



**DATE:** February 9, 2026

**OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #26-02-01**

**SUBJECT:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Shelter and Utility Verification Changes

**TO:** Executive Directors

**FROM:** Robert Hixson  
 Director  
 Bureau of Operations

**PURPOSE**

To inform County Assistance Offices (CAOs) of changes to the shelter and utility verification policy for SNAP.

**SUMMARY AND CHANGE**

Old Policy	New Policy
Verify shelter and utility expenses only when questionable.	Verify shelter and utility expenses at application and reported change to residential address.  Only verify shelter and utility expenses at reapplication when there is not verified shelter and utility expenses on file for the current residential address or if it is questionable and at Semi-Annual Reporting (SAR) if there is a reported change.

**DISCUSSION**

Shelter and utility verification requirements are changing to help reduce the SNAP Payment Error Rate. Previously, client statement was an acceptable form of verification, if the reported shelter costs and utility responsibilities were not questionable. However, Quality Control reviews require the reviewer to get verification of the shelter and utility costs, and when they are not consistent with what is in the case record at the time of the review, it results in the case being cited with an error.

Effective February 9, 2026, the CAO will now have to obtain verification of reported shelter and utilities costs for an applicant or recipient's current residence. This will occur for all applications and change of residential address reports received as of the effective date. If current recipients do not have verified shelter or utility expenses on file, it will be verified at the next reapplication, beginning with reapplications due as of the effective date of this policy change.

[SNAP Handbook 578 Appendix A](#): Verification Information Generally Available from the Client has a list of appropriate verification to ask for when pending for shelter and/or utility costs. The CAO may also provide form [PA 1795](#), "Household Members/Living Expenses" to applicants or recipients to be completed by a landlord or housing agency.

If the household is reporting no shelter or utility expenses (for example, the household is homeless), the CAO is not required to obtain verification and can accept the household's statement unless questionable.

**NOTE:** Returned mail alerts and reports of address change from a Managed Care Organization or other agency are not considered a change of address report from the household, and workers should follow Operations Memorandum (Ops Memo) [24-07-07](#) and Ops Memo [24-07-06](#).

**REMINDER:** SNAP Handbook 570.21 - SNAP SAR households are not required to report change of address and new shelter costs until SAR or at reapplication.

[SNAP Handbook 570.22](#) - Non-SAR households must report address changes and new shelter costs within 10 days of the change. This does not apply to Extended SNAP households during the Extended SNAP period.

## **PROCEDURE**

In the Electronic Client Information System when the shelter and utility information is not verified, this information must be pending for by selecting "Pending Verification" from the dropdown on the Shelter and Utility screen. The CAO will send a PA 253 to the household requesting verification of their shelter and/or utility responsibility, providing form PA 1795 if needed and allowing a minimum of 10 days for the household to provide the verification.

If the household provides verification of their shelter and/or utility expenses, the CAO must enter those expenses on the Shelter and Utility screen and run eligibility before completing a narrative. If the household fails to provide the required verification for shelter and/or utility expenses, the CAO will remove the shelter and utility deductions. The system will evaluate the household without applying the deductions. The worker will narrate that no shelter and/or utility costs were provided so the case was processed without shelter and/or utility costs. **The CAO will not reject or close benefits if the household fails to provide verification of shelter and/or utility**

**costs.**

**EXAMPLE:** An Elderly/Disabled Simplified Application Project identified with Program Status Code FS 75 household lives at 123 Main St with adjusted rent of \$500 monthly. They report a change of address to the CAO with a new address of 456 Main Street and new rent of \$750 monthly. The CAO sends a notice requesting verification, but none is provided. Since verification was not provided, the CAO must remove the rent from the Shelter and Utility screen and count \$0 shelter expenses.

**NEXT STEPS**

1. Share and review this Ops Memo with appropriate staff.
2. Direct questions on this Ops Memo to your Area Manager.
3. This Ops Memo will be obsolete when the Handbook is updated.