

4.1 INTRODUCTION

NOTE: Verification, except for identity, prior to approval is waived for Food Stamp Expedited Service cases. See Chapter 1.

Verification of a client's statement is required when:

- Policy requires routine verification of specific information. See Section 4.2.
- The information provided by the client is questionable. To be questionable, it must be:
 - Inconsistent with other information provided by the client; or
 - Inconsistent with information received by the Department from other sources; or
 - Incomplete; or
 - Obviously inaccurate.
- Past experience with the client reveals a pattern of providing incorrect information or withholding information. A case recording must substantiate the reason the Worker questions the client's statement.
- The client does not know the required information.

NOTE: Verification of negative statements is not routinely required, unless the client's statement is questionable. An example of a negative statement is when a client reports that he has no bank account. His negative statement is not verified unless there is a valid reason to question it.

It is an eligibility requirement that the client cooperate in obtaining necessary verifications. The client is expected to provide information to which he has access and to sign authorizations needed to obtain other information.

Depending upon the program and the item or requirement for which verification is requested, refusal to cooperate may result in one of the following:

- Denial of the application
- Closure of the AG
- Ineligibility of an individual(s)
- Disallowance of an income deduction or an incentive payment

By signing an application the client gives the Department permission to verify information, when necessary. However, some agencies require a signed statement from the client before releasing any information. Form OFS-7, Authorization for Information, is used when necessary.

No case may be determined ineligible when a person outside the AG or Income Group fails to cooperate with verification. The following persons are not considered outside the AG or Income Group for these purposes:

- Ineligible student (FS)
- Ineligible aliens (all programs)
- Disqualified persons (WV WORKS and FS)
- Persons who fail to attest to or verify citizenship or alien status (requirements varied by program)
- Persons who fail to cooperate with BCSE (WV WORKS and Medicaid)
- SSI recipients who would be required to be included in the WV WORKS AG, except for receipt of SSI.

A. CLIENT RESPONSIBILITY

The primary responsibility for providing verification rests with the client. Failure of the client to provide necessary information or to sign authorizations for release of information, results in denial of the application or closure of the active case, provided the client has access to such information and is physically and mentally able to provide it.

B. WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Worker has the following responsibilities in the verification process:

- At application, redetermination and anytime an ES-6 is used, the Worker must list all required verification known at the time. The client must not be required to verify a few items at a time, unless information received after the RAPIDS verification notice or ES-6 is issued calls for additional verification.
- If the client is unsuccessful in obtaining information, or, if physical or mental limitations prevent his compliance, and there is no one to assist him, the Worker must obtain the verification.

Verification

- The Worker must accept any reasonable documentary evidence as verification and must not require a specific kind or source of verification, if the client's verification is reasonable. Verification may be submitted in person, by mail, fax or electronically.
- The Worker must not request verification if the case record or other documentation shows that verification has previously been supplied. It may, however, be requested if the verification provided or shown in the Department's records is incomplete, inaccurate, outdated or inconsistent with recently reported information. Unchanged information is not verified unless it is incomplete, inaccurate, outdated or inconsistent with recently reported information.
- If the client requests a receipt for verification he leaves at the county office or with the Worker, the Worker must provide a signed statement for the client showing the following information:
 - Name of person who leaves the information
 - Case name
 - Date received
 - Specific description of the information, including the date, title and source of any documents
 - Any other information the Worker wishes to include
- When the client alleges domestic violence, the Worker, in order to insure the safety of the individual, must never contact the abuser, his relatives or friends. See Section 4.2,E,7 for acceptable method of verification in domestic violence situations.
- When the Worker must make collateral contact, such as but not limited to a client's employer, the Worker must not disclose the client's status as an applicant/recipient of a DHHR program.
- When the Worker receives information about the Food Stamp AG during the certification period which requires additional clarification or verification, the Worker may request, but not require that the client report to the office for an interview.

NOTE: For Food Stamps, home visits are made only on a case-by-case basis and not because an AG fits an error prone or other profile. A home visit is used for verification only when documentary evidence cannot be obtained or is insufficient to make an eligibility or benefit level determination.