

<b>SNAP/TANF Program Policy Manual</b>	
<b>CHAPTER: 2000 APPLICATION PROCESSING</b>	<b>SECTION: 2000 TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>

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## 2000.00.00 APPLICATION PROCESSING

At the end of the application registration process, client scheduling takes place in order to schedule an interactive interview.

The policies in this chapter pertain to the processing of new applications after the application registration and interview scheduling processes have occurred.

The following sections are contained in this chapter:

- The Interview (Section 2005)
- Responsibilities of the Applicant/Recipient (Section 2015)
- Application Time Standards (Section 2020)
- Verification (Section 2025)
- Providing Information to the Assistance Group (Section 2030)
- Determination of Initial Eligibility (Section 2035)
- Reapplications (Section 2040)

## 2005.00.00 THE INTERVIEW

An interactive interview is required for all individuals who submit an application.

## 2005.05.00 COOPERATION WITH THE ELIGIBILITY INTERVIEW

An application is to be denied if an individual does not cooperate with the interview requirement. For SNAP, applications are to be denied on the 30th day (or next business day when the 30th day is a non-business day) when the applicant has failed to keep scheduled appointments or to reschedule an appointment by the 30th day. (f1)

### 2005.05.10 WHO CAN BE INTERVIEWED

An applicant or authorized representative may be the interviewee and can conduct all business related to the application process.

- An Authorized Representative Form must be used to authorize someone to apply on behalf of an AG and must be filed in the electronic case file.
- A participating AG member can be interviewed without a written authorization. (f2)
- Legal guardians and powers of attorney may apply for assistance on behalf of the applicant and must present the appropriate documents verifying their status.
  - A power of attorney document must be general enough to encompass applying for assistance.

- Authorized representatives assume responsibility for the accuracy of the information provided. AGs who utilize an authorized representative are subject to the same disqualification penalties and possible prosecution as AGs representing themselves.
- For SNAP, ARs will be held liable for any over issuance that results from erroneous information provided by the authorized representative. An exception exists when a drug and alcohol treatment center or a group living arrangement acts as an authorized representative.

When there is an authorized representative the DFR may still require personal contact with the applicant if such contact is necessary in order to determine eligibility under any program.

The eligibility worker may not know until the end of the interactive interview whether or not written authorization is required. Once the AGs are formed, the eligibility worker must determine if there are any AGs for which authorization is required.

## **2005.05.15            RESCHEDULING AN INTERVIEW**

If the interviewee fails to appear for the first eligibility interview, the application is pended, and the client will be mailed a Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI).

For SNAP, if the individual contacts the DFR to reschedule the missed appointment prior to the 30th day after application, the interview should be rescheduled as soon as possible. Clients should be scheduled as soon as possible to stay within processing time frames.

## **2015.00.00            RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE APPLICANT/RECIPIENT**

The DFR must advise each applicant/recipient of the respective rights and responsibilities as indicated in the following sections.

### **2015.05.00            PROVIDE PROOF OF INFORMATION**

- An applicant/recipient must provide verifications required to correctly determine eligibility. (f3)
- DFR will offer assistance to an applicant/recipient in attempt to obtain necessary documentation.
  - Failure or refusal to provide required verifications will render the AG ineligible for assistance (f4).
  - When neither the eligibility worker nor the individual is able to secure the necessary documentation, the individual's statement is to be accepted as sufficient documentation upon the approval of a supervisor.
  - The worker must clearly and completely document the reason for the use of client statement.

### **2015.20.00            REPORT CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES (C)**

The applicant/recipient must report any changes in circumstances affecting TANF eligibility to the DFR within 10 days of the date on which the change occurred or became known to the recipient. (f5)

- This requirement is to be addressed by the eligibility worker during the interview.
- This provision is applicable at any time after the interview, regardless of whether the application has been approved.

## 2015.20.05 CHANGES THAT MUST BE REPORTED

SNAP AGs are subject to simplified reporting requirements and must only report whenever the AGs monthly income exceeds the gross monthly income limit for the AG size. Changes that result in the AG exceeding the gross income for AG size must be reported by the 10th day of the month following the change.

