



Administrative Policies and Procedures: 23.22

Subject Verification and Documentation

Approved by Cherrell Campbell-Street, Chief Officer of Programs and Services

Approval Date: 2/17/2017

Effective Date: 4/1/2017

Authority Tenn. R. & Regs. Ch. 1240-1-16

Application Family Assistance Eligibility Staff

Policy Statement

Family Assistance eligibility staff must confirm all information provided to the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) that will have an impact on a customer's eligibility is accurate. All information received must also be documented in the eligibility and case management system to substantiate all actions taken on an application or existing case.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline and detail all information that must be verified, when it must be verified, and what must be documented in the case record to establish, as accurately as possible, that the assistant unit (AU) meets defined eligibility criteria and that the benefit amount is correct.

Procedures

A. Verification

Any decision made before the end of the standard of promptness period must be based on a clear determination of eligibility or ineligibility.

1. Verification is primarily the responsibility of the Families First customer.
2. The caseworker should secure verifications when the information is known to TDHS through automated data interfaces or when it is more reasonable for TDHS to secure the information.
3. The caseworker may render a decision based on the customer's unverified statement of facts that would make the household ineligible.
4. To render a decision of eligibility, the caseworker must be able to make a firm determination of eligibility based on verified points of eligibility.
5. If there is any doubt of eligibility, the caseworker must resolve it using the best

evidence available including documentary evidence, collateral contacts, and home visits.

6. The customer's statement of the facts can be accepted as verification when:
 - a) The AU has tried, without success, to obtain the needed verification; and
 - b) The customer has requested assistance and the caseworker has exhausted all means of securing documentary evidence, without success.

NOTE: The attempts made by both the customer and the caseworker must be documented in the eligibility and case management system.

B. Documentation

1. All pertinent information provided by the customer or a third party concerning information that may affect eligibility must be clearly documented in the eligibility and case management system. The documentation must include:
 - a) Who provided the information;
 - b) What was provided;
 - c) When the information was provided;
 - d) How the information was provided; and
 - e) How the caseworker verified the accuracy of the information.
2. All documentary verification provided must be documented to include all pertinent information as it relates to the case.
 - a) What was received;
 - b) What information was contained in the verification;
 - c) Was any additional action to confirm the accuracy of the verification needed; and
 - d) If the verification was not sufficient, why, and what additional information has been requested.
3. All actions taken in a case must be documented to include:
 - a) The action that was taken;
 - b) Why the action was taken; and
 - c) The result of the action.

C. Documentary Evidence

1. Documentary evidence is written proof that is relied on as the basis, proof, or support of information provided by the AU and may be official or unofficial documents.
2. When using documentary evidence, record the title or type of document, document number, date of document, date seen, and contents.
3. Documentary evidence is considered the primary source of verification. When it is not available, collateral contacts, or home visits will be used.

D. Collateral Contact

A collateral contact is a verbal confirmation of the AU's circumstances by an individual outside of the home who is knowledgeable of the facts being verified for the AU.

1. The contact may be made in person or by telephone.

2. The caseworker may select the collateral contact or may ask the customer to provide a collateral contact.
3. The caseworker does not have to accept the collateral contact named by the customer.
4. The caseworker should interview the collateral contact thoroughly enough to ascertain the relationship and reliability of the collateral contact. This will ensure that a decision can be made through the collateral contact's statements.
5. When using a collateral contact, document the following in the eligibility and case management system:
 - a) The date of contact;
 - b) Whether the contact was in person, by telephone, or in writing;
 - c) the name of the collateral contact;
 - d) The relationship of the collateral contact to the AU; and
 - e) The information provided by the collateral contact.

NOTE: A collateral contact should not be used to verify technical eligibility information such as relationship or citizenship.

E. Home Visits

1. A home visit may be scheduled to verify the AU's circumstances when there is no documentary evidence or collateral contact available.
2. The eligibility and case management system should be documented with the date the home visit was scheduled, the date the visit was made, and the information obtained during the visit.

F. Verification Required at Initial Application

The following must be verified for all initial applications:

1. Residence;
2. Alien Status;
3. Social Security Number or application for a Social Security Number;
4. AU composition;
5. Age;
6. Relationship;
7. Living with a specified relative;
8. Marital status;
9. School attendance for children age five (5) and older and all minor parents;
10. Immunizations and Health Checks for children;
11. Income, both earned and unearned, and from self-employment;
12. Resources;
13. How expenses are being met when expenses exceed income;
14. Dependent Care expenses;
15. Loans – confirm that any money the customer states is a loan has a repayment agreement to determine whether it would be considered countable income;
16. Striker status;

- 17. Disability or incapacity exemption for the work and/or educational activity;
- 18. Inconsistent or questionable information provided by the applicant; and
- 19. Pregnancy, conception date, and expected delivery date if no other children are in the AU.

G. Verification Required at Renewal

The following must be verified at all renewals:

- 1. Residence;
- 2. Composition of AU;
- 3. School attendance;
- 4. Immunization and Health Check-Ups;
- 5. Living with a specified relative;
- 6. Enumeration - verify Social Security Number of any members who have previously applied for a number and have not reported the number;
- 7. Pregnancy, conception date, and expected delivery date for family cap decision;
- 8. Gross income – earned, unearned, and self-employed;
- 9. Deductible expenses;
- 10. Resources;
- 11. Striker status;
- 12. How expenses are being met when expenses exceed income; and
- 13. Any other information provided by the customer that differs from the information previously verified, or is/has become questionable.

H. Verification of Reported Changes

Customers are required to report ALL changes within ten (10) days of the date the change becomes known to the AU.

- 1. Changes are subject to the same verification procedures and requirements that apply to initial applications or renewals.
- 2. All information that is reported to have changed must be verified.

I. Requesting Verifications

- 1. Verification must be requested in writing, and the request must be documented along with the due date.
- 2. The AU will have ten (10) calendar days to provide verification from the date of request.
- 3. The request for verification must offer to assist the customer with obtaining the verification.

Forms

NONE

Collateral Documents NONE

Additional Resources [Family Assistance Recertification/Renewal Verification Requirements](#)
[Intake/Renewal CLRC Guide](#)
[Change CLRC Guide](#)
[HS-2772 Verification Checklist \(English\)](#)
[HS-2771 Verification Checklist \(Spanish\)](#)

Retention of Records Pending

Glossary

Term **Definition**

Collateral Contact An individual living outside of the household who is in a position to know the AU's circumstances.

Official documents Documents that are prescribed or recognized as authorized and are most commonly provided by businesses, agencies, and organizations engaged in specific enterprises or service delivery such as social security card, utility bill, or award letter.

Unofficial documents Documents that are not prescribed or recognized as authorized such as hand-written notes from employers, baby-sitters, etc.

Verification The process of confirming or substantiating information provided by the customer.