



# National Verifier Acceptable Documentation Guidelines

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## Revision History

<b>Date Revised</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Reason for Revision</b>
<b>12/7/2017</b>	USAC	Version 1.0	Initial Version
<b>6/12/2018</b>	USAC	Version 2.0	Clarification, Proof of Life
<b>9/06/2018</b>	USAC	Version 3.0	Clarification on MCOs

## Overview

When a consumer's eligibility, identity, income, address, and/or proof of life cannot be verified through automated data sources, the consumer will be required to submit additional documentation for this review. Service providers can use the guidelines in this document while assisting consumers with documentation submission.

## Proof of Eligibility

USAC reviewed documentation from federal, state, and local government agencies and offices, qualifying program administrators and managed care organizations (MCOs), and service providers to create guidelines for accepting documentation to prove eligibility for a consumer.

### Minimal criteria for acceptance

USAC will review each document in according to the criteria below. At minimum, documents must:

- State the name of the consumer, or consumer's benefit qualifying person (BQP);
- State the name of the Lifeline-qualifying program, such as SNAP;
- Issued by a federal, state, or local government, program administrator or MCO, or Tribal program; and
- Demonstrate the consumer is currently receiving an income equal or less than 135% of the federal poverty guidelines or is an active participation in a Lifeline-qualifying program.

Consumers may qualify for Lifeline by their income or by participating in at least one of the following qualifying federal assistance program:

- A federal public housing program
- Medicaid
- Veteran's pension
- Tribal programs
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Survivor's benefit

### Proof of Eligibility via Income

To qualify for Lifeline, Consumers must be able to prove their gross income is 135% or less than the [federal poverty guidelines](#). The table below lists qualifying incomes per number of members in a household. The consumer's income must be at or below the following incomes prior to any deductions, such as a deduction for Medicare. Incomes are listed by number of people in the household.

Household Size	135% of Federal Poverty Guidelines in your state*		
	48 Contiguous States, DC, & Territories	Alaska	Hawaii
<b>1 person</b>	\$16,389 or less	\$20,493 or less	\$18,846 or less
<b>2 people</b>	\$22,221 or less	\$27,783 or less	\$25,556 or less
<b>3 people</b>	\$28,053 or less	\$35,073 or less	\$32,265 or less
<b>4 people</b>	\$33,885 or less	\$42,363 or less	\$38,975 or less
<b>5 people</b>	\$39,717 or less	\$49,653 or less	\$45,684 or less
<b>6 people</b>	\$45,549 or less	\$56,943 or less	\$52,394 or less
<b>7 people</b>	\$51,381 or less	\$64,233 or less	\$59,103 or less
<b>8 people</b>	\$57,213 or less	\$71,523 or less	\$65,813 or less
<b>If more than 8, add this amount for each additional person</b>	Add \$5,832	Add \$7,290	Add \$6,710

\*Guidelines are adjusted annually. Above chart reflects guidelines for 2018. Guidelines are usually updated in January.

Consumers can show their income by providing any of the following forms of documentation:

- Prior year's wage and tax statement or W-2
- Prior year's personal tax return or Form 1040 with the consumers' name and address
- Employer paycheck or pay stubs with the consumer's name, address, and payment amount
- Benefit or statement letter issued by the Social Security Administration (SSA) with the consumer's name, address, claim number, income, and effective date
- Retirement/pension statement with the consumer's name, date, and payment amount
- Tribal letter of participation in General Assistance with consumer's name and effective date
- Unemployment/workers' compensation statement of benefits with the consumer's name, address, and effective date

If the consumer's documentation does not cover a full year, such as current pay stubs, the consumer must present the same type of documentation covering three consecutive months within the previous 12 months.

The Lifeline Support Center **CANNOT** accept a bank account statement or other personal financial documents as proof of income.

## Proof of Eligibility via Participation in a Federal Program

Consumers are eligible if they are able to prove their active participation in a qualifying federal programs. Below are examples of documentation that could be approved as proof of eligibility per each program. The Lifeline Support Center welcomes documents not listed below, but may require additional time to review the documents for acceptability.

## Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)

- Program letter such as an approval letter, rent change notice, or lease renewal letter with the consumer's name, address, effective date, and housing assistance information
- Federal housing assisting contract\* or lease for a federal public housing property with the consumer's name, address, and lease dates
- Private lease agreement\* with the consumer's name, landlord or owner, address, housing assistance information, and lease dates
- Owner's Certification of Compliance with the consumer's (lessee) name, effective date, and housing assistance program information

\*All contracts or lease agreements must include the cover letter and all signature pages.

