

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION	FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM MANUAL	
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405.1 Purpose

This section describes the policy and procedures for verifying and obtaining Social Security Numbers.

405.2 Participation Requirement

A. Before certification any household participating or applying for participation in the Food Supplement Program (FSP) must for each household member:

1. Provide social security numbers (SSN); **or**
2. Apply for a social security number.

B. If an individual has more than one number, the individual must provide all the numbers.

NOTE: If a household member has more than one SSN, document each number in the narrative and if necessary, refer the individual to the district Social Security Administration office to determine which number is currently active.

C. The SSN must be verified. See verification in Section 405.8.

D. Refusal or failure without good cause to provide a SSN will result in disqualification of the person for whom the SSN is needed. See Failure to Comply in Section 405.5.

405.3 Obtaining Social Security Numbers

A. For individuals who provide SSNs prior to certification, recertification, or at interim change, record the number and verify it as described in Section 405.8.

B. Refer the following individuals to the Social Security Administration (SSA) to apply for a SSN:

1. Those who have no SSN.
2. Those who have a SSN but do not know the number.

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405.3 Obtaining Social Security Numbers (continued)

3. Newborns without SSA Form 2853 that mothers are given in the hospital as proof of applying for a number. Make a referral for a newborn only if this proof is not provided.

If the household is unable to provide proof of application for a SSN for a newborn, the household must provide the SSN or proof of application at its next recertification or 6 months following the month the baby is born, whichever is later. If the household is unable to provide a SSN or proof of application at that time, determine if good cause exists.

EXAMPLE #1: A household is certified from March 1998 through August 1998. A baby was born in May. The household must provide a SSN or proof of application by the end of November.

EXAMPLE #2: A household is certified from April 1998 through March 1999. A baby is born May 1998. The household must provide a SSN or proof of application by the next rectification.

C. Use the Referral Form (DHR/IMA 460):

1. Give the Referral Form to the customer and explain the types of verification required by the Social Security Administration. Retain a copy of the form in the case record.
2. Tell the customer which section SSA must complete to verify the filing for a card.
3. Advise the customer of the need to return the form to the case manager.
4. If the individual cannot provide evidence of application for SSN, he is disqualified from participation unless good cause exists. See Failure to Comply in Section 405.5.

405.4 Special Processing for Expediting Service

- A. Households entitled to expedited service are not required to furnish or apply for a social security number until after they have received their first allotment. However, these households must provide or apply for a SSN prior to their second full month of participation.
- B. Households with a newborn may have up to six months following the month the baby was born to provide a SSN or to supply proof of application for one.

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405.5 Failure to Comply

- A. If a household member refuses or fails without good cause to provide or apply for a SSN, that individual is disqualified from participation in the program.
- B. The disqualification applies only to the individual for which the SSN is not provided and not the entire household.
- C. The income and resources of individuals disqualified for failure to comply are handled in the following manner:
 - 1. Resources - Consider the total value of resources of the disqualified member as available to the household.
 - 2. Income - Count a prorated share of the disqualified member's income as income to the remaining household members. Determine the prorated share by first subtracting any allowable exclusions, then dividing the remainder evenly among the household members, including the disqualified member. All but the disqualified member's share is counted as available to the household.

EXAMPLE: A disqualified member's monthly income is \$200 after exclusions. Three persons are in the Food Supplement Program (FSP) benefit household, not including the disqualified member. Thus, the member's income of \$200, divided by 4, equals \$50 per member. The disqualified member's share of \$50 is not counted, therefore, \$150 of the total income is available to the household and must be counted.

- 3. Deductible expenses - The earned income deduction applies to any income earned by the disqualified member that was attributed to the household. The portion of the shelter, child support, or dependent care expenses either paid by or billed to the disqualified member's share is counted as a deduction for the remaining household members.

