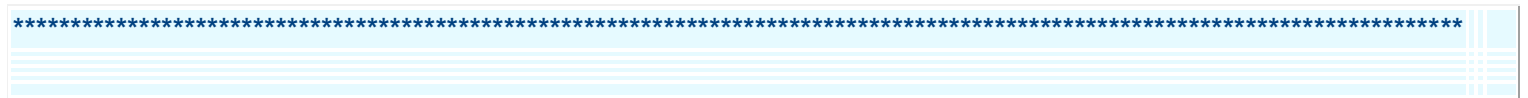


Department of Social and Health Services  
Olympia, Washington  
**EA-Z Manual**

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**Summary**

Updated EA-Z Manual to clarify the difference in SSN rules between food and cash programs.



## Social Security Numbers (SSN)

Revised on [August 21, 2024](#) ~~June 14, 2024~~

### Purpose:

This section provides information about the social security number (SSN) requirements and instructions for obtaining SSNs for applicants and recipients for cash and food assistance.

### WAC 388-476-0005 Social Security number requirements.

- [Clarifying Information and Worker Responsibilities](#)

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[Clarifying Information - WAC 388-476-0005](#)

1. A valid Social Security Number (SSN) is required for cash and Basic Food programs with the exceptions as described in Worker Responsibilities #4 (“Not required to provide/apply for SSN”)
2. Written proof from the Social Security Administration (SSA) of a submitted SSN application, typically SSA form SSA-5028 or any other SSA document, is valid ~~for a maximum of 60 days~~. A copy of the US Department of State, DS-260 application for Special Immigrant VISA showing an SSN was applied for during the application process is also acceptable verification of SSN application for that individual. [At the next Eligibility Review if the SSN was not provided, After 60 days](#) the worker should request one of the following:
  - a. The client’s SSN; or
  - b. Documentation from SSA of the current SSN application status.

**NOTE:**

SSA offices will no longer provide printouts to verify a person's existing SSN or provide benefit verification letters. SSA asks state agencies to use interfaces when available to verify social security numbers. Someone who needs a new card must apply for a card using form SS-5 at [www.ssa.gov/number-card](http://www.ssa.gov/number-card). SSA advises people to register for a **my Social Security** account at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount). After registering, beneficiaries can get a benefit verification online instantly and also conduct other business with SSA

- c. A person must resubmit the SSN application with the necessary documentation, if the application is rejected by SSA.
  - d. Certain members of the household won't be eligible for benefits (e.g., the undocumented parents of citizen children). Per WAC 388-424-0009 (2) (c) SSNs aren't required for ineligible members when processing the application of the applying Assistance Unit (AU)
  - e. If a current and valid SSN isn't available, the department must help the person apply for an SSN. Use "Good Cause " to extend the eligibility of clients who are demonstrating a reasonable effort to comply with the SSN requirement and document in the ACES record the “Good Cause” criteria used. Don’t penalize clients if they meet any of the conditions listed in the following Worker Responsibilities subsections:
    - Applying for an SSN;
    - Newborns;
    - ~~Good Cause;~~
    - [Refusing for Religious Reasons.](#)
3. “Qualified aliens” and "Non-qualified aliens," as defined in [WAC 388-424-0001](#), who are applying for benefits but aren't authorized to work in the U.S. must still apply for a Non-

Work SSN. Follow the **Non-Work SSN procedure**, (posted on the CSD Procedures Handbook) to complete and submit the Non-Work SSN Request form 14-517. For more details see Worker Responsibilities #7 – “Immigrants Not Authorized to Work in the U.S.”

4. Adopted children under 18 immigrating to the United States are granted “automatic” citizenship by the [Child Citizenship Act of 2000](#) effective February 27, 2001. These children are eligible to receive an SSN with [proof of their immigration status](#) issued by Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) upon their arrival into the US, or proof of their US citizenship. Parents can obtain a Certificate of Citizenship from USCIS or a US passport from the Department of State as a proof of child’s US citizenship.
5. If an individual fails to provide or apply for an SSN without Good Cause, remove the individual from the assistance unit. [For more details see Worker Responsibilities #11—Failing to Provide an SSN.](#)

**NOTE:**

**For Basic Food**, 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 within 6 months following the month the baby is born, **whichever is later**. (7 CFR 273.6 (b)(4))

## Worker Responsibilities - WAC 388-476-0005

### 1. **Documentation:**

Clearly document in the case record all actions taken to comply with SSN requirements for cash and Basic Food programs eligibility as evidence of timely decisions regarding eligibility.

