SNAP Error Prone Areas: Wages & Salaries

Laura Ellis | SNAP Quality Assurance Specialist | Economic Assistance and Employment Supports Division
The SNAP ME Team has complied all of the feedback from our technical assistance sessions, customer service reviews, and regional training sessions. Thank you for your valuable input! In response to what we’ve heard from you, we will be presenting on Minnesota’s top error prone areas at each MAFAS and MAXIS Mentor meeting in 2017.
2017 Presentation Topics

- Wages and Salaries
- Household Composition
- Shelter
- Utilities
- Unearned Income
- Child Support
- Self-Employment
The SNAP Identity Verification Document out on the SNAP Resource Page in CountyLink has been reviewed by policy and updated. Remember that there are a wide range of items that will work as verification of identity and photo ID is not required.
CASE NOTE’s are always important, but for cases with income, the CASE NOTE is critical!
Follow the tripod method: Conversation, Verification, and Documentation (CASE NOTE).
You need all 3 aspects to help increase your chance of having a correct case.

Conversation with the client – how much and how often they are paid, what can they anticipate prospectively, do they receive overtime, shift differentials, bonus pay, etc.

Verification – income is a mandatory verification for SNAP (exception: follow TE02.05.106 Self-Declared Income at SNAP Application)

Documentation – include detail in the CASE NOTE (the conversation that happened with the client, the verification on file and why income was budgeted/not budgeted, etc.)

Scripts are available to help you – in the NOTES section, you can use Explanation of Income Budgeted. Income documentation is also a part of the CAF script and the CSR script – it’s now a mandatory field and that’s your reminder to add that detail to your note.
PQ #16688
Verification of a full 30 days of income is NOT required when processing an application, six month report or recertification. A worker may ASK for 30 days of income; however, if 30 days of income is not received a worker may still make an accurate projection of income for the next six month period. When income received 30 days prior to the month of application, Combined Six-month Report or recertification is NOT used, the worker must document in CASE/NOTE what income was used and why that income was used to make an accurate projection of income for the next six-month period.

CM 22.03.01.03 provides guidance for determining (anticipating) prospective income at application, Combined Six-month Report or recertification when USING and NOT USING income received 30 days back from the most recent paystubs and/or other available earned or unearned. CM 22.03.01.03 includes the statement to document in MAXIS CASE/NOTEs what income was used and why.

For most of our clients, based on the client’s pay frequency, when asked for 30 days of wages the client will likely submit the last four weekly paychecks or two 2 bi-weekly paychecks providing 28 days instead of 30 days of income.
For some clients the income and hours from one pay period to the next is fairly close. From the paystubs submitted the worker can look at the Year to Date (YTD) totals and determine that the income and hours have been consistent over a period of time. In these case situations, providing the last 4 weekly paychecks or the 2 bi-weekly paychecks is sufficient verification if the worker documents in CASE/NOTE.

**Common scenario:**
Q: Client starts a new job. We have 1 paystub that shows hours and rate of pay but as the client just started, the paystub is for less hours than they will normally work. Can we accept this and use the client’s statement of anticipated income to budget going forward?

A: Yes

Q: Also if that’s correct, can it be stated verbally or does it have to be in writing – it was in writing in this particular PQ (PQ#14966), but not sure if they’re having a phone conversation with the client if that works as well if documented in case notes.

A: The phone conversation is okay. Workers should do CASE/NOTEs to document the results of their phone conversation.

Q: Lastly, would the agency need to request future proof once the client establishes a history of pay or is this sufficient?

A: The verification is valid for the remainder of the certification period if no changes are reported. Clients do NOT need to get additional proof once the client has earned enough paychecks.
You’re familiar with the chicken and the egg dilemma – what comes first? When it comes to the Work Number, the client’s request for assistance comes first.

Question: When are we allowed to use the work number? Do we need permission? What is considered permission? Not efficient to send out EV for Walmart only to get the letter from Walmart that they require us to use the Work Number.

Answer:
County agencies are to use The Work Number (TWN) to verify client income when the client is unable to obtain income verification needed or the information provided is inconsistent. It is also used for assessing overpayments and/or fraud.
An authorization to release is not required to use the work number.
It is the client’s responsibility to provide verifications of income. They have multiple options available by which to verify this (not just the Employer Verification form) and they need to be allowed the opportunity to decide which option to choose. This involves sending the client a verification request form and allowing 10 days for the client to provide the requested verification.

It is the agency’s responsibility to assist if the client requests assistance. At this point, when the client has indicated they need assistance in obtaining verification,
the agency can use the work number. If the client contacts you to request assistance before the end of the 10 day period mentioned above, you do not have to wait the full 10 days before sending the work number request. You can also let the client know (during an intake for example) that you have access to the work number system and can obtain verification on their behalf, but again, this is just one of their options. If receiving a verbal request by a client to use the work number, be sure to document in CASE NOTES.

Notes: See PQ’s 16015, 16221, 17370, and 17285 for reference.
Again, you have the SNAP Resource Page on CountyLink and Scripts as well.

• **POLI TEMP:**
  - TE02.05.106 Self-Declared Income at SNAP Application
  - TE02.05.54 Processing FS Application – Income Starts
  - TE02.05.55 Processing FS Application – Income Ends

• **SIR MAXIS Training Toolkit:**
  - SNAP – Anticipating Income
  - Case Notes Self-Directed Presentation
If eligible for bonus money, 25% is retained by the state and 75% is shared with counties.

More money = we're better equipped and able to serve our clients and provide them access to timely and accurate benefits.
Please submit any policy related questions through PolicyQuest. Thanks!