

# **Policy Clarification**

## **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – All**

### **PFS-22591-560**

**Submitted: September 10, 2026**

**Agency: CAOs**

**Subject: Verifying Shelter and Utility Cost Changes When a Change is Reported and Methods of Verifying Cooling Costs**

- Questions:**
- 1. Is verification required for changes in Shelter and Utility costs reported at renewal?**
  - 2. How should a worker address a case in which a change of shelter cost is reported on the Semi-Annual Reporting (SAR) when the residential address is not updated, and the change is not verified?**
  - 3. Must changes in shelter and utility costs be verified when a decrease is reported or only when an increase is reported?**
  - 4. How should a worker verify a cooling responsibility?**
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**Response By: BOP**

**Date: September 10, 2026**

Shelter and utility costs must be verified for current residence at Application and *anytime* there is a ***reported change***.

1. Verification is required at Renewal in order to receive the appropriate shelter and SUA deduction if there is no verification on file for the current residential address or if the household *reports a change* in the amount, regardless of whether the cost increases or decreases. If a change is reported on the PA 600R or during an interview, a PA 253 must be sent requesting verification of the reported change in costs allowing the household 10 days to respond. If verification of shelter and/or utility expenses are requested and the household fails to provide the requested verification, then the household has waived their right to the expense deduction, and the expense should be removed. In the

event there are less than 10 days left in the certification period, the case should be processed without the shelter costs (if not received by the certification deadline) and a benefit adjustment issued if the verification is provided within the 10-day time frame as requested on the PA 253.

2. Shelter and utility costs must be verified at SAR in order to receive the appropriate shelter and SUA deduction *whenever a change is reported* in order for the household to receive the income deduction; this applies whether the reported amount increases or decreases. If a change is reported at SAR and no verification is provided, the County Assistance Office (CAO) should first attempt to contact the household to request verification of the change in shelter cost. A PA 253 should be sent requesting verification within 10 days. If there is insufficient time remaining in the budget month or if the household fails to provide verification within 10 days, the SAR should be processed removing the deduction for which the reported change remains unverified. If verification is later received, the case should be updated according to the verified amount. Verification received within the 10-day time frame as requested on the PA 253 should be issued a benefit adjustment as required. Changes reported at SAR should be treated the same as when a change is reported at any other time within the certification period.
3. Any change reported in shelter and utility costs must be verified in order to receive the appropriate shelter and SUA deduction regardless of whether the cost increases or decreases. **The previously reported and verified amount MAY NOT be used after a change has been reported.** Anytime a change is reported but not verified, the CAO must send a PA 253 and allow 10 days for the household to respond and provide the requested verification after which the expense should be zeroed out and benefits adjusted accordingly. If verification of shelter and/or utility expenses are requested and the household fails to provide the requested verification, then the household has waived their right to the expense deduction, and the expense should be removed.
4. Cooling costs, defined as the operation of air conditioning systems or room air conditioners (not including fans), qualifies for the Heating and Cooling Standard Utility Allowance amount. As all air conditioning units operate on electricity, verification may include:
  - a. A copy of an electric bill in the name of a household member if the household has indicated the presence of an air conditioning unit.
  - b. A copy of a lease indicating household responsibility for cooling costs.
  - c. A statement from the landlord indicating household responsibility for cooling costs.
  - d. Copy or receipt from landlord or utility company.