home visits may be used as verification only when documentary evidence is insufficient to make a firm determination of eligibility or benefit level, or cannot be obtained, and the home visit is scheduled in advance with the household.

Discrepancies

Where unverified information from a source other than the household contradicts statements made by the household, the household shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to resolve the discrepancy prior to a determination of eligibility or benefits.

1. The county department may verify the information directly and contact the household only if such direct verification efforts are unsuccessful.

2. If the unverified information is received through IEVS, the county department may obtain verification from a third party as specified in [Section 205 I](#).

E. Responsibility for Obtaining Verification

The household has primary responsibility for providing documentary evidence to support statements on the application and resolve any questionable information. The eligibility worker must assist the household in obtaining this verification as long as the household is cooperating with the county department.

Households may supply documentary evidence in person, through the mail, by facsimile or other electronic device, or through an authorized representative. The eligibility worker must not require the household to present verification in person at the food assistance office.

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

Whenever documentary evidence is insufficient to make a firm determination of eligibility or benefit level, or cannot be obtained, the county department may require a collateral contact or a home visit. The county department, generally, shall rely on the household to provide the name of any collateral contact. The household may request assistance in designating a collateral contact. The county department is not required to use a collateral contact designated by the household if the collateral contact cannot be expected to provide accurate third-party verification. When the collateral contact designated by the household is unacceptable, the county department shall either designate another collateral contact, ask the household to designate another collateral contact or to provide an alternative form of verification, or substitute a home visit. The county department is responsible for obtaining verification from acceptable collateral contacts.

F. Documentation

Case files must be documented to support determinations of eligibility, ineligibility and benefit level. This includes documentation in sufficient detail to permit a reviewer to determine the reasonableness and accuracy of determinations made at initial certification, recertification and changes during the certification period. Documentation includes any written documents that support the household statements as well as narrative recordings that chronologically outline case actions.

The case file must contain: a signed application form, validated TAD's, reports submitted during the certification period, documentation providing sufficient information about how eligibility was determined, benefit level and income computations, verification documents and written notes of verification obtained orally, copies of manually prepared notices provided to households, information/verification obtained through computer matches including follow-up actions required to complete the process, related eligibility referrals and correspondence with other units/agencies.

G. State Data Exchange (SDX) and Beneficiary Data Exchange (BENDEX)

The county department may verify SSI benefits through SDX and Social Security benefits through BENDEX, or through verification provided by the household. The county department may use SDX and BENDEX data to verify other information; however, the household shall be given an opportunity to provide verification from another source if the SDX or BENDEX information is

contradictory to the information provided by the household. Determination of the household's eligibility and benefit level shall not be delayed past the application processing time standards of this section if SDX or BENDEX data is unavailable.

H. Verification Subsequent to Initial Certification

Recertification

At recertification, the county department shall verify the following for all households:

1. Gross nonexempt earned income.
2. Unemployment Compensation Benefits
3. SSI benefits.
4. Child Support income.
5. Family Assistance (FA) grants.
6. All other gross, nonexempt unearned income for the household if from a new source or if changed by \$50 or more from previous certification.

(For quarterly reporting households, any change shall be verified with the exception of interest income which the household states does not exceed \$10 per month or \$120 per year.)

7. Dependent care expenses, if changed.
8. Child Support deduction.
A household eligible for the child support deduction must verify any changes in the legal obligation to pay child support, the obligated amount, and the amount of the legally obligated child support a household member pays to a non-household member. The worker shall verify reported unchanged child support information only if the information is incomplete, inaccurate, and inconsistent or outdated.

9. Medical expenses.
Households that are receiving the standard medical deduction (\$175) may continue to receive the standard medical deduction when a household member continues to incur out-of-pocket medical expenses in excess of \$35. Document the household's statement, unless the statement is questionable. If questionable, verification must be provided before the standard medical deduction is allowed.

Households that report incurring out-of-pocket medical expenses in excess of the standard medical deduction (\$175) must provide verification of the actual amount of medical expenses. If the actual amount verified is not in excess of \$175 but is more than \$35 and is equal to or less than \$175, the household is entitled to the standard medical deduction.

10. Alien status/citizenship, if questionable.
11. ABAWDS subject to "Time Limit"

Work hours must be verified for ABAWDS who are satisfying the work requirement by working, by combining work and participation in a work program, or by participating in a work program that is not operated or supervised by the State agency.

12. Questionable information.
13. Actual utility expenses if change is more than \$25.00 and the household does not qualify for the BUA or SUA.
14. Newly obtained social security numbers for current household members or social security numbers of new household members shall be verified through the monthly enumeration tape match with SSA.

Verification at recertification shall be subject to the same verification procedures as apply during initial verification.

Changes

See [Chapter 12](#).

I. Use of IEVS

1. The following information obtained through IEVS is considered verified upon receipt:
 - a) Unemployment Compensation Benefits from the Department of Industrial Relations.
 - b) FA grants (from Clearinghouse Report)
 - c) Social Security Benefits (From SSA)
 - d) SSI Benefits (From SSA)

The county department shall take action, including proper notices to households, to terminate, deny, or reduce benefits, or increase benefits based on the information from IEVS which is considered verified upon receipt. If the county department has information that the IEVS obtained information about a particular household is questionable, this information shall be considered unverified upon receipt and the county office shall independently verify with the household. When the independent verification is received, the county department shall process the information if it is different from the current case information and the appropriate notices shall be sent to the household.