## Medicaid

- Program approval letter or benefit statement issued by the federal or state government or MCO, with the program name (Medicaid or state equivalent Medicaid), consumer's name, and eligibility dates or current participation status
- Verification of coverage letter issued by the federal or state government or MCO, with the program name (Medicaid or state equivalent Medicaid), consumer's name, and eligibility dates
- A screen shot or printout from an online portal or website tool with the consumer's name, Medicaid identification number and eligibility dates
- Valid Medicaid or health care card with the consumer's name and an indicator that the consumer is currently participating in Medicaid, such as their Medicaid identification number

## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) *also known as Food Stamps*

- Program approval letter or benefit statement issued by the federal or state government or other authorized organization with the program name (SNAP or state equivalent), consumer's name, and eligibility dates or current participation status
- Verification of coverage letter issued by the federal or state government or other authorized organization with the program name the program name (SNAP or state equivalent), consumer's name, and eligibility dates or current participation status
- A screenshot or printout from an online portal or website tool with the program name, consumer's name, and eligibility dates or current participation status
- Valid SNAP card with the program name (SNAP or state equivalent) and consumer's name
  - USAC **CANNOT** accept SNAP cards that can be:
    1. Used for other assistance programs not accepted as eligible programs for Lifeline such as Cash Assistance – the Colorado Quest Card, New Mexico EBT Card, and the Utah Horizon Card will not be accepted, **OR**

2. Issued for people other than the consumer, or BQP, applying for Lifeline; the Mississippi SNAP Card will not be accepted

## Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

**NOTE:** The Supplemental Security Income benefit is **NOT** the same as the Social Security benefit.

- Approval letter or benefit statement issued by the SSA, or on SSA letterhead, with the consumer's name, date, claim number or other consumer identification number, and payment amount
  - USAC understands that consumers may request a benefit verification letter via *my Social Security account*. This letter may also be referred to as *my Social Security Benefit Verification Letter*, budget letter, proof of income letter, or proof of award letter.
  - To be acceptable, documentation **must show supplemental security income payments**, not Social Security benefits.
- Notice of Award issued by the SSA, or on SSA letterhead, with the consumer's name, award date, claim number or other consumer identification number, payment amount, and eligibility dates
- Benefit Summary letter issued by the SSA, or on SSA letterhead, with the consumer's name, date, claim number or other consumer identification number, description of payment assistance, and eligibility dates
- Notice of Change in Payment issued by the SSA, or on SSA letterhead, with the consumer's name, claim number or other consumer identification number, description of change in payment assistance, and effective or eligibility date

## Veteran's Pension & Survivor's Benefit

- Pension Grant letter issued by Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), or on VBA letterhead, with the consumer's name, benefit information or entitlement amount, and effective date
  - Veteran's pension assistance is **NOT** the Veteran's Disability benefit; Veteran's Disability does not qualify for Lifeline
  - To be acceptable, the document must state the program name, Veteran's Pension
- Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) letter issued by VBA, or on VBA letterhead, with the consumer's name, benefit information or assistance amount, and effective date
- Survivors Benefit Summary letter issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), or on VA letterhead, with the consumer's name, address, description of benefit, and effective date
  - To be acceptable, the document must state the program name, Survivor's Benefit
- Survivors Pension COLA issued by the VA, or on VA letterhead, with the consumer's name, benefit information or assistance amount, and effective date

## Tribal Program Documentation

Consumers who qualify via Tribal programs will be required to submit official documentation issued by either the Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Head Start, Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations. Documentation should include the consumer's name and the name of Tribal program.

## Proof of Identity, Date of Birth, or Social Security

If a consumer's identity, date or birth, and or social security number cannot be verified, consumers can submit one or a combination of the following documentation:

- Driver's license
- W-2
- Social Security card
- Certificate of U.S. Citizenship
- Permanent resident alien card
- Passport
- Weapons permit\*
- Statement of benefits from a qualifying program\*
- Birth certificate
- Recent state, federal, or Tribal tax return
- Certificate of Naturalization
- Permanent resident card
- U.S. government, military, state, or Tribal issued ID
- Military discharge documentation\*
- Government assistance program document\*
- Unemployment/worker's compensation statement of benefits\*

\*Must include either the consumer's date of birth or last four digits of social security number

## Proof of Address

Consumers can submit any of the following documentation to confirm address.

