



**Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements**



# SAVE Program Guide

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program Guide outlines the Program's policies and procedures, as well as the roles and responsibilities of participants. This guide contains requirements that are incorporated by reference in the memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the user agency. Some agencies have a computer matching agreement (CMA) rather than an MOA, and although there are some differences, the provisions found in the MOA have a CMA equivalent. Additionally, documents incorporated by reference in this guide may also contain SAVE System requirements. Your agency must monitor SAVE notifications to be aware of when SAVE updates requirements and training tutorials and to ensure that SAVE users are following the most recent procedures and policies. The design of this guide provides both training and guidance to reference materials to help answer questions that may arise regarding the SAVE Program and the verification process.

## 2. SAVE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### 2.1 What is the SAVE Program

SAVE is an inter-governmental initiative using a web-based service to help federal, state and local benefit-issuing and licensing agencies and other governmental entities determine the immigration status of applicants for public benefits or licenses (hereinafter "benefits") so only entitled applicants receive them. SAVE verifies the status of non-immigrants, immigrants, and certain naturalized and derived U.S. citizens. SAVE does not determine an applicant's eligibility for a specific benefit.

SAVE will provide timely customer-focused immigration status information to authorized agencies in order to assist them in maintaining the integrity of their programs. This includes promoting the use of automated systems to enhance inter-agency collaboration, customer service, efficiency, and information privacy.

### 2.2 Governing Legislation

#### 2.2.1 The Creation of the SAVE Program

In 1986, Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), Public Law (Pub. L.) No. 99-603. This legislation altered the relationship between certain federal benefit granting agencies and the applicants for benefits they administered. IRCA prohibited the granting of specified federal public benefits to certain non-U.S. citizens and imposed obligations upon benefit granting agencies to determine the citizenship and/or immigration status of applicants for these benefits.

IRCA required that each benefit applicant declare in writing whether he or she is a citizen or national of the United States. If the applicant is not a citizen or national of the United States, the applicant must show that he or she is in a satisfactory immigration status, as set forth by federal law, to receive that benefit. IRCA required the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the predecessor agency to what is now Department of Homeland Security (DHS), United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), to establish an automated system for verifying the immigration status of noncitizen applicants for certain federal benefits. This system was accessible to federal, state, and local benefit-issuing agencies and institutions that would administer those federal benefits. Table 2 lists the agencies and benefits covered by IRCA.

SAVE was created in 1987 out of a previously existing pilot program to comply with these IRCA requirements and to oversee and administer the automated system used to verify immigration status and naturalized or derived citizenship. Soon after its creation, subsequent legislation built upon and expanded SAVE's role.

### 2.2.1.1 Agencies and Benefits Covered by IRCA.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program
- Medicaid Program
- Certain Territorial Assistance Programs
- Food Stamps

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)

- Unemployment Compensation Program

U.S. Department of Education (DOE)

- Title IV Educational Assistance Programs

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- Certain Housing Assistance Programs

**Please Note:** The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 removed the IRCA requirement that state agencies verify eligibility for food stamps with SAVE.

### 2.2.2 The Evolution of the SAVE Program

About a decade after SAVE was created, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), Pub. L. No. 104-193, was passed and provided additional restrictions for certain programs funded by federal, state and local governments. PRWORA established stricter citizenship or immigration status eligibility requirements for many programs and rendered certain categories of non-U.S. citizens ineligible for many benefits.

Under PRWORA, an applicant must be a "qualified alien" to be eligible for many benefits. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), Pub. L. No. 104-208, and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, Pub. L. No. 105-33 defined a "qualified alien" as:

- An alien who is lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) [8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.];
- An alien who is granted asylum under Section 208 of the INA [8 U.S.C. 1158];
- A refugee who is admitted to the United States under Section 207 of the INA [8 U.S.C. 1157];
- An alien who is paroled into the United States under Section 212(d)(5) of the INA for a period of at least one year [8 U.S.C. 1182(d)(5)];
- An alien whose deportation is being withheld under Section 243(h) of the INA (as in effect prior to April 1, 1997) [8 U.S.C. 1253] or whose removal has been withheld under Section 241(b)(3) [8 U.S.C. 1231(b)(3)];

- An alien who is granted conditional entry pursuant to Section 203(a)(7) of the INA as in effect prior to April 1, 1980 [8 U.S.C. 1153(a)(7)];
- An alien who is a Cuban/Haitian Entrant as defined by Section 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980 [8 U.S.C. 1153]; or
- Certain aliens who have been battered or were subjected to extreme cruelty [8 U.S.C. 1641(c)].