2. The following information obtained through IEVS is considered unverified upon receipt:
 - a) Unearned income from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
 - b) Wage information from SSA and wage and employment (New Hire) information from the Department of Industrial Relations.
 - c) Questionable IEVS information (i.e. information from IEVS which is considered verified upon receipt but for which the county department has conflicting information).(See #1 above)

- d) Information from the Prisoner Verification System. (PVS) (See #3 below)
- e) National Directory of New Hire (NDNH) information (New Hire, Quarterly Wage, and Unemployment Insurance).

Prior to terminating, denying, or reducing benefits based on information obtained through IEVS which is considered unverified upon receipt, the county department shall independently verify the information.

Independent verification of the asset and/or ownership, or amount of income involved whether the household actually has or has had access to such asset or income such that it would be countable income or resources for food assistance purposes, and the period during which such access occurred. Except with respect to unearned income from the IRS, if the county department has information which indicates the independent verification is not needed, such verification is not required.

The county department shall obtain independent verification of unverified information from IEVS by contacting the household and/or the appropriate income, resource, or benefit source. If the county department contacts the household, it must do so in writing, informing the household of the information that has been received and requesting the household to respond within 10 days. If the household fails to respond in a timely manner, the county office shall issue a 10 day Notice of Adverse Action to terminate the household. The county department may contact the appropriate source by the means best suited to the situation. When the independent verification is provided by the household or appropriate source, the county department must notify the household of the action it intends to take prior to any adverse action.

3. BENDEX Death Matches and Prisoner Verification Matches

BENDEX Death Matches and Prisoner Verification System Matches received during the certification period require contact with the household when received. The county department must follow up on these matches with a Notice of Match Results. Inform the household of the information received by the county department, clearly explain what information the household must provide and the consequences of failure to respond. The county department must remove the individual from the household and adjust the household's benefits accordingly if the household does not respond to the request, or does respond but fails to provide sufficient information to clarify the household circumstances. Send the household a Notice of Adverse Action if the action to remove the individual results in a decrease or termination of the household's benefits.

If the information from death and prisoner matches are independently verified by the county department and the effect on the household's continued eligibility and/or benefit allotment can be readily determined, the county department must send a Notice of Adverse Action. A notice of match results would not be appropriate.

206 Normal Processing Standard

A. Thirty-Day Processing

The county department shall provide eligible households that complete the initial application process an opportunity to participate as soon as possible, but no later than 30 calendar days

following the date the application was filed, unless such households are entitled to expedited services.

See [Section 212](#), "Providing Benefits to Participants", for delivery of benefits.

B. Denying the Application

Households that are found to be ineligible are to be sent a notice of denial as soon as possible but not later than 30 days following the date the application was filed. If the 30th day falls on a weekend or holiday, the application should be denied on the first work day following the weekend or holiday.

If the household has failed to appear for a scheduled interview and has not made subsequent contact with the county department to express interest in pursuing the application, the household should be issued a notice of denial on the 30th day following the date of application. The household must file a new application if it wishes to participate.

In cases where the county department was able to conduct an interview and request all the necessary verification on the same day the application was filed, and no subsequent requests for verification have been made, the application shall be denied on the 30th day if the county department provided any assistance the household requested and the household failed to provide the requested verification.

207 Delays in Processing

A. Determining Cause

If the county department does not determine a household's eligibility and provide an opportunity to participate within 30 days following the date the application was filed, the county department shall determine if the cause of the delay is the fault of the household or the county department.

The delay shall be considered the **fault of the household** if the household has failed to complete the application process even though the county department has taken all the action it is required to take to assist the household; such action consists of the following:

1. For households that failed to complete the application form, the county department must have offered, or attempted to offer, assistance in its completion.
2. If one or more members who were required to register for work have failed to do so, the county department must have informed the household of the need to register for work, determined if the household members are exempt from work registration, and given the household at least 10 days from the date of notification to register these members.
3. In cases where verification is incomplete, the county department must have provided assistance as required and allowed the household sufficient time to provide the missing verification. Sufficient time shall be at least 10 days from the date of the county department's initial request for the particular verification that was missing.
4. For households that have failed to appear for an interview, the county department must notify the household that it missed the scheduled interview and that it is responsible for

rescheduling a missed appointment within 30 days from the date the application was filed.

- a) If the household fails to schedule a second appointment, or the subsequent interview is postponed at the household's request or cannot otherwise be rescheduled until after the 20th day but before the 30th day following the date the application was filed, the household must appear for the interview, bring verification, and register members for work by the 30th day; otherwise the delay shall be the fault of the household.
- b) If the household fails to appear for the first interview, fails to schedule a second interview, and/or the subsequent interview is postponed at the household's request until after the 30th day following the date the application was filed, the delay shall be the fault of the household.
- c) If the household has missed both scheduled interviews and requests another interview, any delay shall be the fault of the household.

If the household fails to comply with the above requirements, deny the application on the 30th day following the date of application. Reopen the denied food assistance application if the denial was caused by the delay of the household and the household provided all necessary information within 60 calendar days from the original application date.

Delays that are the fault of the county department include, but are not limited to, those cases where the state agency failed to take the actions described in the items above.

B. Delays Caused by the Household

If by the 30th day the county department cannot take any further action on the application due to the fault of the household, the household shall lose its entitlement to benefits for the month of application.

On the 30th day following the date the application was filed, a Notice of Denial/Pending Status shall be sent to the household explaining the reason for the denial and what actions the household must take in the second 30 days in order to reopen their case. (See Forms Manual for instructions.) As a Notice of Denial was issued on the 30th day, the application has been processed within the standard of promptness and is not delinquent.