- Other changes may be reported by the AG and if reported, must be acted upon.
- Households must report substantial lottery and gambling winnings of \$4500 or more (amount effective as of 10/01/2024) (amount to be updated with COLA changes annually) within 10 days of the end of the month in which the winnings were received.

## 2020.00.00 APPLICATION TIME STANDARDS

Time standards for application processing as required by the individual programs are explained in the following sections.

### 2020.05.00 APPLICATION TIME STANDARDS (S)

Action must be taken to approve or deny a SNAP application within 30 days of the application.

- If all verifications are provided and the AG is eligible, the case must be authorized by the 30th day. The AG's benefits would be calculated from the date of application.
  - EXCEPTION: For residents of institutions who apply for SNAP prior to their release from the institution, an opportunity to participate must be no later than 30 calendar days from the date of release from the institution.
- Denials can be completed the following business day. (f6)
- If all required verifications are submitted after denial but before the 60th day from the application file date, the denial is to be rescinded. If eligible, the date the final required verification was received is to be used as the proration date for benefits.
- If the rescind results in ineligibility, the client will receive a notice with the specific reasons for denial.
- If the only verifications outstanding are for expenses/deductions, the application must be processed by the 30th day without the unverified expenses/deductions.
- If expenses/deductions are later verified, the case will be processed.
- An eligibility notice is generated from the eligibility system to the client upon authorization of the case.

Applicants are given 13 days to provide required verifications. The exception is if the client has caused a delay in the interview process. In this case, the documents are due two days prior to the

30th day. An interview that is conducted two days or less prior to the 30th day, the due date for the verifications is the same day.

Client and agency delay for the purpose of determining the verification due date is defined as follows:

- Client delay: When the client refuses to accept an initial appointment within 12 calendar days from application file date or requests to reschedule the appointment after 12 calendar days from application file date and the appointment is scheduled within 30 days from the application file date.
- Agency delay: When the agency, due to no appointment slots being available, schedules the initial appointment after the 12th calendar day from application file date or appointment is rescheduled to a date after 30 days from the application file date.
- If an AG which is entitled to expedited services misses a scheduled appointment and contacts to reschedule, the first available appointment is to be offered.
- The AG must have eligibility established by the 7th calendar day following the rescheduled appointment as long as the AG completes the rescheduled interview. The 7 days expedited processing time begins again the day after the scheduled interview. These procedures apply if the applicant still meets expedited criteria.
- If the verification is provided within 30 days from application file date, the AG is entitled to assistance from the date of application, if determined eligible.

**EXAMPLE:**

Applicant submits an application on Monday April 16th and is scheduled for an appointment on Wednesday, April 18th. The applicant misses the scheduled appointment but contacts the agency on April 26th and reschedules an appointment for Friday, April 27th. Saturday the 28th is day one of the seven-day processing standard. The AG is entitled to have benefits authorized by May 4th.

## 2020.05.05 TIME STANDARDS FOR EXPEDITED SERVICE (S)

The DFR will make SNAP benefits available to AGs entitled to expedited service no later than the close of business on the seventh calendar day following the date of application. If the seventh day falls on a holiday or weekend, SNAP benefits must be issued on the business day prior to the holiday or weekend. (f7)

The first calendar day following the date of application is the first day of the time frame.

**EXAMPLE:**

AG submits an application on December 22 they must receive their SNAP benefits by December 29, to meet the expedited time frame.

All expedited AGs which apply after the 15th calendar day and receive a prorated allotment for the month of application will also receive the second month's allotment within the expedited time standard.

Expedited service is not allowed for AGs that file applications during the redetermination month.

## 2020.05.15 COMBINED MONTH ISSUANCE TIME STANDARD (S)

AGs which apply after the 15th calendar day for initial month's assistance and fulfills all eligibility requirements, are eligible for the month of application and the subsequent month and must be issued the initial month's prorated allotment and the second month's allotment simultaneously.

When the first month's benefits of less than \$10 is prorated to a zero benefit, the AG will not receive combined benefits. Benefits for the second month will be available on the first working day of the second month.

## 2020.05.20 NOTICE OF MISSED INTERVIEW (S)

When a client has an application on file for SNAP and misses the appointment, a notice must be sent to the client informing him of the missed appointment. This applies to initial applications, reapplications, and redeterminations.