EXAMPLE: A disqualified member has gross earned income of \$200 monthly and pays \$60 towards the rent and \$20 towards the utilities. The household contains three persons plus the disqualified member. The household's prorated share of the income equals \$150. The prorated share of rent and utilities are \$45 and \$15, respectively. Include the \$150 in the household's total gross monthly income. Because it is earned income, the household is entitled to the earned income deduction. Consider the \$60 prorated share of the disqualified member's shelter expenses as a deductible shelter expense in the FSP computation.

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405.5 Failure to Comply (continued)

Exception: If the disqualified person is entitled to a medical expense deduction, the household is not entitled to any portion of this person's deduction during the disqualification period. Also, if the person disqualified is the only senior/disabled member of the household, the household is not entitled to the uncapped shelter deduction.

EXAMPLE: The disqualified senior/disabled member has gross unearned income of \$200 monthly and pays \$60 toward the rent and \$21 toward the utilities. The disqualified person has \$60 per month medical expenses. The household normally contains two persons plus the disqualified person. Neither of the other persons is senior/disabled. Total rent for the three persons is \$200 and utilities are \$80. Therefore, during the disqualification, \$140 is assigned to the household as income. No medical expenses are allowed. The household is allowed \$180 for rent [total rent \$200 minus a prorated share of rent paid by the disqualified member (\$20) and \$73 for utilities (total utilities of \$80 minus a \$7 prorated share of utilities paid by the disqualified member \$7). The household is also subject to the cap on shelter expenses.

Once a disqualification penalty is imposed, the household may not declare the disqualified individual to be a separate FSP benefit household. Continue to count the disqualified member's income and resources until the disqualification ends. However, if the disqualified member physically moves out of the home, the household must report the change in household composition. At that point, the disqualified member's income and resources are no longer available to the household and, therefore, not counted.

405.6 Good Cause/Failure Comply

- A. In determining if good cause exists for failure to comply with the requirement to provide or obtain a SSN, consider the information from the household member, the Social Security Administration, and the local department.
- B. Consider documentary evidence or collateral information that the household has applied for the number or made an effort to provide SSA with the necessary information as good cause for failure to comply. If the individual applying for the SSA has been unable to obtain the documents required by SSA, the worker must make every effort to assist the individual in obtaining these documents.

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405.6 Good Cause/Failure to Comply (continued)

- C. Good cause does not include delays due to illness, lack of transportation, or temporary absences, because SSA makes provisions for mail-in applications.
- D. If the household member can show good cause why an application for a SSN was not made in a timely manner, allow that person to participate for one month in addition to month of application.
- E. If the household member has been unable to obtain the documents required by SSA, make every effort to assist the individual in obtaining the documents.
- F. Good cause for failure to apply must be shown monthly in order for the household member to continue to participate.
- G. Once the individual applies for a SSN, the member may participate pending notification of the household member's SSN.

405.7 Ending Disqualification

The household member disqualified may become eligible by providing a social security number or evidence that an application for a social security number has been made.

405.8 Verification at Application

- A. **Social security numbers provided at application must be verified through the Social Security Administration.** Do not delay the certification of an otherwise eligible household solely to validate a household member's SSN, even if the 30-day processing period has not expired. As soon as all other eligibility requirements are met, except for verifying the SSNs, certify the household. Once verified, make a permanent annotation to the case file to prevent unnecessary re-verification in the future.
- B. The following sources may be used to verify a SSN:
 1. The household member's social security card is not sufficient evidence by itself to satisfy the verification requirement, but it may be used to match with other information provided by the Social Security Administration, such as BENDEX or SDX records;

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405.8 Verification at Application (continued)

2. The household's case record if the SSN was previously verified through an IEVS or SVES match when applying for TCA, PAA or TEMHA;
3. BENDEX or SDX.
4. IEVS or SVES match

405.9 Verification at Recertification

At recertification, verify newly obtained social security numbers, which were not previously verified. Do not re-verify previously verified numbers unless you have questions about the identity of the individual or validity of the SSN.