1. If the 30th day falls on a weekend or holiday and the requested information is received on the first workday after the weekend or holiday, benefits shall be prorated from the date the information is received.

The household shall be given an additional 30 days to take the required action, such as providing requested verification or registering for work those members who were required to register, but did not.

2. If the household takes the required action within the second 30-days, the county department shall reopen the case without requiring a new application.

When the household is at fault for the delay in the first 30-day period, but is found to be eligible during the second 30-day period, the county department shall provide benefits only from the month following the month of application. Benefits must be prorated from the date the household takes the necessary action to enable the application to be

processed. The household is not entitled to benefits for the month of application when the delay was the fault of the household.

3. If the household does not take the required action within the second 30-days, no further action by the county department is required.

C. Delays Caused by the County Department

Whenever a delay in the initial 30-day period is the fault of the county department, the county department shall take immediate corrective action.

The county department shall not deny the application if it caused the delay, but shall instead notify the household by the Notice of Denial/Pending Status, on the 30th day following the date the application was filed that its application is being held pending. **Although the Notice of Denial/Pending Status is issued on the 30th day, the application is still considered delinquent as the county department has not determined the household's eligibility by the 30th day.**

If the household is found to be eligible during the second 30-day period, the household shall be entitled to benefits retroactive to the month of application. If, however, the household is found to be ineligible, the county department shall deny the application.

D. Delays beyond 60 Days

If the county department is at fault for not completing the application process by the end of the second 30-day period, and the case file is otherwise complete, the county department shall continue to process the original application until an eligibility determination is reached.

If the household is determined eligible, and the county department was at fault for the delay in the initial 30-days, the household shall receive benefits retroactive to the month of application. However, if the initial delay was the household's fault, the household shall receive benefits retroactive only to the month following the month of application.

The county department shall use the original application to determine the household's eligibility in the months following the 60-day period.

If the county department is at fault for not completing the application process by the end of the second 30-day period, but the case file is not complete enough to reach an eligibility determination, the county department may either continue to process the original application, or deny the case and notify the household to file a new application. If the case is denied, the household shall also be advised of its possible entitlement to benefits lost as a result of county department causing the delay. If the county department was at fault for the delay in the initial 30-days, the amount of benefits lost would be calculated from the month of application. If, however, the household was at fault for the initial delay, the amount of benefits lost would be calculated from the month following the month of application.

If the household continues to be at fault for not completing the application process by the end of the second 30-day period, the county department shall require the household to file a new application if it wishes to participate. The household is not entitled to any lost benefits. If the delay in the initial 30-days of the application had been the fault of the household, the household is not entitled to retroactive benefits for the first 30-days nor can their case be reopened after the

second 30-days. The county department does not send a second denial at the end of the second 30-days.

208 Expedited Service

A. Entitlement to Expedited Service

The following households are entitled to expedited service:

1. Households with less than \$150 in monthly countable gross income provided their liquid resources (i.e., cash on hand, checking or savings accounts, savings certificates, and lump sum payments) do not exceed \$100.

Note: Income that is excluded for food assistance purposes shall not be considered in determining the household's entitlement to expedited service.

2. Migrant or seasonal farm worker households who are defined as destitute in [Section 1004C](#) provided their liquid resources (i.e. cash on hand, checking or savings accounts, savings certificates, and lump sum payments) do not exceed \$100.
3. Households whose combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than the household's monthly rent or mortgage and actual utilities, except that the telephone standard rate shall be substituted for actual telephone bills.

B. Identifying Households Needing Expedited Service

The Food Assistance Application (and the Joint Application for Public Assistance and Food Assistance, short form) are designed to identify households eligible for expedited service at the time the household requests assistance. (When the Joint Application is filed without the short form, the worker shall determine, based on the interview, if the household is entitled to expedited service.)

Applications shall be screened for entitlement to expedited service as they are filed or as individuals come in to apply for assistance. A receptionist, volunteer, or other employee may conduct the screening.

C. Processing Standards

The county department shall use the following procedures for expediting issuance to households entitled to expedited service and determined eligible in accordance with [Section 208](#) below.

Food assistance must be available not later than the seventh calendar day following the date the application was filed. (This provision includes all expedited service households, regardless of whether such households reside in drug addict or alcoholic treatment rehabilitation centers or group living arrangement facilities.)

There are no exceptions to the seven calendar day processing standard for weekends or holidays.

1. If the seventh calendar day falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the household shall have the opportunity to pick up their food stamps on the last working day prior to the weekend or holiday.
2. If food assistance is mailed, sufficient time shall be allowed for the assistance to reach the household by the seventh calendar day after the application is filed.

Entitlement to Expedited Service and Waiver of the Office Interview

If the household is entitled to expedited service and is also entitled to a waiver of the office interview, the county department shall conduct the interview (unless the household cannot be reached) and complete the application process within the expedited service standards unless a telephone interview is conducted.

If the county department conducts a telephone interview and must mail the application to the household for signature, the mailing time involved will not be calculated in the expedited service standards. Mailing time shall only include the days the application is in the mail to and from the household and the days the application is in the household's possession pending signature and mailing.

Late Determinations/Changes in Expedited Status

If the screening of applications required in B above fails to identify a household as being entitled to expedited service and the county department subsequently discovers that the household is entitled to expedited service, the county department shall provide expedited service to households within the processing standards described in this section, except that the processing standard shall be calculated from the date the county department discovers the household is entitled to expedited service.

If a household loses its entitlement to expedited service between the date of application and the interview, the application shall be processed using normal processing standards.