The eligibility system will automatically send this notice if both requirements are met:

- The SNAP appointment has been scheduled using the Client Scheduler in the eligibility system.
- The application is taken through Application Registration.

All other situations will require a manual notice to be sent to the client if a SNAP application is on file and the client misses the SNAP interview. Examples of these are if the worker adds SNAP as a program in an already existing case or if client scheduling was not used to schedule the appointment.

## 2020.10.00 APPLICATION TIME STANDARDS (C)

Applicants are to be advised of application processing time frames verbally and in writing during the interview.

For Assistance Groups (AGs) meeting all conditions of eligibility:

- If not required to participate in Applicant Job Search (AJS), assistance shall begin no later than 30 days from the date of application.
- For AG's that are required to participate in AJS, it shall be no later than 60 days from the date of the application. (f8)

For AGs not meeting all conditions of eligibility:

- If not participating in AJS, the authorization to deny the application should occur no later than 31 days from the date of application or the next business day if the 31st day is a non-business day.
- For AG's participating in AJS, the authorization to deny the application should occur no later than 61 days from the date of application, or the next business day if day 61 is a non-business day.

## 2020.10.05 TIME STANDARDS FOR PAROLED, TRANSITIONED OR RELEASED PRISONERS (C)

All efforts will be made to ensure that the normal time processing standards will allow for assistance to be available when the prisoner, if eligible, is released, transitioned, or paroled, in accordance with IC 11-10-12-5.

## 2020.20.10 EXCEPTIONS TO APPLICATION TIME STANDARD (C)

Every effort must be made by the DFR to process all applications within the time standards. If an application pends beyond the time standard, the reason must be clearly documented in the eligibility system. Reasons are as follows:

- Awaiting documentation of life insurance cash value from a life insurance company
- Other extenuating circumstances
- Receipt of hearing decision (the eligibility system will require a delay code to be entered if a denial was overturned by the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ)).

## 2025.00.00 VERIFICATION

The DFR must have adequate factual information on which to base case eligibility decisions.

- At least one source of verification for each eligibility factor, other than relationships (see 2420.05.05), is considered adequate verification.
- Proper verification would include the use of third-party information or documentation, as well as other sources as appropriate.

### **EXAMPLE:**

Financial and demographic information is required only for those individuals living in the home who are members of the AG (as participants or non-participants). Therefore, when dealing with a household made up of AG members and excluded persons, the eligibility worker may not require the AG, as a condition of eligibility, to provide information and verify the circumstances of the non-AG members.

Verifications may be secured by one of the following methods:

- Telephone contact
- Personal contact

- Written (hard copy) documentary evidence.
  - including verifications received by fax or other electronic devices where the authenticity of the source of the verification along with the verification itself can be validated.

The eligibility system must contain all telephone or personal contacts used as verification. At a minimum, the following must be recorded:

- The eligibility factors verified.
- The name of the contact person
- The date of the contact
- The information obtained from the contact.

Notes in the eligibility system must be in sufficient detail to support the determination of eligibility or ineligibility.

## 2025.05.05 VERIFICATION OF QUESTIONABLE INFORMATION

When determining if information provided is questionable, the eligibility worker will base the decision on the circumstances of the AG. Further verifications may be necessary if the following situations occur:

- A report of expenses that exceed income.
- Information has been received that individuals listed as household members is incorrect or incomplete.
- Other situations that indicate that case circumstances may not be as reported by the applicant/recipient.

Questionable information alone does not serve as a basis for a denial or termination of the case. Benefits for one program may not be terminated only because benefits for another program have been terminated.

When unclear information is received from a third party or from the AG, clarification and verification of the AGs circumstances must be pursued.

- Mail a request for verification specifically addressing all required verifications.
- 13 calendar days must be allowed for the return of verifications.
- Take action to close/deny the case if, by the due date, the AG fails to respond or does not provide sufficient information as indicated on the request for verification.

## 2025.05.10 COLLATERAL CONTACTS

When contacting collateral contacts, disclosure of information should be limited to that which is absolutely necessary to obtain the information being sought.

- Disclosure that the AG has applied for or is receiving SNAP or Cash Assistance should not occur.
- Collateral contacts may require a signed release from an applicant/recipient.

