

256J.32 DOCUMENTING, VERIFYING, AND RECERTIFYING ELIGIBILITY.

Subdivision 1. **Verification of information.** A county agency must only require verification of information necessary to determine MFIP eligibility and the amount of the assistance payment.

Subd. 2. **Documentation.** The applicant or participant must document the information required under subdivisions 4 to 6 or authorize the county agency to verify the information. The applicant or participant has the burden of providing documentary evidence to verify eligibility. The county agency shall assist the applicant or participant in obtaining required documents when the applicant or participant is unable to do so. The county agency may accept a signed personal statement from the applicant or participant only for factors specified under subdivision 8.

Subd. 3. **Contacting third parties.** A county agency must not request information about an applicant or participant that is not of public record from a source other than county agencies, the department, or the United States Department of Health and Human Services without the person's prior written consent. An applicant's signature on an application form constitutes consent for contact with the sources specified on the application. A county agency may use a single consent form to contact a group of similar sources, such as banks or insurance agencies, but the sources to be contacted must be identified by the county agency prior to requesting an applicant's consent.

Subd. 4. **Factors to be verified.** The county agency shall verify the following at application:

- (1) identity of adults;
- (2) presence of the minor child in the home, if questionable;
- (3) relationship of a minor child to caregivers in the assistance unit;
- (4) age, if necessary to determine MFIP eligibility;
- (5) immigration status;
- (6) Social Security number according to the requirements of section 256J.30, subdivision 12;
- (7) income;
- (8) self-employment expenses used as a deduction;
- (9) source and purpose of deposits and withdrawals from business accounts;
- (10) spousal support and child support payments made to persons outside the household;
- (11) real property;
- (12) vehicles;
- (13) checking and savings accounts;
- (14) savings certificates, savings bonds, stocks, and individual retirement accounts;
- (15) pregnancy, if related to eligibility;
- (16) inconsistent information, if related to eligibility;
- (17) burial accounts;
- (18) school attendance, if related to eligibility;
- (19) residence;
- (20) a claim of family violence if used as a basis to qualify for the family violence waiver;

(21) disability if used as the basis for reducing the hourly participation requirements under section 256J.55, subdivision 1, or the type of activity included in an employment plan under section 256J.521, subdivision 2; and

(22) information needed to establish an exception under section 256J.24, subdivision 9.

Subd. 5. [Repealed, 1998 c 407 art 6 s 118]

Subd. 5a. **Inconsistent information.** When the county agency verifies inconsistent information under subdivision 4, clause (16), or 6, clause (5), the reason for verifying the information must be documented in the financial case record.

Subd. 6. **Recertification.** (a) The county agency shall recertify eligibility in an annual face-to-face interview with the participant. The county agency may waive the face-to-face interview and conduct a phone interview for participants who qualify under paragraph (b). During the interview, the county agency shall verify the following:

- (1) presence of the minor child in the home, if questionable;
- (2) income, unless excluded, including self-employment expenses used as a deduction or deposits or withdrawals from business accounts;
- (3) assets when the value is within \$200 of the asset limit;
- (4) information to establish an exception under section 256J.24, subdivision 9, if questionable;
- (5) inconsistent information, if related to eligibility; and
- (6) whether a single caregiver household meets requirements in section 256J.575, subdivision 3.

(b) A participant who is employed any number of hours must be given the option of conducting a face-to-face or phone interview to recertify eligibility. The participant must be employed at the time the interview is scheduled. If the participant loses the participant's job between the time the interview is scheduled and when it is to be conducted, the phone interview may still be conducted.

Subd. 7. **Notice to undocumented persons; release of private data.** County agencies in consultation with the commissioner of human services shall provide notification to undocumented persons regarding the release of personal data to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and develop protocol regarding the release or sharing of data about undocumented persons with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services as required under sections 404, 434, and 411A of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

Subd. 7a. **Requirement to report to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.** The commissioner shall comply with the reporting requirements under United States Code, title 42, section 611a, and any federal regulation or guidance adopted under that law.

Subd. 8. **Personal statement.** The county agency may accept a signed personal statement from the applicant or participant explaining the reasons that the documentation requested in subdivision 2 is unavailable as sufficient documentation at the time of application, recertification, or change related to eligibility only for the following factors:

- (1) a claim of family violence if used as a basis to qualify for the family violence waiver;

(2) information needed to establish an exception under section 256J.24, subdivision 9;

(3) relationship of a minor child to caregivers in the assistance unit;

(4) citizenship status from a noncitizen who reports to be, or is identified as, a victim of severe forms of trafficking in persons, if the noncitizen reports that the noncitizen's immigration documents are being held by an individual or group of individuals against the noncitizen's will. The noncitizen must follow up with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to pursue certification. If verification that certification is being pursued is not received within 30 days, the MFIP case must be closed and the agency shall pursue overpayments. The ORR documents certifying the noncitizen's status as a victim of severe forms of trafficking in persons, or the reason for the delay in processing, must be received within 90 days, or the MFIP case must be closed and the agency shall pursue overpayments; and

(5) other documentation unavailable for reasons beyond the control of the applicant or participant. Reasonable attempts must have been made to obtain the documents requested under subdivision 2.

History: 1997 c 85 art 1 s 21; 1998 c 407 art 6 s 64-66; 1999 c 245 art 6 s 36,37; 2000 c 488 art 10 s 9; 1Sp2001 c 9 art 10 s 19,20,66; 2002 c 379 art 1 s 113; 1Sp2003 c 14 art 1 s 41-44; 2004 c 288 art 4 s 35,36; 2007 c 13 art 1 s 25; 2007 c 147 art 2 s 29; 2008 c 277 art 1 s 41; 2012 c 216 art 8 s 3