If a household is not eligible for the month of application, but is eligible and qualifies for expedited service for the following month, it shall be provided an opportunity to participate within seven days from the date of application or the first day of the second month, whichever is later.

D. Special Procedures

The county department shall use the following special procedures for expediting certification to households entitled to expedited service:

1. In all cases, the applicant's identity (i.e., the identity of the person making the application) shall be verified through a collateral contact or readily available documentary evidence.
2. All reasonable efforts shall be made to verify through collateral contact or readily available documentary evidence the following items within the expedited processing standards:
 - a) Residency
 - b) Income statement (including a statement that the household has no income).
 - c) Liquid resources.

- d) All other factors for which verification is required if the application is an initial application or if it is a recertification application.

Food assistance benefits shall not be delayed beyond the 7-day processing standards in this section solely because the above eligibility factors (other than identity) have not been verified.

County departments should attempt to obtain as much verification as possible during the interview, but should not delay the certification of households entitled to expedited service for the full 7-day timeframe if it has been determined it is unlikely the other verification can be obtained within the 7 days.

Specific nonfinancial eligibility criteria shall be handled as follows for expedited cases.

Social Security numbers: Households will be requested to provide a SSN or apply for one for each person before the first full month of participation (or before the second full month of participation if the household receives a combined allotment). Household members who are unable to provide the required SSN can continue to participate only if they satisfy the good cause requirements in [Chapter 6](#). If the household is unable to provide proof of application for an SSN for a newborn, the household must provide the SSN or proof of application at its next recertification or within 6 months following the month the baby is born, whichever is later. If the household is unable to provide an SSN or proof of application for an SSN at its next recertification or within 6 months following the baby's birth, determine if the good cause provisions of [Chapter 6](#) are applicable.

Work registration: With regard to the work registration requirements, the county department shall, at a minimum, require the applicant to register (unless exempt or unless the person being interviewed is the authorized representative). The county department may attempt to register other household members but shall postpone the registration of other household members if it cannot be accomplished within the expedited service timeframes.

The county department may attempt work registration of other household members by requesting that the applicant complete the work registration forms for other members to the best of his or her ability. The county department may also attempt to accomplish work registration for other household members in a timely manner through other means, such as calling the household. The county department may attempt to verify questionable work registration exemptions, but such verification shall be postponed if the expedited service timeframes cannot be met.

Collateral Contact When Documentary Evidence Is Not Readily Available

Once an acceptable collateral contact has been designated, the county department shall promptly contact the collateral contact, in accordance with the provisions in [Section 205 D](#). Although the household has the primary responsibility for providing other types of verification, the county department shall assist the household in promptly obtaining the necessary verification.

Certification Periods

Households that are certified on an expedited basis and have provided all necessary verification required in [Section 205](#) shall be assigned normal certification periods; semi-annual reporting households shall be assigned a certification period of twelve months. If verification was postponed, the county department may certify these households for:

1. The month of application (the month of application and the subsequent month for those households applying after the 15th of the month), or

2. A normal certification period for those households whose circumstances would otherwise warrant longer certification periods than one or two months as described above.

When Verification Is Postponed

Verification of all eligibility factors other than identity may be postponed in accordance with [Section 208D](#) to meet the timely processing standard for expedited applications.

When certified only for the month of application, households must reapply and complete the verification which was postponed, unless they have been certified under normal processing standards since the last expedited certification.

All households applying between the 1st and 15th of a month, who are assigned certification periods greater than one month, shall have verification postponed for the month of application, if needed, and are entitled to receive the first month's prorated benefit within the expedited timeframe if otherwise eligible. The State agency shall notify the households in writing that no further benefits will be issued until the postponed verification is completed. The notice must also advise the household that if verification results in changes in the household's eligibility or level of benefits, the county will act on those changes without advance notice of adverse action.

Households applying after the 15th of the month, who is assigned certification periods greater than one month, shall have verification postponed for the first month and the subsequent month, if verification cannot be secured within the expedited timeframe, and shall receive the first month's benefit and the following month's benefit as a combined allotment, if they are otherwise eligible. The State agency shall notify the households in writing that no further benefits will be issued until the postponed verification is completed. The notice must also advise the household that if verification results in changes in the household's eligibility or level of benefits, the county will act on those changes without advance notice of adverse action.

Migrant households applying after the 15th of a month, who are assigned certification periods greater than one month shall:

1. Receive the first month's benefit and the following month's benefit within the expedited timeframe, if otherwise eligible.
2. Be notified in writing that they shall provide postponed verification from sources within the state before the third month's benefits are issued.
3. Be notified that they shall provide all verification from out-of-state sources before being issued benefits for the fourth month.

The notice shall also advise the household that if verification results in changes in the household's eligibility or level of benefits, the county department shall act on those changes without advance notice of adverse action.

Migrant households shall be entitled to postpone out-of-state verification only once each season. If a migrant household requesting expedited service has already received this exception during the current season, the county department shall grant a postponement of out-of-state verification only for the initial and second month's issuance and not for the third month's issuance.

When households which applied for benefits after the 15th of the month provide the required postponed verification, the county department shall issue the third month's benefits within five working days from receipt of the verification or the first day of the third calendar month, whichever is later (regardless of the household's scheduled issuance day). The actual first working day of

the calendar month issuance provision shall also apply to issuance in the fourth month for those migrant households needing out-of-state verification.

Except for migrant households needing out-of-state verification, when the postponed verification is not completed by the end of the second month, the county department shall terminate the household's participation and shall issue no further benefits.