- Recent utility bill with the consumer's name and address
- Current income statement, paycheck stub, or W-2 with the consumer's name and address
- Prior year's state, federal, or Tribal tax return with the consumer's name and address
- Current mortgage or lease statement with the consumer's name and address
- Valid government, state, or Tribal issued ID or driver's license
- Benefits statement from a government program with the consumer's name, address, and effective dates
- Retirement or pension statement of benefits with the consumer's name and address
- Unemployment/workers' compensation statement of benefits with the consumer's name, address, and effective dates
- Map screenshot from an internet source (such as Google Maps) with an icon of your residence, address or street name, and coordinates

## Proof of Life

If a consumer cannot be confirmed as living, they will have to verify their date of birth, last four digits of their Social Security number or Tribal ID, and their recent life activity. Consumers should complete the following steps:

**Step 1:** Submit ONE document from Category A1 *and* ONE document from Category A2 **-OR-** Submit ONE document from Category B.

CATEGORY A		CATEGORY B
A1	A2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driver's license</li> <li>• Birth certificate</li> <li>• Certificate of Naturalization</li> <li>• Proof of citizenship</li> <li>• Permanent Resident or Permanent Resident Alien card</li> <li>• Passport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W-2 from within the last 2 years</li> <li>• Prior year's state, federal, or tribal tax return</li> <li>• Social Security card</li> <li>• SSA-1099</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government, military, state, or tribal issued ID which includes DOB and/or SSN/tribal ID</li> <li>• Military discharge documentation with DOB and/or SSN/tribal ID</li> <li>• Weapons permit with DOB and/or SSN/tribal ID</li> <li>• Government assistance program document with DBO and/or SSN/tribal ID</li> <li>• Statement of benefits from a qualifying program with DBO and/or SSN/tribal ID</li> <li>• Unemployment/Worker's compensation statement of benefits with DOB and/or SSN/tribal ID</li> <li>• Eligibility confirmation from state eligibility database or administrator with DOB and/or last four of SSN and/or tribal ID</li> </ul>

**Step 2:** Submit ONE document from Category C\*

CATEGORY C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current program eligibility or government assistance documentation</li> <li>• Current utility bill</li> <li>• Current income statement such as a paystub</li> <li>• Current mortgage or lease statement</li> <li>• Current retirement/pension statement of benefits</li> <li>• Current unemployment/workers' compensation statement of benefits</li> <li>• A notarized letter affirming the subscribers identity and alive status</li> </ul>

**\*NOTE:** Phone and internet bills CANNOT be used as utility bills. You can use water, electricity, and waste removal bills.

## Other things to remember

Consumers should note the following when they submit applications, recertify their Lifeline benefit, and or submit documents:

- Consumers should apply using their full legal name, or the full legal name of their benefit qualifying person (BQP)
  - Do **NOT** use a nickname or other commonly used name, unless appears on their federal, state, or government ID or document
- Documentation must be valid or issued/dated within the last 12 months
- Include the name of the Lifeline-qualifying program, such as SNAP, or the state/local equivalent
  - Medicaid and SNAP programs are often referred to by the state as something, for an example, Colorado calls its Medicaid program *Health First Colorado*
  - Refer to [Healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) for Medicaid program names by state
- Have proof the document was issued by a federal or local government, qualifying program administrator or organization, an employer, or other authorized agency
  - Contain a logo or hologram
  - Include a notarized stamp or seal
  - Printed on program letterhead
  - Contains valid contact information
- If qualifying via a Lifeline-qualifying program, demonstrate the consumer is an active participant
  - Contain effective start and end dates or the period of participation
  - List current status of the participant (i.e. “active”)
- Consumers may submit one or multiple types of documents in order to verify themselves
  - For an example: if a consumer’s address and availability nor address was verified, the consumer may submit
- Consumers applying to Lifeline via a BQP should ensure documentation provides information to complete all NLAD fields. A new validation, as of September 2017, requires information for all BQP fields in NLAD.

## How to submit documentation

When submitting documentation to the Lifeline Support Center:

- Do **NOT** submit original copies of documentation as proof of eligibility, identity, income, and/or address. Consumers should provide copies of the original documentation. Documentation can be submitted as a scanned copy, screenshot or picture, or printout from an online portal.
- Do **NOT** submit documentation with personally identifiable information (PII), such as a Social Security number, birthday, or address, to the Lifeline Support Center via email or other unsecure means for any reason.



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- Include the application ID on all documents when mailing directly to the Lifeline Support Center. This can be done by returning the cover letter that is receiving in outreach mailings from the Lifeline Support Center with the documents or by writing the application ID on the top of each document. If the application ID is not included, the Lifeline Support Center will **NOT** be able to process the documentation.