When asked to release information necessary to process an application, the date and the name of the person or organization from which information is being requested must be listed on the release form prior to requesting the client's signature.

- This policy applies to the Authorization for Release of Information Form, or any of the other forms used to document the client's authorization for the release of confidential information.
- All forms of this type must show the date of the client's signature and may not be honored if more than 90 days old. The client may also revoke this authorization at any time prior to the expiration of the release.

## 2025.05.15 CLIENT ATTESTATION AND WRITTEN STATEMENTS

When all reasonable attempts have been made but neither the worker nor the client can secure the necessary documentation, the client's signed statement is to be acceptable information. The signed statement will serve as verification of the given eligibility element.

Client Attestation cannot be used for any of the following:

- Citizenship or Immigration status
- Social Security number
- Legal documentation that includes but not limited to trusts, wills, court orders, or contracts.

If a written statement is submitted, the statement must include the client's best estimate of the information that was requested (for example, date employment ended if the former employer refuses to write a statement for the client). The statement must be dated and signed by the client.

**Note:** All written and attested statements must include a signature, date, and give specific monetary/frequency terms of actual/anticipated projections of information when applicable.

**EXAMPLE:**

"My mother gave me a total of \$25 in the month of May, and it was only for one month" or "My mother gives me \$200 per month each month to assist with expenses", or "My last day of employment at ABC company was January 5th."

The worker must document the reason for the signed statement (i.e., case notes could read "Client states previous employer would not give them a statement showing their last day of employment, accepted handwritten statement from client stating last date employed.")

**Note:** If the client verbally provides information over the phone rather than in writing, this must be properly documented in case notes.

**EXAMPLE:**

Joe called and stated his previous employer will not provide any statements regarding his last day worked. Accepted Joe's statement on 4/15/23 as best available verification of end date of employment.

If there is question as to whether a submission or statement is sufficient, send to PAL for review before taking adverse action on the case.

## 2030.00.00 PROVIDING INFORMATION TO THE ASSISTANCE GROUP

The eligibility worker must verbally explain the following information to each interviewee:

- The AG will receive written notice stating the actions that must be taken to stay eligible. (If the AG cannot comply, the payee should call before the deadline to request assistance.)
- All eligibility factors pertaining to the categories of assistance which have been chosen.
- The applicant's rights and responsibilities.
- The fact that the application will be processed for the most assistance available.
- The latest date by which the DFR must deliver the AG's assistance (if they are eligible).
- If the AG disagrees with any action taken by the DFR, it may request a fair hearing.
- The AG's SSNs will be matched against the records of other agencies to detect unreported income and resources and that failure to provide either an SSN or proof of application for one will mean that the person cannot be on SNAP or TANF.
- The next steps to be taken by both the applicant and the DFR.
- An individual may withdraw their application at any time during the application process or request that his assistance be discontinued.

## 2030.05.00 PROVIDING INFORMATION TO THE AG (S)

The following should be explained verbally:

- That all persons subject to time limited benefits must meet work requirements, or the individual may lose SNAP.
- Those AG members are expected to keep any suitable job they might have. (Quitting or reducing hours without good cause might make the individual ineligible.)
- Those AGs under simplified reporting are only required to report when their total calendar month income exceeds the gross income limit for their AG size and substantial lottery and gambling winnings.
- That the AG has the right to request a telephone interview for any scheduled interview.
- SNAP may only be used to purchase food items and garden seeds at retailers approved by the USDA. They also may not be used to purchase cigarettes, alcoholic beverages, firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other non-food items.
- Sales tax may not be charged on any item purchased with SNAP.
- SNAP benefits on an EBT account may not be bought, sold, or traded.

## 2035.00.00 DETERMINATION OF INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

This section discusses policy for:

- Disposition - The initial determination of eligibility or ineligibility
- Date of entitlement - The initial date of eligibility for assistance

Refer to Chapter 2200.00.00 for determination of on-going eligibility, redeterminations, and certification periods.

## 2035.05.00 EXPEDITED SERVICE (S)

Identity is the only factor that must be verified prior to receiving expedited benefits.

Verification necessary for ongoing eligibility determination will be requested per the usual process of utilizing state form 54107 and allowing 13 days for the provision of verifications.