When Verification Is Not Postponed

Households who have applied for benefits after the 15th of the month and who have been determined eligible to receive benefits for the initial month of application and the subsequent month shall receive their prorated allotment for the month of application and the first full month's allotment at the same time within the expedited timeframe.

1. If the prorated allotment is less than \$10, the second month's allotment shall be issued in accordance with the expedited service timeframe.
2. The period of intended use for the combined allotment is two months regardless of the date of issuance; therefore the household is entitled to receive both months' allotments at the same time in either the first or second month.
3. Unless the migrant or seasonal farm work household has been out of certification at least 30 days, this household is not entitled to a combined allotment even if he meets the criteria for entitlement to a combined allotment.

Recertification

There is no limit to the number of times a household can be certified under expedited procedures, as long as prior to each expedited certification, the household either completes the verification requirements that were postponed at the last expedited certification or was certified under normal processing standards since the last expedited certification.

Non-entitlement to Expedited Services

Households requesting, but not entitled to, expedited service shall have their applications processed according to normal standards.

209 Special Procedures for Reopening Cases after Household Fails to Provide Verification ^[6]

Simplified Reporting households in certification that fail to respond to a request for additional information/verification which results in case closure or termination of benefits may have their benefits reinstated if the requested information/verification is submitted to the county office after the case has closed but before the end of the month following case closure/termination. The county office must have issued a written request advising the household of the additional information/verification it must provide and allowed the household 10 days to provide the requested information/verification. This policy should also be applied to expedited service households that fail to provide postponed mandatory verification which results in case closure or termination. The county office must have issued a notice of adverse action or appropriate notice of action explaining the reason for case closure.

The automated notice of action will inform the household that their case can be reopened without a new application if the household provides the missing information/verification by the end of the month. The household must fully resolve the reason for case closure and be eligible for benefits

during the reinstatement month and the remainder of the certification period. The household must have at least one month remaining in the certification period after the effective date of eligibility in order to apply these special procedures. Benefits for the month the case is reopened must be prorated. The certification period will be for the month the case is reopened and the months remaining in the current certification period. Reference Chapter 17, Section 1706-C, Special Procedures for Reopening Six-Month Reporting Cases after Household Fails to Provide Verification, for policy and instructions on reinstatement/reopening six-month reporting cases after the household fails to provide verification which includes expedited service cases with postponed verification that fail to verify.

210 Public Assistance and Categorically Eligible Households

Any household in which all members are recipients of PA and/or SSI benefits shall be considered eligible for food assistance because of their PA/SSI status.

1. Recipients include individuals authorized to receive PA and/or SSI benefits but who have not yet received payment.
2. In addition, persons are considered recipients if their PA or SSI benefits are suspended or recouped.
3. Persons entitled to PA benefits but who are not paid such benefits because the grant is less than \$10 are also considered PA recipients.
4. Persons not receiving PA or SSI benefits who are entitled to Medicaid only shall not be considered recipients.

Categorically eligible households shall be certified in accordance with the notice, procedural and timeliness requirements of the food assistance program.

A. Categorically Eligible Households

Any household (except those listed in the exceptions below) in which all members receive or are authorized to receive PA and/or SSI benefits shall be considered eligible for food assistance because of their status as PA and/or SSI recipients unless the entire household is institutionalized or any member is disqualified for any reason from receiving food assistance. (See "Exceptions to Categorical Eligibility" below)

The eligibility factors which are deemed for food assistance eligibility without the verification required in Section 205 of this chapter because of PA/SSI status are resources, gross and net income limits, social security number information, sponsored alien information and residency.

If any of the following factors are questionable, the county department shall verify that the household which is considered categorically eligible:

1. Contains only members that are PA or SSI recipients as defined in this section.
2. Meets the household definition in Section 100, Chapter 1.
3. Includes all persons who purchase and prepare food together in one food assistance household regardless of whether or not they are separate units for PA or SSI purposes.

4. Includes no persons who have been disqualified as provided in the exception to categorically eligible listed below.

Households subject to retrospective budgeting that have been suspended for PA purposes or that receive zero benefits shall continue to be considered as authorized to receive benefits from the appropriate agency. Categorical eligibility shall be assumed at recertification in the absence of a timely PA redetermination.

Categorical eligibility shall be assumed at recertification in the absence of a timely PA redetermination.

Households determined to be categorically eligible must report substantial lottery and gambling winnings of \$3500 or more.

Households that reapply and are certified after losing eligibility for benefits due to substantial lottery or gambling winnings must not be considered categorically eligible. Eligibility for these households must be determined under regular program rules.

B. Expanded Categorically Eligible Households

All households authorized to receive non-cash services funded by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) shall be considered categorically eligible after receiving information and referral services, i.e. pamphlet series 09-3 and after Broad Based Categorical Eligibility has been conferred to the household. Conferring means that the household has been determined eligible to receive food assistance benefits. Households authorized to receive FANF non-cash services must continue to meet the remaining food assistance eligibility criteria. Categorical eligibility must not be extended to any household that is not eligible to participate in the Food Assistance Program because the entire household is institutionalized or any member is disqualified for any reason from receiving food assistance. (See "Exceptions to Categorical Eligibility" below)

To determine categorical eligibility based on receipt of TANF non-cash services, households are subject to the following income test.

1. 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), or
2. 200% of the FPL if all household members are elderly or disabled and the net income limit is at or below 100% if FPL. The county department must revert to normal program policy (use of 100% net income limit and \$3000 asset test) if the income of these households exceed the 200% gross income limit.

Households that qualify under expanded categorical eligibility rules are exempt from the asset (resource) test.

