



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 5101:4-7-14 Food assistance: systematic alien verification for entitlements program.

Effective: October 1, 2026

A county agency shall use the systematic alien verification for entitlements (SAVE) program established by the department of homeland security (DHS) United States citizenship and immigration service (USCIS). The county agency can access this system through the web-enabled SAVE system to verify the validity of documents provided by aliens applying for supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefits. When accessing the SAVE system, the county agency shall ensure that the individual's privacy is protected to the maximum degree possible.

(A) What is the SAVE system?

The SAVE system is an information-sharing initiative allowing authorized staff to validate a noncitizen's immigration status by accessing USCIS data. The USCIS protects the individual's privacy in accordance with the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1952 and other applicable statutes. No consent for release of information is required to use the SAVE system.

(B) What are the methods of verifying the authenticity of documents using the SAVE system?

There are three methods for verifying documents provided:

- (1) Initial or primary verification uses the alien's alien registration number, "A-number", or USCIS number to provide alien status verification. This verification is used for most applicants. The county agency is to compare the information provided through the SAVE system with the documents provided by the individual. When the documentation matches in the SAVE system, the process is complete and the county agency is to include a copy of the "Initial Verification Result" in the case record.
- (2) Additional or secondary verification provides a more extensive validation when problems appear in the verification of alien status. When an additional verification request is submitted to the SAVE system, the county agency is to include a copy of the "Additional Verification Result" for the case record. Secondary verification is required in any of the following situations:
 - (a) The document appears to be counterfeit or altered.
 - (b) An individual presents unfamiliar USCIS documentation or a document indicates immigration status, but does not contain an "A-number" or USCIS number.
 - (c) The document contains an "A-number" in the A60 000 000 series.
 - (d) The document contains an "A-number" in the A80 000 000 series.



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- (e) An alien has no immigration documentation and is hospitalized, medically disabled, or can otherwise show good cause for the alien's inability to present documentation, and for whom securing such documentation would constitute an undue hardship.
 - (f) An alien presents a foreign passport and/or a I-94 "Arrival-Departure Record" form and the "Admission for Permanent Residence" endorsement is more than one year old.
 - (g) When an individual claims lawful permanent (or conditional) resident status because they are a battered alien, a parent of a battered child(ren) or a victim of domestic violence.
 - (h) A "Certificate of Naturalization" or a "Certificate of Citizenship" is presented, and verification of U.S. citizenship status is required.
 - (i) When an automated check through the SAVE system returns with a response "institute additional verification" or when there is a material discrepancy between an individual's documentation and the record contained in the SAVE system.
- (3) A third-level review is to be completed when SAVE needs to review a copy of the applicants immigration documents to issue a verification response. When submitting a third-step verification, the county agency is to scan and upload any relevant immigration/citizenship documents to SAVE.

(C) How does SAVE verification affect eligibility?

SAVE verification only provides information regarding alien status and eligible alien status is to be determined in accordance with rule 5101:4-3-07 of the Administrative Code.

- (1) No eligibility determination is delayed, denied, reduced or terminated solely because of pending SAVE verification.
- (2) When an individual appears eligible with available USCIS documentation and all other program eligibility criteria are met, the county agency shall issue benefits to the assistance group while awaiting a response from USCIS.
- (3) When the county determines an alien is ineligible after using the SAVE system, the county agency shall send prior notice of adverse action to the assistance group in accordance with the provisions described in rule 5101:6-2-04 of the Administrative Code.



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- (4) The provisions described in accordance with rule 5101:4-8-15 of the Administrative Code are applicable when payments have been erroneously issued.

(D) What are allowable uses of information received through the SAVE program?

The county agency shall use information obtained through the SAVE program only for:

- (1) Verifying the validity of documentation of alien status presented by an applicant;
- (2) Verifying an individual's eligibility for benefits;
- (3) Investigating whether participating assistance groups received benefits to which they were not entitled, when an individual was previously certified to receive benefits on the basis of eligible alien status; and
- (4) Assisting with or conducting administrative disqualification hearings, or criminal or civil prosecutions based on receipt of SNAP benefits to which participating assistance groups were not entitled.