

# **OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**

## **FIELD INVESTIGATION AND REFERRAL PROCESS**



**August 2016**

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## Field Investigation Process

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Before submitting a referral the Income Maintenance Caseworker (IMCW) must first attempt to verify eligibility factors and authorize, deny, or adjust benefits for applications, redeterminations, and partial redeterminations. This includes an attempt to verify and document as much information as possible concerning questionable information, suspicion of fraud, or a tip concerning an applicant or recipient. However, there may be instances when the IMCW, after taking all steps to satisfy an outstanding condition of eligibility through contact with the applicant/individual and collateral sources or through automated sources, questions the completeness, validity, or accuracy of statements or documentation.

In instances where additional information is needed, questions remain concerning eligibility, or suspicions remain prior to the authorization of benefits or before an overpayment referral is completed and submitted (for recipients), the IMCW should make a referral to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for a field investigation. Referrals can be made on applicants and active recipients. The reasons for making a referral can include but are not limited to:

- questionable state or county of an individual's residence;
- questionable location of an absent parent;
- unreported or under reported income, particularly where expenses significantly exceed income;
- reports or other information received alleging ineligibility or suspected fraud and the IMCW is unable to verify their accuracy without investigatory help.

The IMCW will complete and forward the OIG 12 and attached document(s) to the OIG Investigator.

The OIG Investigator will conduct an investigation, complete the Investigative Findings Section of the Field Investigation Referral, and return the Field Investigation Referral to the IMCW. The OIG Investigator will strive to complete the investigation within five workdays or notify the CAO liaison when extensions are required on referrals involving applications or reapplications. All other field investigations will be completed as soon as the OIG Investigator can develop the facts. IMCWs will only refer cases with known domestic violence after the referral has been reviewed and approved by DHS's Bureau of Policy (BOP). Do not refer a case for investigation involving expedited food stamps.

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The IMCW, upon review of the investigative findings, will make an eligibility determination. The IMCW will complete Section IV, Result of Investigation, and return the OIG 12 to the OIG Investigator within 30 days.

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### FIELD INVESTIGATION PROCESS

The IMCW initiates the Field Investigation Process by completing specific sections of the Field Investigation Referral (OIG 12 and 12.2). The IMCW forwards the Field Investigation Referral and the appropriate application document (if referral involves an application) to the OIG Investigator. The OIG 12 and 12.2 are processed as follows:

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| IMCW                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Completes Section I and Section II of the OIG 12.</li><li>2. Provides comments to identify specific information that requires a field investigation. Information should include all steps the IMCW has conducted prior to the referral.</li><li>3. Submits the OIG 12, a copy of the applicant's/individual's application document (if referral involves an application), and/or other supporting documentation to the OIG Investigator.</li></ol> |
| OIG<br>INVESTIGATOR | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Initiates an investigation.</li><li>5. Completes Section III of the OIG 12, using the Investigative Findings Continuation Page (OIG 12.2), if necessary. The OIG Investigator will not use specific identifying information on contacts gathered during the investigation due to confidentiality concerns.</li><li>6. Returns the OIG 12 and 12.2 (if appropriate) to the IMCW.</li></ol>  |
| IMCW                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. Completes Section IV of the OIG 12 indicating the action taken and forwards the OIG 12 to the OIG Investigator within 30 days.</li></ol>   |

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### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE FIELD INVESTIGATION REFERRAL (OIG 12 and 12.2)

#### **SECTION I: REFERRAL INFORMATION - Completed by IMCW**

- Item 1**      **INDIVIDUAL'S NAME** - Enter the applicant's/individual's first name, middle initial, and last name.
- Item 2**      **IMCW NAME** - Enter the first name, middle initial, and last name of the IMCW who completes Sections I and II.
- Item 3**      **COUNTY/RECORD NUMBER** - Enter the applicant's/individual's two-digit county number and seven-digit record number.
- Item 4**      **INDIVIDUAL NUMBER** – Enter the applicant's/client's nine-digit individual number
- Item 5**      **LANGUAGE PREFERENCE** - Enter the applicant's/client's preferred language (do not enter code).
- Item 6**      **DOES INDIVIDUAL CLAIM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?** - Enter a check mark in the appropriate box to indicate if the applicant/individual claims domestic violence. If domestic violence is known/indicated in the casefile, the IMCW will indicate that the client has claimed domestic violence. The referral will then be forwarded to DHS's Bureau of Policy (BOP) for review. BOP will review the referral and the domestic violence circumstances. If it is determined by BOP that the domestic violence circumstances fall into one of the approved mitigating circumstances pursuant to DHS policy, BOP staff will return the referral to the IMCW informing them it is approved for referral to the OIG. Once the IMCW receives the approval from BOP, the IMCW will check "Yes" next to "If Yes, was referral reviewed and approved by BOP" in Box 6 and send the referral to the OIG for investigation. If it is determined by BOP that the domestic violence circumstances do not fall into one of the approved mitigating circumstances, BOP staff will disapprove the referral and return it to the IMCW and no further action will be taken