Benefit and allotment levels must be based on the net income limits after all income and deductions are verified and applied.

Exceptions to Categorical Eligibility

Households that reapply and are certified for Food Assistance after losing eligibility due to substantial lottery or gambling winnings must not be conferred Broad Based Categorical Eligibility. Eligibility for these households must be determined under regular program rules.

Under no circumstances shall any household be considered categorically eligible (even if all members are PA and/or SSI recipients) if any member(s) of that household is disqualified for:

1. An intentional program violation.
2. Failure to comply with any of the work requirements (registration, compliance with job search, etc.).
3. Drug felons who have not met the requirements found in Chapter 1, Section 101-f.
4. Lottery and gambling winnings of \$3500 or more.

The above households are subject to all food assistance eligibility and benefit provisions.

Excluded Household Members

No person shall be included as a member in any household which is otherwise categorically eligible if that person is:

1. An ineligible alien.
2. An ineligible student.
3. Institutionalized in a nonexempt facility.
4. An ineligible ABAWD

Work Registration

For the purposes of work registration, the normal requirements and exemptions shall be applied to individuals in categorically eligible households. Any household member who is not exempt from work registration is subject to all other work registration requirements.

When determining eligibility for a categorically eligible household described in "A" above (all members receive SSI and/or PA), all factors of eligibility except for those listed below shall apply.

1. Categorically eligible households do not have to meet the resource limits.
2. Categorically eligible households do not have to meet either the gross or net income eligibility standards.
3. Categorically eligible households do not have to have their eligibility determined for the month of application.
4. Categorically eligible households do not have to have their available resources determined at the time of their certification interview.
5. Categorically eligible households do not have to have their income determined or anticipated to establish eligibility for food assistance.
6. Categorically eligible households shall not be denied due to their income exceeding the net income standards.

When determining eligibility for an expanded categorically eligible household described in "B" above, all factors of eligibility except for those listed below shall apply.

1. Categorically eligible households do not have to meet the resource limits.
2. Households must meet income limits for TANF Information & Referral Service.

3. Categorically eligible households do not have to have their available resources determined at the time of their certification interview.
4. Categorically eligible households whose net income exceeds the food assistance net income limits must be denied.

211 SSI Households

Households which meet all the following conditions may apply for food assistance benefits and have their application interview at the SSA office:

1. All members are applying for SSI.
2. The household has not applied for food assistance in the 30 preceding days.
3. The household does not have an application pending at the food assistance office.

Households applying simultaneously for SSI and food assistance shall be subject to food assistance eligibility criteria, and benefit levels shall be based solely on food assistance eligibility criteria until the household is considered categorically eligible.

Households that are denied food assistance that have an SSI application pending shall be informed on the Notice of Denial of the possibility of categorical eligibility if they become SSI recipients.

All fair hearing requests for households jointly applying for SSI and food assistance regarding their food assistance eligibility or benefit level must be handled by the Department of Human Resources as is now the case. The presence of Social Security Administration employees may not be compelled at any such hearings, but any negative findings concerning the Social Security Administration should be forwarded to the Social Security Administration for corrective action.

Any civil rights complaints directed at Social Security Administration employees or other complaints about Social Security Administration employees, procedures or facilities should be directed to the Social Security Administration for review and appropriate action.

A. Initial Application and Eligibility Determination

Whenever a member of a household consisting only of SSI applicants or recipients transacts business at a SSA office, the SSA shall inform the household of:

1. It's right to apply for food assistance at the SSA office without going to the food assistance office.
2. It's right to apply at a food assistance office if it chooses to do so.

The SSA office will accept and complete food assistance applications received at the SSA office from SSI households and forward them, within one working day after receipt of a signed application to the local food assistance office for the county in which the households resides. The food assistance application shall be attached to Form SSA-4233(6-81), Social Security Administration Transmittal for Food Assistance Applications when forwarded by SSA.

County Department Action

County departments shall act on food assistance applications received from SSA in accordance with the following procedures:

1. The county department shall make an eligibility determination and issue food assistance benefits to eligible SSI households within 30 days following the date the application was received by the SSA. Applications shall be considered filed for normal processing purposes when the signed application is received by SSA.

The expedited processing time standards shall begin on the date the county department receives a food assistance application.

2. Food assistance applications and supporting documentation sent to an incorrect food assistance office shall be sent to the correct office, by the county department, within one working day of their receipt in accordance with [Section 202\(B\)](#) of this chapter.
3. Households in which all members are applying for or participating in SSI will not be required to see an eligibility worker, or otherwise be subjected to an additional county interview.
4. The food assistance application will be processed by the county department.
5. The county department shall not contact the household further in order to obtain information for certification for food assistance benefits unless one of the following applies:
 - a) The application is improperly completed.
 - b) Mandatory verification required is missing.
 - c) The county department determines that certain information on the application is questionable.
6. In no event would the applicant be required to appear at the food assistance office to finalize the eligibility determination.
7. Further contact made in accordance with the above procedures shall not constitute a second food assistance certification interview.

Households Where Not All Members Are Applying For or Receiving SSI

The SSA office is not required to accept food assistance applications or conduct food assistance interviews for SSI applicants/recipients who are members of households which contain non-SSI applicants/recipients. An applicant for or recipient of SSI shall be informed at the SSA office of the availability of benefits under the Food Assistance Program and the availability of a food assistance application at the SSA office.

Applications from such households shall be considered filed on the date the signed application is received in the appropriate food assistance office.

