

11/01/04

Bulletin No. 04-09

P-2900 C

P-2900 Fuel ProgramC. Application Processing1. Data Entry and Application Processing

Staff of the Office of Home Heating Fuel Assistance (OHHFA) enters applications into ACCESS upon receipt each day (APPL/C).

The application should include a yellow return receipt postcard completed by the applicant. If the card is received and complete, it is stamped with the date received and anticipated date of benefit issuance if the applicant is determined eligible. It is mailed back to the applicant within two business days.

Fuel BPS processes eligibility in ACCESS using FUEL/C. All approvals and denials are done on a nightly basis. Fuel BPS may manually approve eligibility. Denial notices are generated daily. Notices of eligibility are generated at the time payment is made.

2. Processing Codes (VERIFIED Field in FUEL/C)

When fuel eligibility or verification is pending, the VERIFIED field on FUEL/C is Q (Questionable).

When the information or verification is received change the Q to **V** (verified) in VERIFIED field on FUEL/C for applications received by the primary application period deadline (July 15 through August 31 or as specified in Fuel Rule 2902.1)

If the application was received in **September**, but after the primary application period deadline, enter an **S** in the VERIFIED field on FUEL/C. These recipients will receive 100 percent of the full season's benefit in January. If the application may be processed and included in time for the November benefit, enter a **V** in the VERIFIED field to generate the issuance in November.

If the application was received in **October** enter an **O** in the VERIFIED field on FUEL/C. These recipients will receive 100 percent of the full season's benefit in January.

If the application was received in **November** enter an **N** in the VERIFIED field on FUEL/C. These recipients will receive 100 percent of the full season's benefit in January.

If the application was received in **December** enter a **D** in the VERIFIED field on FUEL/C. These recipients will receive 80 percent of the full season's benefit in February.

If the application was received in **January** enter a **J** in the VERIFIED field on FUEL/C. These recipients will receive 60 percent of the full season's benefit in March.

If the application was received in **February** enter an **B** in the VERIFIED field on FUEL/C.

These recipients will receive 40 percent of the full season's benefit in March.

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C. Application Processing (Continued)

3. Requests for Additional Information or Verification

Interviews are not required, but Fuel BPS may contact applicants by phone or mail to clarify questionable or confusing information or to obtain additional information.

If information is questionable, verification may be required as stated in Fuel Rule 2905.

Applicants will be allowed no less than twelve days to respond to a request for information or verification. The twelve day count begins the day after we mail the request.

a. Fuel Assistance and/or Health Care Programs Only

When information is questionable and may be provided verbally, attempt to contact the applicant by phone. If the applicant cannot be reached by phone or a written response is required, send a PATH 202V, Verification Request, with a deadline for providing the information or verification and enter a Q in the VERIFIED field on FUEL/C in ACCESS.

If the applicant does not provide the information within the specified time frame, change the Q to F. The application will be denied and a notice will be generated.

b. Pending Eligibility for Reach Up, Food Stamps, Essential Person, and/or Healthcare Programs

When the applicant has applied for other programs and the eligibility determination is pending, the fuel application cannot be accurately processed. Enter a Q in the VERIFIED field on FUEL/C and hold the application until eligibility has been determined for other programs. If a benefit issuance deadline is near, notify the District Office Benefit Program Specialist of possible adverse effects to the applicant and request expeditious processing.

c. Active Reach Up, Food Stamps, and/or Essential Person Programs

Income / Resource Verification: To the extent that the department collects and maintains income and resource information within its automated ACCESS data system on recipients of ongoing programs, such income/resource information will be used for the determination of eligibility and benefits for the Fuel Program.

If income or resource information in ACCESS is different and more recent than what is reported on the Fuel application, the information in ACCESS will be used to determine Fuel eligibility.

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P-2900 Fuel ProgramC. Application Processing3. Requests for Additional Information or Verificationc. Active Reach Up, Food Stamps, and/or Essential Person Programs (Continued)

*If the income or resource information on the Fuel application is different and more recent than what is on ACCESS, the Fuel BPS will request verification for **all active programs.** A PATH 202V Verification Request will be sent, checking off all active programs and with a deadline allowing the applicant no less than twelve days to respond. A questionable code Q will be entered in the VERIFIED field on FUEL/C in ACCESS. A CATN message will be sent to the district BPS worker indicating verification has been requested for all programs and the date due.*

If income reported is “new”, having not been reported or recorded in the ACCESS system, the fuel BPS will send a PATH 202V requesting the client have their employer complete an Employment Information form (218E) and submit all pay stubs received in the last 30 days.

If the applicant indicates termination of employment, which has not been reported or recorded in the ACCESS system, the fuel BPS will send a PATH 202V requesting the client have their employer complete an Employment Termination form (218ET) and submit all pay stubs received in the last 30 days.

d. Eligibility Determination when verification is provided

When the applicant provides information as requested, the fuel BPS worker will update the appropriate STAT panels in ACCESS, process fuel eligibility, and send a CATN message to the district BPS worker indicating verification was received. The original documentation will be sent via interoffice “pink” mail to the district BPS with a brightly colored routing slip. Copies of the documentation will be kept with the fuel application.

e. Eligibility Determination when verification is not received

If the applicant does not provide the information within the specified time frame, the Fuel BPS will change the Q to F. The application for fuel assistance will be denied and a notice will be generated the following morning. The fuel BPS will notify the district BPS case worker by sending a CATN message that verification was not received. District BPS staff will be responsible for determining the course of action and determination of eligibility for the programs they administer according to applicable program rules and regulations.

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C. Application Processing

3. Requests for Additional Information or Verification (Continued)

f. Verification for Caretaker/Companionship/Medically Necessary Services

An elderly or disabled applicant whose live-in caretaker has resources or income (other than payment from the applicant for services provided in the home) may be asked to provide proof that the caretaker provides homemaker or personal care services that the applicant cannot or should not perform. If the need for these services is questionable, send the applicant a PATH 202SFP (Verification for Medically Necessary Services) to be completed by the applicant's physician, or a PATH 202SFH (Household Verification for Caretaker or Companionship Services) to be completed by the customer and signed by both customer and caretaker or companion. If proof is not provided, the live-in caretaker must be included as a member and his or her income and resources considered when determining eligibility.

NOTE: No verification is needed if the applicant receives Essential Person benefits.