

*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street • Boston, MA 02111*

DEVAL L. PATRICK
Governor

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
Lieutenant Governor


JOHN W. POLANOWICZ
Secretary

STACEY MONAHAN
Interim Commissioner

Tel.: 617-348-8600
Fax: 617-348-8575
www.mass.gov/dta

**Operations Memo 2013-14 A
May 2, 2013**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

From:  Stephanie Brown, Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations

Re: SNAP, TAFDC and EAEDC - Verifying Noncitizen Status: Mandatory SAVE Documentation

Overview

Department policies and procedures require verification of citizenship status prior to issuing benefits. A recent report by the Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General highlights the importance of confirming a noncitizen's status and documenting this status in the case record. The Department is required to use the federal Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program to validate the immigration status of any noncitizen to determine whether the individual meets noncitizen requirements for benefit eligibility purposes.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) updated the SAVE program document selection screens for validating noncitizen immigration status and provides guidance for increasing the chances of successful initial noncitizen status verification.

This Operations Memo is being reissued to clarify who can call the Systems Support Help Desk to have passwords reset.

Purpose of Memo

This Operations Memo is being issued to:

- remind TAO staff how to obtain passwords to log in to SAVE;
 - remind TAO staff how to verify noncitizen status;
 - provide TAO staff with updated information from USCIS regarding SAVE document selections; and
 - remind TAO staff about the USCIS fact sheet clients can use to correct erroneous status information; and
 - always filing documentation of noncitizen status in the case record.
-

Obsolete Memo

This memo obsoletes Operations Memo 2013-14.

**Verifying
Citizenship
through
Verification
Information
System (VIS)
Logging In to
SAVE**

The SAVE Program's Verification Information System (VIS) is used to verify the noncitizen's immigration status, primarily by using the noncitizen's alien registration number (A number), if available. The case manager should use this website: <https://save.uscis.gov/Web/> to access the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Verification Information System (USCISVIS).

To log into SAVE and create a new password, TAO staff must:

- click in the User Id field and enter the letters "ma" followed by their Wel Id. For example, if the Wel Id is Welxxa, then the User ID would be mawelxxa;
- have the authorized TAO designated caller call the Help Desk and request a default password. Enter the default password in the Password field and click the Login button. A prompt will be displayed to create a new password;
- click in the Old Password field and enter the default password. Then enter the new password in the next two fields; and
- click the Submit button when finished. The Welcome screen of the SAVE website will be displayed.

Note: Passwords must be changed every 45 days.

**Verifying
Citizenship
through
Verification
Information
System (VIS)
(continued)**

The information received from VIS verifies only the noncitizen's immigration status. It does not verify eligibility for the particular Department program. The noncitizen immigration status is verified with USCIS data through a primary or additional verification process.

The primary verification process uses the noncitizen's alien registration number (A number), when available; however other documents, such as an unexpired passport can also be used.

After selecting the noncitizen's document type, the case manager must enter the A number, if available, without the A prefix, on the USCIS screen for an automated query with VIS. The case manager will be asked to review and confirm the entries. If the entries are correct, click Next. If the entries are not correct, click Back, edit the entries and click Next. The Initial Verification screen will be displayed.

The Initial Verification screen will identify the noncitizen's alien registration number, if available, name, date and country of birth, date of entry into the U.S., and the USCIS noncitizen status. A unique verification number that identifies the particular query and a message about whether the noncitizen has employment authorization will be displayed.

The case manager must print the Initial Verification screen by clicking the Print Case Details button, carefully reviewing it and comparing the information from the printout with the noncitizen's name and date of birth on the Noncitizen page on BEACON to ensure information accuracy.

Important: The printout of the Initial Verification screen must be filed in the case record. Lack of this documentation in some cases was noted by the Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General report.

In instances where a record of the noncitizen's status could not be located, a message to Institute Additional Verification will be displayed. When the system response line message is displayed, the case manager must click the Request Additional Verification button. The case manager will then be directed to complete the Enter Additional Verification section, and click on the Submit Additional Verification button.

VIS usually returns a response to a request for additional verification within three working days. Once received, this information must be filed in the case record.

Important: The printout of the VIS response must be filed in the case record. Lack of this documentation in some cases was noted by the Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General report.

Document Selection Screen Updates

The chart on this page compares the old SAVE document selection screen to the updates USCIS made to the screen. Depending on the document selected for the query, different information will require data entry on subsequent VIS screens.

Old Document Selection Screen	New Document Selection Screen
I-327 (Reentry Permit)	I-327 (Reentry Permit)
I-551 (Permanent Resident Card)	I-551 (Permanent Resident Card)
I-571 (Refugee Travel Document)	I-571 (Refugee Travel Document)
I-766 (Employment Authorization Card)	I-766 (Employment Authorization Card)
Certificate of Citizenship	Certificate of Citizenship
Naturalization Certificate	Naturalization Certificate
Machine Readable Immigrant Visa (with Temporary I-551 Language)	Machine Readable Immigrant Visa (with Temporary I-551 Language)
Temporary I-551 Stamp (on passport or I-94)	Temporary I-551 Stamp (on passport or I-94)
I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record)	I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record)
Unexpired Foreign Passport	I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record) in Unexpired Foreign Passport
WT/WB Admission Stamp in Unexpired Foreign Passport	Unexpired Foreign Passport
I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status)	I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status)
DS2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status)	DS2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status)
Other (Use Document Description)	Other (Select If Document Not Listed)

USCIS advises that by providing both the client's I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record) number and his/her current unexpired passport number, the chance of a successful initial verification is increased. However, providing an I-94 number is optional.

