



**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Public and Indian Housing**

Special Attention of:

Public Housing Agency Directors; Section 8 and Public Housing Administrators; Public Housing Hub Office Directors; Public Housing Field Office Directors; Program Center Coordinators; Section 8 Financial Management Center; Resident Management Corporations; Resident Councils

Notice PIH 2004-18 (HA)

Issued: September 17, 2004

Expires: September 30, 2005

Cross References:

Subject: **Verification of Social Security (SS) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits**

Purpose: The purpose of this Notice is to inform Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) of the *required* procedures for verifying social security benefits of applicants, participants and household members during mandatory examination of household income.

Applicability: This notice applies to HUD-PIH rental assistance programs, including: Public Housing, Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation, Housing Choice Voucher and Section 8 Project-Based Certificate Programs.

Overview: It has been the standard practice of PHAs to verify social security benefits of applicants, participants and household members by either contacting the local office of the Social Security Administration (SSA) by phone or in writing, reviewing an original social security benefit check, or accepting tenant-provided benefit letters.

In an ongoing effort to eliminate time consuming manual requests for benefit verification from PHAs, SSA provides HUD with benefit information on all current participants and household members who have disclosed a valid social security number. HUD makes this information available to administrators of Public Housing and Section 8 programs through HUD's Tenant Assessment Subsystem (TASS) and Upfront Income Verification (UIV) system. All PHAs are required to use TASS or UIV to verify SS/SSI benefits of current participants and household members.

Despite this convenient data exchange between SSA and HUD, SSA continues to receive a large volume of requests for income verification from PHAs. The SSA has taken the position that local SSA offices will no longer furnish verification of social security benefits via phone, mail, or fax. This Notice describes the

required procedures for verifying Social Security (SS) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits of applicants, participants, and household members of HUD-assisted rental units.

Effective Date: This notice is effective immediately.

Third Party Verification Requirement

PHAs are required to comply with 24 CFR §960.259(c)(1) and §982.516(a)(2), which requires PHAs to obtain and document in the family file third party verification of the following factors, or document in the file why third party verification was not available: (1) reported family annual income; (2) the value of assets; (3) expenses related to deductions from annual income; and (4) other factors that affect the determination of adjusted income or income-based rent.

Third Party Verification of SS/SSI Benefits of Applicants and Household Members

Third party verification of SS/SSI benefits of applicants and household members is not available. PHAs should request a current (dated within the last 60 days) SSA benefit verification letter for each household member that receives social security benefits. If the applicant and/or household member are unable to provide the requested document, ask the applicant/household member to call SSA at 1-800-772-1213 to request a benefit verification letter. The request for a benefit verification letter can also be made at the SSA Internet Website at www.ssa.gov. From the front page of the website (Social Security Online), click on *Already receiving* benefits, which is located in the center column of the page. From the right side of the page under *Things You Can Do Online*, click on *Get a "Proof of Income Letter."* Follow the instructions on the page to complete the request for a benefit verification letter. The applicant/household member should provide the POA with the original benefit verification letter. The POA should make a photocopy of the original benefit verification letter, return the original benefit verification letter to the applicant/household member, and maintain the photocopy of the benefit verification letter in the tenant file.

Third Party Verification of SS/SSI Benefits of Participants and Household Members

Third party verification of SS/SSI benefits of participants and household members is available through HUD's Tenant Assessment Subsystem (TASS) or Upfront Income Verification (UIV) System. ***All PHAs are required to use TASS or UIV to verify SS/SSI benefits of current participants and household members.*** PHAs who do not currently have access to TASS may contact HUD's Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) on 1-888-245-4860 or by logging on the REAC web page: <http://www.hud.gov/reac>. On the REAC web page, on the left side, click on *Online Systems*. From the right side of the web page, click on *Online Registration* to request access to TASS. HUD will announce the availability of HUD's UIV system at a later date. However, PHAs within the following States should contact their local HUD field office to register as soon as possible for access to the UIV system: Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, North

Dakota, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and Vermont.

If benefit information is not available in HUD Systems, the POA should request a current SSA benefit verification letter from each household member that receives social security benefits. If the participant and/or household members are unable to provide the requested document, ask the participant/household member to call SSA at 1-800-772-1213 to request a benefit verification letter. The request for a benefit verification letter can also be made at the SSA Internet Website at www.ssa.gov. From the front page of the website (Social Security Online), click on *Already receiving* benefits, which is located in the center column of the page. From the right side of the page under *Things You Can Do Online*, click on *Get a "Proof of Income Letter."* Follow the instructions on the page to complete the request for a benefit verification letter. The participant/household member should provide the POA with the original benefit verification letter. The POA should make a photocopy of the original benefit verification letter, return the original benefit verification letter to the participant/household member, and maintain the photocopy of the benefit letter in the tenant file.

Documentation of Unavailability of Third Party Verification of SS/SSI Benefits

In the event that third party verification is not available, the PHA must document the tenant file as to why third party verification was not available. Below are some examples of acceptable file documentation:

- New admission, information not available in TASS
- New tenant, information not available in TASS
- Current tenant, information not available in TASS due to change in re-examination date
- Current tenant, information not available in TASS due to discrepancy with name, date of birth, or social security number in SSA file
- Current tenant, information not available in TASS, reason unknown

How to Ensure Availability of Social Security Benefit Information in HUD Systems

The availability of social security benefit information in HUD systems is dependent upon data quality and timely submission of HUD Form 50058 to the Public and Indian Housing Information Center (PIC). PHAs must ensure that data entered on HUD Form 50058 is accurate and complete. If a family's HUD Form 50058 is not successfully submitted to PIC, social security benefit information will not be available in HUD income verification systems. Below is a summary of error descriptions, explanations, and corrective actions to take in order to reduce the number of unavailable Social Security Benefit reports.

