



Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore MD 21201

FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

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**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS**

FROM: ~~KEVIN MAHON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIA~~

RE: SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS FOR NEWBORNS

PROGRAM AFFECTED: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY AND RESEARCH

SUMMARY

A final rule effective November 18, 1996 simplified several Food Stamp Program regulatory requirements and increased flexibility. This action transmittal explains the changes in social security number requirements for newborns.

OLD POLICY

Current policy requires an applicant household to provide social security numbers for each household member. A household member who does not have a social security number (SSN) must apply for one before he or she can be certified unless there is good cause.

Households entitled to expedited service must furnish an SSN for each person or apply for one before the first full month of participation. Those household members unable to provide an SSN or who do not have one prior to the first full month of participation are allowed to continue to receive food stamps only if they can satisfy the good cause requirements.

CURRENT POLICY

Procedures effective March 1, 1990 made it possible for a parent to apply for an SSN for a newborn on the same form that is used to register the child's birth. A completed Form SSA-2853 "Message from Social Security" receipt form is acceptable verification of SSN application for an infant.

NEW POLICY

◆ Normal Application Processing, Interim Changes and at Recertification

- If the household cannot provide or apply for a social security number (SSN) for a newborn baby immediately after the baby's birth, the household may provide a social security number or proof of application **the later** of:
 - ▶ the next recertification, or
 - ▶ within six months following the month in which the child is born.
- If the household cannot provide an SSN at its next recertification or within six months following the baby's birth, the case manager must determine if good cause exists. See Section 405.6 of the Food Stamp Manual.
- Example #1: On January 5, Ms. A reported her baby was born November 15, 1997. The household's certification period began October 1, 1997 and is through March 31, 1998. She must provide an SSN or proof of application for one no later than May 31, 1998.
- Example #2: On December 5, Ms. B reported her baby was born November 15, 1997. This household's certification period is from October 1, 1997 through September 30, 1998. She must provide an SSN or proof of application for one no later than her next recertification.

◆ Expedited Application Processing

- When a household is entitled to expedited service, a newborn may participate for up to six months following the month of its birth before the household must provide an SSN or proof of application for an SSN for the newborn.
- Example: On November 16, 1997, Ms. C applied for food stamps and was eligible for expedited service. She did not have a social security number for her baby born November 6. She was certified through October 1998. Ms. C must provide an SSN or proof of application prior to May 31, 1998.

ACTION REQUIRED

AIMS

- ◆ Complete the AIMS 2/3B and leave the SSN fields blank.
- ◆ Create a 745 alert to remind the worker of record at the appropriate time (either at redetermination or the baby's sixth month, whichever is later).

- ◆ Once the SSN is received, complete the AMF1 to update AMF.

CARES

Processing without a social security number:

Using either Option O (application interview) or Option R (interim change or redetermination interview) from the AMEN:

- ◆ Enter the baby's date of birth in the SSN APPL DATE field located on the DEM1 screen for the newborn. If neither verification of SSN application nor the SSA-2853 is available, use the current day as the application date. Correct the application date to reflect the actual date of the application for an SSN when the information is available. **NOTE: Either a date or SSN must be entered on this screen during application or redetermination interviews, or the worker will not be able to go to DONE and print an EDD.**
- ◆ Create a 745 alert to remind the worker of record to request SSN verification in either the baby's sixth month or the month of the next redetermination, whichever is later.

Entering the newborn's social security number:

Using Option R from the AMEN –

- ◆ Go to the DEM1 screen for the newborn.
- ◆ Press the PF-20 key and enter the newborn's social security number. **DO NOT ENTER ANY SSN VERIFICATION CODE IN THE VERIFICATION FIELD.**
- ◆ Press ENTER and check to be certain the correct name, DOB, and client ID are showing.
- ◆ Type "Y" in the select field and press PF-20 to match, if the correct information is displayed.
- ◆ Enter the SSN verification code in the appropriate field and fast path to DONE.

****REMEMBER TO PRESS PF-21 FROM THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD'S ADDR SCREEN AND UPDATE THE NARRATION.****

Please remove all current pages in Section 405 of the Food Stamp Manual and replace them with the attached manual pages.

ACTION DUE

This policy is effective upon receipt of this transmittal.

INQUIRIES

Please direct questions to Kay Finegan at (410) 767-7939. Systems questions may be directed to Kathryn Volpini at (410) 767-8494.

cc: FIA Management Staff
Constituent Services
OIM Help Desk
CTF

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405.1 Purpose. This section contains the policy and procedures for obtaining Social Security Numbers when required.

405.2 Participation Requirement

- A. Any household participating or applying for participation in the Food Stamp Program must provide a social security numbers (SSN) for each household member or apply for one before certification.
- 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 408.8.
- D. Refusal or failure without good cause to provide an 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 an SSN:
 - (1) Those who have no SSN.
 - (2) Those who have an SSN but do not know the number.
 - (3) Newborns without the Form 2853. Proof of application is 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 an 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 an 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 an SSN or proof of application by the end of November.

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405.3 Obtaining Social Security Numbers (continued)

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

B. 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 for 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.

404.4 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 an 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 an SSN or to supply proof of application for one.

405.5 Failure to Comply

- A. If a household member refuses or fails without good cause to provide or apply for an 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.

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405.5 Failure to Comply (continued)

- (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 stamp 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 food stamp computation.

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 special 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

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405.5 Failure to Comply (continued)

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 food stamp 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 be 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 an 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.
- 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 an 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 an SSN, the member may participate pending notification of the household member's SSN.

405.8 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.

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408.8 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 an 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;
 - (2) An official document containing the household member's SSN;
 - (3) The household's case record if verification of the SSN was previously provided for TCA or TEMHA;
 - (4) BENDEX or SDX.
 - (5) IEVS or SVES match

NOTE: "Official document" is defined as any document which contains an SSN provided by an organization or source that has verified the SSN for their purposes – a W-2 form or a grant/award letter for example. A document such as a driver's license or school ID where the recipient has provided the SSN is not regarded an official document.

When verifying the SSN of a Social Security beneficiary from Social Security documents, such as a Medicare card or an award letter, take care to differentiate between the "Claim Number" and the SSN. These two numbers are not always the same, as many Social Security beneficiaries receive "dependent" benefits that are based on the Social Security earnings record of another individual. Thus, the "Claim Number" will be the SSN of the individual whose record is being used, and not necessarily that of the person receiving the benefits.

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408.8 Verification at Application.

For example: If a widow collects Social Security checks based on her husband's earnings record, her Claim Number (on her Medicare card and all Social Security correspondence) will be her deceased husband's SSN.

A "Claim Number" will always be a nine-digit number, followed by one or two letters (e.g. 123-45-6789D or 987-65-4321HA). If the letters at the end of a Claim Number ends in A, HA, J, M or T, the Claim Number is the same as that individual's SSN. If the letters are B, C, D, E, F, HB, HC, K or W, the individual is receiving dependent benefits on another Social Security record. Do not use Claim Number.

For cases where a household member does not have an SSN, acceptable verification that an application has been made for an SSN is Form SSA-5028 or other documentation from SSA.

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.