Expedited Service Screening

The SSA shall prescreen all applications for entitlement to expedited services on the day the application is received at the SSA office and shall mark "Expedited Processing" on the first page

of all households' applications that appear to be entitled to such processing. The SSA will inform households which appear to meet the criteria for expedited service that benefits may be issued a few days sooner if the household applies directly at the food assistance office. The household may take the application from SSA to the food assistance office for screening, an interview, and processing of the application.

The county department shall prescreen all applications received from the SSA for entitlement to expedited service on the day the application is received at the correct food assistance office. All SSI households entitled to expedited service shall be certified in accordance with expedited service procedures except that the expedited processing time standard shall begin on the date the application is received at the correct food assistance office.

SSI Applications by Phone

If SSA takes an SSI application or redetermination on the telephone from a member of a pure SSI household, a food assistance application shall also be completed during the telephone interview.

1. In these cases, the food assistance application shall be mailed to the claimant for signature for return to the SSA office or to the food assistance office.
2. SSA shall then forward any food assistance applications it receives to the food assistance office.
3. The county department may not require the household to be interviewed again in the food assistance office. The county department shall act in accordance with the above section, "County Department Action".

SSI Applications by Mail

To SSI recipients re-determined for SSI by mail, the SSA shall send a stuffer informing them of their right to file a food assistance application at the SSA office (if they are members of a pure SSI household) or at their local food assistance office, and their right to an out-of-office food assistance interview to be performed by the county department if the household is unable to appoint an authorized representative.

Food Assistance Information Distributed By SSA

The Department of Human Resources provides SSA with an information sheet, "Facts about Your Food Assistance Application", for distribution to SSI households.

Verification for Households Initially Applying for SSI and Food Assistance

Verification for households initially applying are the same as for any other household initially applying. Households entitled to expedited services shall be processed in accordance with expedited service procedures.

Certification Periods/Denial of SSI

County departments shall follow the normal guidelines for certification periods for households applying for SSI and food assistance. In these households in which the SSI determination results in denial, and the county department believes that food assistance eligibility or benefit levels may be affected, the State agency shall:

1. Send the household a Notice of Expiration advising that the certification period will expire at the end of the month following the month in which the notice is sent and that it must reapply if it wishes to continue to participate.

2. The notice shall also explain that its certification period is expiring because of changes in circumstances which may affect food assistance eligibility or benefit levels and that the household may be entitled to an out-of-office interview.

Changes in Circumstances

These households shall be subject to the same change reporting requirements as all other households based on the type of budgeting the household is subject to.

SSI Households Applying at the County Department

The county department shall allow SSI households to submit food assistance applications to local food assistance offices rather than through the SSA if the household chooses. In such cases all verification, including that pertaining to SSI program benefits, shall be provided by the household or by SDX or BENDEX, rather than being provided by the SSA.

Restoration of Lost Benefits

The county department shall restore to the household benefits which were lost whenever the loss was caused by an error by the county department or by the Social Security Administration through joint processing. Such an error shall include, but not be limited to the loss of an applicant's food assistance application after it has been filed with SSA.

B. Recertification

The county department shall complete the application process and approve or deny timely applications for recertification in accordance with [Chapter 14](#).

A face-to-face interview shall be waived if requested by a household consisting entirely of SSI participants unable to appoint an authorized representative.

The county department shall provide SSI households with a Notice of Expiration in accordance with [Chapter 14](#), except that such notification shall inform households consisting entirely of SSI recipients that they are entitled to a waiver of a face-to-face interview if the household is unable to appoint an authorized representative.

Households shall be entitled to make a timely application for food assistance recertification at an SSA office under the following conditions:

1. SSA shall accept the application of a pure SSI household and forward the completed application, transmittal form and any available verification to the designated food assistance office.
2. Where SSA accepts and refers the application in such situations, the household shall not be required to appear at a second office interview, although the county department may conduct an out-of-office interview, if necessary.

212 Households Applying for or Receiving Social Security Benefits

An applicant for or recipient of social security benefits under Title II of the Social Security Act shall be informed at the SSA office of the availability of benefits under the Food Assistance Program and the availability of a Food Assistance Program application at the SSA office. The SSA office is not required to accept applications and conduct interviews for Title II applicants/recipients.

213 Providing Benefits to Participants

A. General

Each county department is responsible for the timely and accurate issuance of benefits to certified eligible households. Those households comprised of elderly or disabled members who have difficulty reaching issuance offices, and households which do not reside in a permanent dwelling or of a fixed mailing address shall be given assistance in obtaining their regular monthly benefits. County departments shall assist these households by arranging for mail issuance of coupons to them, by assisting them in finding authorized representatives who can act on their behalf, or by using other appropriate means.

B. Newly Certified Households

All newly certified households, except those that are given expedited service, shall be given an opportunity to participate no later than 30 calendar days following the date the application was filed. An opportunity to participate consists of having an issuance facility open and available for the household to obtain its allotment. If food assistance is mailed, two days shall be allowed for delivery before determining if the household has been provided an opportunity to participate.

A unique provision for the delivery of benefits is made to households who meet all of the following conditions:

1. Apply for food assistance after the fifteenth of a month.
2. Fulfill all eligibility requirements and
3. Are determined to be eligible for both the month of application and the next subsequent month.

This provision is these households shall receive both allotments at the same time within the appropriate timeliness standards.

4. The period of intended use for an aggregate allotment is two months regardless of the date of issuance.

Therefore, a household would be entitled to both the initial and second month's allotment in either the first month or the second month.

C. Ongoing Households

All households shall be placed on an issuance schedule so that they receive their benefits on or about the same date each month.