Error Description	Explanation	Corrective Action
Member SSN not sent to SSA – invalid SSN	HUD did not submit the SSN to SSA based on the invalid characteristics of the SSN. For example, 999-99-9999, 111-11-1111, etc.	Enter a valid SSN on HUD Form 50058, or request original social security card from tenant. Confirm SSN displayed on the social security card matches the SSN reported on the HUD Form 50058. If the numbers do not match, make the necessary correction to the HUD Form 50058.
No benefits reported by SSA	The tenant's identity was verified by SSA based on the SSN/Last Name/Date of Birth combination. However, the tenant does not and has never received SS/SSI benefits.	None Note: In some cases a tenant may actually receive benefits but the local SSA field office has not updated SSA's master file with the benefit information. Thus the current benefit information is not displayed.
SSN not found in SSA records	The tenant's SSN is not a valid number issued by SSA.	Request original social security card from tenant. Confirm SSN displayed on the card matches the SSN reported on the HUD Form 50058. If the numbers do not match, make the necessary correction to the HUD Form 50058.
SSN was not verified by SSA	The tenant's SSN is not a valid number issued by SSA.	Request original social security card from tenant. Confirm SSN displayed on the social security card matches the SSN reported on the HUD Form 50058. If the numbers do not match, make the necessary correction to the HUD Form 50058.
Surname matched, but date of birth did not match with SSA records	The tenant's identity was not verified because while the Surname matched with SSA records, the Date of Birth did not match. However, based on the SSN/Last Name combination, SSA has indicated that the tenant does	Request original birth certificate from tenant. Confirm Date of Birth displayed on the birth certificate matches the Date of Birth reported on the HUD Form 50058. If the Date of Birth does not match, make

Error Description	Explanation	Corrective Action
	not receive SS/SSI benefits.	the necessary correction to the HUD Form 50058.
Date of birth matched, but surname did not match with SSA records	The tenant's identity was not verified because while the Date of Birth matched with SSA records, the Surname did not match. However, based on the SSN/Date of Birth combination, SSA has indicated that the tenant does not receive SS/SSI benefits.	Request birth certificate and social security card of tenant/household member. Confirm Surname on all documents matches the Surname reported on the HUD Form 50058. If the Surname does not match, verify the change in Surname (court order, marriage license, etc.) and make the necessary correction to the HUD Form 50058.
SS benefits cannot be disclosed due to discrepancy in date of birth	The tenant's identity was verified by SSA based on the SSN/Last Name combination and the <u>tenant is receiving SS benefits</u> . However, due to the discrepancy in the Date of Birth, the benefit information cannot be disclosed.	Request original birth certificate from tenant. Confirm Date of Birth displayed on the birth certificate matches the Date of Birth reported on the HUD Form 50058. If the Date of Birth does not match, make the necessary correction to the HUD Form 50058.
SS benefits cannot be disclosed due to discrepancy in name	The tenant's identity was verified by SSA based on the SSN/Date of Birth combination and the <u>tenant is receiving SS benefits</u> . However, due to the discrepancy in the Last Name, the benefit information cannot be disclosed.	Request birth certificate and social security card of tenant/household member. Confirm Surname on all documents match. If the Surnames do not match, verify the change in Surname (court order, marriage license, etc.) and make the necessary correction to the HUD Form 50058.
SSI benefits cannot be disclosed due to discrepancy in date of birth	The tenant's identity was verified by SSA based on the SSN/Last Name combination and the <u>tenant is receiving SSI benefits</u> . However, due to the discrepancy in the Date of Birth, the benefit information cannot be disclosed.	Request original birth certificate from tenant. Confirm Date of Birth displayed on the birth certificate matches the Date of Birth reported on the HUD Form 50058. If the Date of Birth does not match, make the necessary correction to the HUD Form 50058.

Error Description	Explanation	Corrective Action
SSI benefits cannot be disclosed due to discrepancy in name	The tenant's identity was verified by SSA based on the SSN/Date of Birth combination and the tenant <u>is receiving SSI benefits</u> . However, due to the discrepancy in the Last Name, the benefit information cannot be disclosed.	Request birth certificate and social security card of tenant/household member. Confirm Surname on all documents match. If the Surname does not match, verify the change in Surname (court order, marriage license, etc.) and make the necessary correction to the HUD Form 50058.
SS and SSI benefits cannot be disclosed due to discrepancy in date of birth	The tenant's identity was verified by SSA based on the SSN/Last Name combination and the tenant <u>is receiving both SS and SSI benefits</u> . However, due to the discrepancy in the Date of Birth, the benefit information cannot be disclosed.	Request original birth certificate from tenant. Confirm Date of Birth displayed on the birth certificate matches the Date of Birth reported on the HUD Form 50058. If the Date of Birth does not match, make the necessary correction to the HUD Form 50058.
SS and SSI benefits cannot be disclosed due to discrepancy in name	The tenant's identity was verified by SSA based on the SSN/Date of Birth combination and the tenant <u>is receiving both SS and SSI benefits</u> . However, due to the discrepancy in the Last Name, the benefit information cannot be disclosed,	Request birth certificate and social security card of tenant/household member. Confirm Surname on all documents match. If the Surname does not match, verify the change in Surname (court order, marriage license, etc.) and make the necessary correction to the HUD Form 50058.

For inquiries about this Notice contact: your local HUD Field Office.

Paperwork Reduction. The information collection requirements contained in this notice have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3520) and assigned OMB control number(s) 2577-0220.

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act, HUD may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

/s/

Michael Liu, Assistant Secretary
for Public and Indian Housing