PRWORA applies only to nonexempt “federal public benefits” and “state and local public benefits.” Thus, PRWORA restrictions do not apply to all federal, state and locally funded activities and programs. Further, access to important emergency health services, public health assistance and community-based services necessary to protect life and safety remain accessible to all non-U.S. citizens. Benefit-granting agencies should determine whether the particular program or benefit they administer is providing a “federal public benefit” or a “state or local benefit.” Once this is determined, the benefit provider can decide whether Title IV of PRWORA or other applicable laws require verification of an applicant’s citizenship or immigration status. A “federal public benefit,” as defined in PRWORA, is:

- 1) Any grant, contract, loan, professional license or commercial license provided by an agency of the United States or by appropriated funds of the United States; and
- 2) Any retirement, welfare, disability, public or assisted housing, post-secondary education, food assistance, unemployment benefit or any other similar benefit for which payments or assistance are provided to an individual, household or family eligibility unit by an agency of the United States or by appropriated funds of the United States.

According to PRWORA, the definition of “state and local public benefit” is identical to the federal public benefit, except that it substitutes “state or local government” for “the United States.” A “federal public benefit” will never be a “state or local benefit,” and vice versa, because a benefit cannot meet both definitions. Accordingly, if any federal funds are used, a benefit is by definition federal regardless of whether state or local funding is also used.

Furthermore, IIRIRA as amended, requires DHS-USCIS to respond to inquiries by federal, state and local benefit-issuing agencies seeking to verify or determine the citizenship or immigration status of any individual within the jurisdiction of the agency for any lawful purpose. DHS-USCIS is currently using the SAVE Program’s automated and manual verification processes to provide federal, state and local benefit-issuing agencies and institutions with information that will assist in verifying an individual’s immigration status. Note that DHS uses the Law Enforcement Service Center operated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement to provide immigration information to eligible law enforcement agencies. Please also note that SAVE verifies the immigration status, or naturalized or derived citizenship of certain individuals, but does not make any determinations or recommendations on whether an applicant qualifies for any specific benefit.

The Real ID Act of 2005, Pub. L. No. 109-13 further enhanced the role of SAVE. This Act establishes certain minimum standards for the issuance of state-issued driver’s licenses and identification cards in order for those documents to be acceptable for official federal purposes. The Real ID Act defines official purposes as “accessing federal facilities, boarding federally regulated commercial aircraft, entering nuclear power plants, and any other purpose that the Secretary [DHS] shall determine.” To meet the requirements of the Real ID Act, states must verify the immigration status of every applicant for a Real ID driver’s license

and identification card. States must use SAVE to verify the immigration status for non- U.S. citizens. States may also use SAVE to verify certain naturalized or derived citizens.

SAVE's role was further expanded under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-148, which provides for a variety of healthcare reforms including health insurance benefits for qualified "aliens lawfully present in the United States." The legislation creates state-based health insurance benefit exchanges through which individuals can purchase coverage, with premium and cost-sharing credits available to low-income individuals and families. The legislation requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with DHS, the Social Security Administration and the Department of Treasury, to establish a program for determining an individual's eligibility for enrollment in Affordable Care Act benefits and for certain existing benefits, such as Medicaid, through the exchanges. As part of this eligibility determination, exchanges and health and human services agencies use SAVE to verify the immigration status and naturalized or derived citizenship of certain applicants.

The Federal Aviation Administration Extension, Safety and Security Act of 2016 (FAA Act), Pub. L. No. 114-190, § 3405(d) (July 15, 2016), directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to authorize Airport Operators to have direct access to E-Verify (the electronic employment eligibility verification program administered by USCIS) and SAVE to determine the eligibility of individuals seeking unescorted access to any security identification display area of an airport. The Secretary of Homeland Security has directed USCIS and the Transportation Security Administration to coordinate their responsibilities concerning implementation of this requirement. Some Airport Operators are private non-governmental entities.