### 2. **Verifying an SSN:**

Verify the SSN by accessing State-Online Query (SOLQ). When the SSN is verified and validated in SOLQ, no additional verification is needed.

### 3. **SSN Not Validated in SOLQ:**

- a. Recheck and re-verify the SSN to resolve any discrepancy when the ACES valid value doesn't show the SSN to be federally verified (FV).
- b. When SOLQ shows that the SSN doesn't belong to the client and the client refuses to cooperate, terminate all program benefits for which SSN is an eligibility factor.

### 4. **Not Required to Provide or Apply for SSN:**

- a. Per [WAC 388-424-0009 \(2\) Citizenship and alien status – Social Security number \(SSN\) requirements](#) the following immigrants aren't required to provide or apply

for an SSN:

i. Applicants for:

1. Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP);
2. [Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance \(RCA and RMA\)](#);
3. [State-funded benefits as a survivor of certain crimes.](#)
- 3.4. [Disaster SNAP](#)

ii. Members of household who aren't applying for benefits for themselves.

b. Do not refer these applicants to SSA for SSN application.

## 5. **Applying for an SSN:**

a. Use ACES letter 023-08 SSN Referral to refer households to the Social Security Administration District Office (SSADO) for:

- i. Application for an SSN;
- ii. Application for a replacement card; or
- iii. Determination of a previously issued number.

[b. For cash programs, proof of the SSN application is required prior to approving benefits \(unless the individual qualifies for a religious exemption, see #10 below\).](#)

[c. For Basic Food, benefits can be approved for one month in addition to the month of application if the individual has good cause for not applying for the SSN.](#)

~~b.d.~~ [Code "P" \(Generate Referral Letter to be Printed\) in SSA/SSN Referral field on the ACES Client page to print the 023-08 SSN Referral. After the letter is printed \(locally or from central print\), valid value "S" \(Referral Letter Generated\) will automatically replace "P" ~~to provide continuous eligibility for all programs.~~](#)

~~c.e.~~ [After 60 days During the second month of certification, if no proof of application for an SSN is provided for Basic Food:](#)

i. Request an updated proof of the SSN application status from SSA.

[ii.](#) Replace "S" (Referral Letter Generated) with "G" (SSN Good Cause-) if individual is complying.

~~iii.~~ [Good cause for failure to apply for an SSN must be verified each month until successful application.](#)

[f.](#) If the client refuses to cooperate, terminate all program benefits for which SSN is an eligibility factor by coding "R" (Refused to Supply SSN) on the SSA/SSN Referral field. For more details see Worker Responsibilities #10 – Failing to Provide an SSN.

~~d.g.~~ Once proof of the SSN application is received, the client has satisfied the requirement for the certification period. At the next ER, the client must provide the SSN if they didn't provide it during the certification period.

## 6. **Newborns:**

a. If an applying family has a newborn, accept documents signed and dated by a hospital official as verification that a household has applied for an SSN for the newborn.

b. Code "H" (Hospital Application) in SSA/SSN Referral field on the child's Client page to continue eligibility ~~for all programs.~~

~~c.~~ For cash programs, proof of the SSN application is required before approving benefits for the newborn.

~~e.d.~~ Require the parent of a newborn to provide SSN after the date of birth:

i. For TANF – at the next recertification within 2 months

ii. For Basic Food – within 6 months or at the next recertification **whichever is later.**

~~d.e.~~ For cash programs, a After 60 days, if no SSN is provided:

~~i.~~ Request an updated proof of the SSN application status from SSA.

~~ii.i.~~ Replace "H" (Hospital Application) with "G" (SSN Good Cause), if the individual is complying.

~~e.f.~~ If the SSN is not provided within 12 months after the date of birth, terminate all program benefits for which SSN is an eligibility factor by coding "R" (Refused to Supply SSN) on the SSA/SSN Referral field on child's Client page. ~~For more details see Worker Responsibilities #11—Failing to Provide an SSN.~~

## 7. **"Immigrants not authorized to work in the U.S.":**

"Qualified aliens" as defined in [WAC 388-424-0001](#) (e.g. abused spouses and children who received a USCIS notice of "prima facie" (BA), persons who have been granted parole for at least one year (PL)), and "Non-qualified aliens," who are applying for benefits but are not authorized to work in the U.S. must still apply for a Non-Work SSN.

a. Assist with the application as described in the EA-Z Manual, [Citizenship and Alien Status Chapter- Social Security Number \(SSN\) Requirements for Legal Immigrants.](#)

b. Use the [Non-Work SSN Request Letter DSHS form 14-517](#) (see **Non-Work SSN Request procedures**, posted on the CSD Procedures Handbook) to refer them to a SSN office for a Non-Work SSN. Please inform clients to bring this letter, verification of their identity, immigration status, and their date of birth with them when they go to the SSN office.