To explain this option, a message entitled, Travelers Without the I-94, was added to the I-94 help screen confirming that some foreign travelers are not given an I-94 number by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). CBP stamps those passports with the noncitizen's specified Class of Admission and the period of time the individual is permitted to stay.

Note: These Class of Admission codes and a brief description of these codes are available in the SAVE home page on the top right corner under the Online Resources Tab.

**Document
Selection Screen
Updates
(continued)**

- When a client provides an Unexpired Foreign Passport **with an I-94**, select the “I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record) in Unexpired Foreign Passport” document selection type.
- When a client provides an Unexpired Foreign Passport **without an I-94**, select the “Unexpired Foreign Passport” document selection type.

Additionally, the WB/WT (business waiver or tourist waiver status) document selection type, previously its own selection type, is now found in the “Unexpired Foreign Passport” document selection type. Select the “Unexpired Foreign Passport” document selection type when the noncitizen’s passport contains the WB/WT Admission Stamp.

Case managers will be prompted to enter the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) number for the Unexpired Foreign Passport document type if the SAVE database returns a Student classification for the client. The case manager must ask the client to provide his/her SEVIS number. If the client does not know his/her number, give the client a Verification Checklist (VC-1) to request the number from the school or program the client is attending. Allow 10 days for the client to provide the verification.

When a document provided by a client does not appear on the SAVE document selection screen, select the Other (Select If Document Not Listed) document selection type. The Other document selection type description has been updated; however, the data search capabilities and functionality of this screen remain the same.

Reminder: Remember to confirm with the client that the most current immigration document has been provided to insure that the most current status is being verified.

**Third Step
Verification
Process –
G-845S Form**

In some rare instances, a third verification may need to take place before the citizenship status can be validated. When the message displayed under Additional Verification Results requires the resubmission of verification documents, click the Resubmit Verification button:

- print and fill out Section A of the USCIS Document Verification Request form G-845S; and
- attach to the G-845S a clear, legible copy of the front and reverse sides of the documentation submitted by the noncitizen as proof of noncitizen status.

Important: Always file a copy of the G-845S in the case record;

**Third Step
Verification
Process –
G-845S Form
(continued)**

- send the G-845S and the copies to USCIS:
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
10 Fountain Plaza, 3rd Floor Buffalo, NY 14202 Attn: Immigration Status
Verification Unit (USCIS has 20 days to respond)
- enter on the BEACON Narrative tab that the G-845S form was sent to
USCIS including the date it was sent; and
- once received, review the response from USCIS indicating:
- a valid noncitizen status,
- further USCIS search is warranted, or
- the documents appear to be invalid.

Important: This information must be filed in the case record. If USCIS does not return a response within 20 days, case managers must resubmit the information.

Before any action is taken to terminate assistance due to invalid documentation, the case manager and supervisor must carefully review the documents, requesting further documentation from the noncitizen if necessary. USCIS may have determined the documentation provided is invalid because of the expiration date but the noncitizen may remain eligible for assistance if more current documentation is provided.

**USCIS Fact
Sheet**

If a client disagrees with his or her status as it appears on SAVE, access this link to obtain an informational fact sheet on how the client can correct his or her status as it appears on SAVE:
<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=77d3feb9a2ca8210VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=1721c2ec0c7c8110VgnVCM1000004718190aRCRD>

**Systems
Documentation**

Systems Documentation for the SAVE/VIS application can be found by logging into DTA Online as described above and:

- clicking on Policy Online in the blue column on the left side of the DTA Online page;
- clicking on Related Systems Information; and
- clicking on SAVE.

The direct link is: <http://170.154.109.59/refrence/curpol/relate/save.htm>.

Training Job Aid Instructions for verifying noncitizen status can be found by going to DTA Online from Internet Explorer and:

- opening Internet and choosing Department of Transitional Assistance from the Intranet Sites/Select Agency drop down list on the right hand side;
- clicking on Training in the blue column on the left side of the DTA Online page;
- clicking on Job Aids/Desk Guides; and
- clicking on Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE).

The direct link is: http://dtaonline/training/tr_online/jobaidessave.pdf

**Additional
Helpful Links**

The following links are being provided to help TAO staff determine the most current and appropriate codes for identifying a noncitizen's status.

Employment Authorization codes can be found at:

<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnnextoid=f3c02af9f0101310VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD>

“Green card” codes can be found at:

<http://www.uscis.gov/ilink/docView/AFM/HTML/AFM/0-0-0-1/0-0-0-26573/0-0-0-32054.html>

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.