1. The date upon which a household receives its initial allotment after certification need not be the date that the household must receive its subsequent allotments.

County departments may stagger the issuance of benefits to households throughout the entire month.

2. No more than 40 days shall be allowed to elapse between any two issuances provided to a household. However, this policy does not apply to households who receive their combined allotment during the first month of the certification period. In these cases more than 40 days may elapse between the combined allotment received during the month of application and the issuance of the third month's benefits.

214 Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

Every household which has at any time applied or been certified for food assistance is guaranteed confidentiality of the information in their case record. Use or disclosure of information shall be handled as explained in this Section.

A. Use or Disclosure without the Household's Permission

Information in a household's case record may be shared with the following individuals without the household's permission:

1. Persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of the provision of the Food Assistance Act or regulations, other federal assistance programs, or federally assisted state programs providing assistance on a means-tested basis to low income individuals.
2. Persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of the programs which are required to participate in IEVS to the extent the food assistance information is useful in establishing or verifying eligibility or benefit amounts under those programs.

NOTE: Information from the food assistance case record may not be shared with the Internal Revenue Service without the client's permission.

3. Persons directly connected with the verification of immigration status of aliens applying for food assistance benefits through the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program to the extent the information is necessary to identify the individual for verification purposes.
4. Persons directly connected with the Administration of the Child Support Program under Part D Title IV of the Social Security Act in order to assist in the administration of that program.
5. Employees of the Comptroller General's Office of the United States for Audit examination authorized by any other provision of law.
6. Local, State or Federal law enforcement officials upon their written request for the purpose of investigating an alleged violation of the Food Assistance Act or regulations. The written request shall include the identity of the individual requesting the information and his authority to do so, violation being investigated and the identity of the person on whom the information is requested.

7. Local, State or Federal law enforcement officers upon written request shall be provided the address, social security number, and (if available) photograph of food assistance recipients if the officer furnishes the recipient's name and notifies the agency that:
 - a) Locating or apprehending the individual is an official duty.
 - b) The request is being made in the proper exercise of an official duty and
 - c) The individual is fleeing to avoid prosecution, custody, or confinement for a felony, the individual is violating a condition of probation or parole, law enforcement is actively seeking the individual to enforce the conditions of the probation or parole, or the individual has information necessary for the officer to conduct an official duty related to another member who is fleeing to avoid prosecution, custody, confinement for a felony, or has violated a condition of probation/parole. The county office must follow the same procedure for verifying through law enforcement whether an applicant or participant is a probation or parole violator as those used to determine if an individual is a fleeing felon. The county department shall terminate the participation of the member if the law enforcement officer provides documentation of the offense. A written request from law enforcement without the proper documentation of the offense will not be sufficient to terminate the member's participation.

NOTE: The information may be disclosed or released only upon written request that contains: (1) the name of the requestor, (2) the requestor's position and authority, (3) crime being investigated, (4) the name of the person on whom information is requested, and (5) the information being requested.

8. Names and address only of participating households may be made available to Department of Human Resources employees assigned to public information and nutrition education efforts and to the Cooperative Extension System.
9. Employees of the Department of Human Resources in the official performance of their duties directly related to the administration or enforcement of any federal assistance program or federally assisted state program in order to aid in maintaining the integrity of the assistance programs and to prevent the abuse of government aid. This includes but is not limited to the Child Support Program, Protective Services and the Parent Locator Service.
10. The Medicaid Agency including Medicaid Quality Control.

B. Use or Disclosure with the Household's Permission

Information in a household's case record may be shared with the following individuals with the permission of the household:

1. Household members and currently authorized representatives shall be given access to their records or case file information when the household member or authorized representative provides in writing a request to the county department to review their record or to obtain information from their record.
2. Other individuals who may have access to a household case record with permission are non-household members (other than authorized representatives) acting on behalf of the household's request. This may be a friend, attorney, congressman, etc.

- a) The non-household member may request information concerning the household's food assistance case either orally or in writing. However, no information can be released or the food assistance record made available until this request is received in writing. This request may be accompanied by a responsible household member's written statement in which the non-household member was asked to help the household with their food assistance. (This statement need not specifically state the non-household member be allowed to review the food assistance record or have access to the information in the record, but may simply be a request for the individual to help the client with his food assistance.)
- b) Should no written statement be attached to the request, the non-household member's written request must specifically reference the household's request to him/her for assistance with their food assistance.
- c) Should the state agency or county department have any doubts concerning the household's permission to release information from their food assistance case, no information shall be released until further authorization is obtained from the household.
- d) If the request by the non-household member is made orally, the state agency or county department may begin to gather the requested information and inform the individual that upon receipt of his written request, the information will be made available as soon as possible.

C. Making Records Available

- 1. Material and information from food assistance records shall be made available to authorized persons for inspection during normal business hours. In order to avoid interfering with efforts to enforce the requirement of the Food Assistance Act and applicable regulations, the county department may withhold confidential information such as the names of individuals who have disclosed information about a household without the household's knowledge, or the nature or status of criminal prosecutions.
- 2. When questionable, the county department should request credentials before allowing access to records or case files.
 - a) USDA reviewers have been instructed to present their pictorial identification upon entering a county office.
 - b) If the identification of the visitors cannot be resolved, the Food Assistance Division should be contacted before allowing access to individual case files.

^[1] Revised 5-12-10

^[2] Revised 3-13-12

^[3] Revised 3-13-12

^[4] Revised 3-13-12

^[5] Revised 3-13-12

^[6] Revised 8-28-13