- c. Consider using Good Cause if a victim of domestic violence isn't able to apply or provide proof that they have previously received an SSN.

## 8. **Adoption Cases:**

- a. Effective February 27, 2001 adopted children born outside of the U.S. are granted “automatic” citizenship upon their arrival. Code “P” (Generate Referral Letter to be Printed) in SSA/SSN Referral field on the Client page to print the ACES letter 023-08 (SSN Referral) to refer the household to SSA to apply for SSN for the child.
- b. Valid value “S” (Referral Letter Generated) will automatically appear in the SSA/SSN Referral field on the child’s Client page after the SSN Referral letter is printed.
- c. After 60 days, if no SSN is provided, request proof of the SSN application status and process case as usual.

## 9. **Good Cause:**

- a. Any individual who provides written proof has "Good Cause" for not providing an SSN, if they are:
  - i. Making substantial and reasonable efforts to supply the Social Security Administration with the necessary information; or
  - ii. A victim of domestic violence and are unable to supply an SSN.
  - iii. [For cash programs, proof of the SSN application is required before approving benefits. Good cause may be used after the SSN application is submitted and the individual is complying with SSA but is unable to provide the SSN.](#)
  - iv. [Good cause for failing to apply for an SSN applies to Basic Food only.](#)
- ~~b.~~ [Good Cause may also exist if the SSA offices are closed to in-person activities. \(See Note Above in "Applying for an SSN."\)](#)
- ~~c.~~ Reason for granting Good Cause must be clearly documented in the case narrative and in Remarks for the Client page.
- ~~d.~~ Code “G” (Good Cause) in the SSA/SSN Referral field on the individual’s Client page.
- ~~e.~~ If “Good Cause” has been used to extend a person’s [Basic Food](#) eligibility, after an initial grace period of [up to 2 months](#), ~~which includes including~~ the month of benefit application, proof of good cause must be provided for every month that the SSN application is delayed (WAC 388-476-0005 (5)).
- ~~f.~~ Good Cause doesn't include delays due to illness, lack of transportation, temporary absence, or failure to respond to the SSN request.

~~g.f.~~ Battered Aliens who meet the definition of Abused spouses or children provided in WAC 388-424-0001 Citizenship and alien status – Definitions, Qualified Aliens, (2), (a - i) are qualified aliens with 5 year bar on federal benefits. Every effort should be made to help them to obtain or validate their SSN as they might not be able to apply or provide proof that they have previously received an SSN.

~~h.g.~~ If proof of Good Cause ~~is~~ not provided monthly, as required ~~for Basic Food~~, consider an individual as Failing to Provide an SSN and terminate ~~all program~~ benefits for which SSN is an eligibility factor by coding "R" (Refused to Supply SSN) on the SSA/SSN Referral field on the individual's Client page.

## 10. Refusing to Provide an SSN for Religious Reasons:

- a. Personal, cultural, or political beliefs do not qualify as a religious objection to providing an SSN.
- b. If the individual claims religious grounds for refusing to provide or apply for an SSN:
  - i. No negative action should be taken.
  - ii. Use an existing SSN for verification and matching purposes without further notice to the client if one is already known to the Department.
  - iii. Document the client's statement regarding the religious objection. No further verification is necessary. Continue to ask and document at subsequent eligibility reviews.
  - iv. Code "X" (Refused for Religious Reasons) in the SSA/SSN Referral field on the Client page to provide continued eligibility ~~for all programs~~. Do not use the SSN Application Date field.

## 11. ~~Failing to Provide an SSN:~~

- ~~a. If an individual, who is an applicant for assistance, fails to provide or apply for SSN and doesn't claim Good Cause, they are not eligible for assistance, except as it is described in Worker Responsibility #4 – Not required to provide/apply for an SSN.~~
- ~~b. If an individual, who is a recipient of assistance, fails to provide or apply for an SSN and doesn't claim Good Cause:
  - ~~i. Check the case records and any available systems for a valid SSN.~~
  - ~~ii. If no valid SSN is found, remove the individual from the assistance unit by updating their Client page with "R" (Refused to Supply SSN) in the SSA/SSN Referral field.~~
  - ~~iii. Do not override the ACES letter to the client telling about change in benefits due to no SSN provided.~~~~

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## ACES Procedures

- See Social Security Number (SSN).