For expedited benefits, when requested verifications are not received by the 13th day, the case is closed and is not eligible for a rescind of closure. A new application must be filed.

If client indicates that they have received benefits in another state for the month of application, they are not eligible for month of application in Indiana.

Pending verification of receipt of out-of-state benefits are postponed if not available during the expedited time frame.

Readily available verification of AG income must be accepted, including client's statement of no income.

Applicants are not eligible for expedited processing if postponed verifications were not provided on the most recent expedited application and the client has not been certified under normal processing since the previous expedited application.

Expedited AG's eligible for combined issuance that have postponed verifications cannot receive the third month's benefits until all required verifications are provided.

## 2035.25.00 DETERMINATION OF CASH ASSISTANCE CATEGORY (C)

When Cash Assistance is indicated as a program choice, the eligibility system automatically determines (through a process called failure logic) the category under which the Assistance Group (AG) may receive benefits, according to the hierarchy listed below. If the AG fails to meet the eligibility requirements of all Cash Assistance categories, assistance is to be denied.

Cash Assistance Hierarchy:

- Regular TANF: TANF based upon absence of a parent.
- Refugee Cash Assistance: Cash assistance when categorical TANF eligibility does not exist for an AG with refugee status.
- Two-Parent TANF: TANF based on a two-parent AG.

## 2035.35.00 DETERMINATION OF INELIGIBILITY

An AG is to be denied if just one eligibility requirement fails to be met causing the entire AG to be ineligible. However, if other requirements are not met, all reasons for denial must be entered.

## 2035.40.00 AUTHORIZATION

An AG must be authorized when all required eligibility information is documented, and the determination of eligibility is complete. Authorization of an AG is not to be delayed while awaiting completion of the eligibility determination for other AGs in the case.

Before authorizing an AG, the eligibility worker should carefully review all data in the eligibility system for accuracy.

## 2035.50.00 EFFECTIVE DATE (S)

The effective date for SNAP assistance is the date of application, unless the initial month(s) is denied, or an AG delay has occurred which revises the effective date.

If any Migrant/Seasonal Farm Worker AG was certified for the month prior to the application month in any state or county, benefits will not be prorated from the application date, but will receive a full month's benefits.

## 2035.55.00 EFFECTIVE DATE (C)

The effective date of assistance is the first of the month following the date of application except when an application is filed on the first day of a month containing 31 days.

In this instance, the effective date is the 31st day of the month. Benefits for this day are prorated by the eligibility system. If an application is filed on January, March, May, July, August, October, or December first, a benefit is calculated for the 31st day only.

A person applying for Cash Assistance in Indiana who has received case assistance in another state cannot receive benefits in Indiana until the other state has verified benefit discontinuance. Cash assistance effective date can be no earlier than the discontinuance date in the other state.

## 2040.00.00 REAPPLICATIONS

A reapplication may be made at any time by an individual whose application for assistance was denied or whose assistance was discontinued.

- If a recipient comes into compliance prior to the effective date of the discontinuance, it is appropriate to rescind the adverse action rather than to require a reapplication.
- An individual who appeals a denial or discontinuance which had become effective may file a reapplication at any time.

- The individual is not to be denied the right to reapply pending the decision of the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ).
- If the hearing decision is in the individual's favor, the DFR is to take adjusting action as directed in the decision.
- If the DFR action is sustained, the reapplication is to be processed in the usual manner.
- The DFR is not to delay the processing of a reapplication taken under these circumstances until the hearing decision is issued, as this is not considered an extenuating circumstance for pending a case beyond the time standard.

2099.00.00

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER 2000

Following are the footnotes for Chapter 2000:

- (f1) 7 CFR 273.2(e)(3)
- (f2) 7 CFR 273.2(e)(1) SNAP  
470 IAC 10.3-2-2 TANF
- (f3) 470 IAC 2.1-1-2(a)
- (f4) 470 IAC 2.1-1-2(e)
- (f5) 470 IAC 2.1-1-2(b)
- (f6) 7 CFR 273.10(g)(1)
- (f7) 7 CFR 273.2(i)(3)(i)
- (f8) 470 IAC10.3-2-3(c)