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**Item 7**      **ASSISTANCE                      PROGRAMS/SERVICES                      INVOLVING INVESTIGATION** - Enter a check mark in the appropriate box for each category of assistance or services for which the applicant/individual is applying or receiving. Include categories for Cash (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medical Assistance, GA Related Medical Assistance, TANF Related Medical Assistance, SSI Related Medical Assistance, PCA Related Medical Assistance, MG Related Medical Assistance, Special Allowance, Long Term Care, Child Support, Employment and Training, LIHEAP, and Other. Check all that apply.  
**NOTE:** LIHEAP investigations are only to be referred if the IMCW has a suspicion of fraud.

**Item 8**      **REFERRAL FOR** - Enter a check mark in the appropriate box to indicate the type of referral. Check all that apply.

### **SECTION II: REASON(S) FOR REFERRAL (Explain) - Completed by IMCW**

Complete this Section providing specific details about the information needed and all steps taken to verify information. The information provided will be used by the OIG Investigator when conducting the investigation.

**IMCW SIGNATURE & DATE** – Sign/date the form.

**REFERRAL DATE TO OIG** – Enter the date the referral is forwarded to the OIG Investigator.

### **SECTION III: INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS - Completed by OIG Investigator**

**BFPP FILE NO.**      The BFPP file number is a tracking number used by the OIG and is unique to each investigation.

**Item 1**      **DATE RECEIVED** - Enter the date the OIG Investigator received the referral from the CAO.

**Item 2**      **INVESTIGATOR NAME** - Enter the OIG Investigator's first name, middle initial, and last name.

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**Item 3**      **DATE RETURNED** - Enter the date the OIG Investigator returns the referral form to the CAO.

**Item 4**      **INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS (USE CONTINUATION PAGE, IF NECESSARY)** - Enter a summary of the investigative findings without specific identifying information.

**INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE /DATE** - Sign/date the form and return it to the CAO.

### **SECTION IV: RESULT OF INVESTIGATION - Completed by IMCW**

**ACTION TAKEN: (CHECK BOX THAT APPLIES)** - Enter a check mark in the box which best describes the action taken on the application. Check one box. **NOTE:** For Codes 62, 63, and 64 below, if the category of assistance is Special Allowances, Child Care, and/or LIHEAP, the IMCW must provide the amount that the applicant would have received or recipient is ineligible to receive.

**Codes:**

- **61 - NO REDUCTION IN BENEFITS** - Eligibility for all categories of assistance was not affected by the OIG Investigator's findings.
- **62 - DENIED/CASE CLOSED** - The IMCW, based on the OIG Investigator's findings, either denied issuing benefits for all categories of assistance on an application or closed all of an active recipient's benefits.
- **63 - VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL** - The applicant or recipient voluntarily withdrew their application for benefits or requested case closure.
- **64 - REDUCED BENEFITS\*** - Benefits were authorized, however, based on the OIG Investigator's findings the original amount of benefits requested for any category of assistance was reduced to correspond with



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the applicant's/recipient's eligibility or one category was closed or reduced while others remained open. As indicated by the asterisk (\*), if Code 64 is marked, enter the reduced benefit amount(s) and/or number of persons in the **AUTHORIZED WITH REDUCED BENEFITS** field and include comments describing why benefits/persons were reduced in the **COMMENTS** field.

- **65 - REJECTED - CAO ACTION** - The application was denied before the OIG Investigator began or completed the investigation or for other reasons. If the reduction or closure is based on the OIG Investigator's findings, use Code 62 or 64.

**COMMENTS:** Explain the action taken.

**IMCW SIGNATURE/DATE** - Sign/date the form and return it to the OIG Investigator with a copy to the IMC Supervisor.