### 3. SAVE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

#### 3.1 Eligibility Criteria

SAVE provides verification services to over 1100 agencies. Besides private airport operators authorized under the FAA Act, only federal, state and local benefit-granting agencies may register for to use SAVE. The agency must be authorized by law to engage in an activity or provide a benefit for which immigration status verification is required.

To register for SAVE, an agency must submit electronic copies of all applicable legal authorities authorizing the agency to:

- Issue the stated benefit or license or engage in other activity; and
- Verify the immigration status of its applicants before issuing the stated benefit or license or pursuant to engaging in the other activity

USCIS reviews the legal authorities to ensure that the agency is authorized to participate in SAVE.

If the agency meets the eligibility criteria to participate in SAVE, the agency is required to execute an MOA with DHS/USCIS outlining the purpose and the responsibilities for participation in the program. A user agency is one that has executed an MOA to use SAVE. A user agency must revise its SAVE MOA before it can use SAVE it for any purpose or benefit not outlined in its MOA.

#### 3.2 SAVE's Responsibilities

In accordance with the MOA, SAVE will:

- Provide access to and maintain the SAVE system
- Respond to properly submitted verification requests from the user agency by providing the information as stated in the Purpose Section of the MOA
- Process and respond to properly submitted additional verification requests submitted by the user agency through the SAVE system or (when specifically authorized by SAVE on a case by case basis under extraordinary circumstances) on USCIS Form G-845, Verification Request
- Provide operating instructions, and guidance, training and information regarding the laws, policies, and procedures that govern verifying, safeguarding, using, maintaining, and disclosing certain citizenship and immigration status information
- Provide SAVE point of contact information for questions or problems regarding the user agency's participation in the program
- Provide access to USCIS Form G-845 and other forms and/or supplements as appropriate, which may be reproduced and/or computer generated

#### 3.3 SAVE Transaction Charges

Additionally, the agency must complete and sign an Anticipated Collections Addendum (ACA) that contains the agency's financial information and funding obligations.

For verification services, SAVE assesses charges based upon the number and type(s) of transactions an agency submits each month. An electronic initial verification request incurs a base transaction charge.



The current SAVE transaction charges are located on the SAVE public website.

### 3.4 User's Responsibilities

In accordance with the MOA, the user agency (or airport operator) must ensure that each user who makes SAVE requests for verification or manages cases follows the requirements set forth in the MOA. For more information on the responsibilities of a user agency, refer to your agency's official MOA, SAVE notifications and other documents incorporated by reference in the MOA and this Program Guide. The SAVE Self-Assessment Guide (referenced in section 4.5.1 below) that can be found once a user is logged in to SAVE at "Resources" also provides information on how to comply with SAVE requirements. **Note:** The "Resources" section has numerous guidance documents to assist users in understanding immigration information and how to use SAVE.

#### 3.4.1 Proper System Use

All users are responsible for following the SAVE Program policies and procedures as outlined in this guide, the agency's MOA, the SAVE tutorial, other documents incorporated by reference and updates to these requirements. SAVE may make notifications in the form of ticker messages on the SAVE System, emails, letters or via the [SAVE Website](#).

Users may run SAVE verifications only on benefit applicants. If an individual is applying for benefits on behalf of another person, a user may, under federal law, only verify the status of the person who will actually be receiving the benefits. See Department of Justice *Interim Guidance Concerning the Verification of Aliens under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act* at 62 Fed. Reg. 61344, 61347 (Nov. 17, 1997). For example, if a child is seeking benefits based upon his or her own eligibility, the SAVE verification must be made on the child, not on his or her parent(s). This is also relevant to the definition of an applicant in other contexts. For example, for a grant application filed on behalf of a corporation, the SAVE verification should be run on an applicant who is an officer, director or employee with a direct interest in the corporation's receipt of the grant.

Failure to follow this requirement violates the MOA (See sections III. Purpose and IV.B. Responsibilities) and may result in the individual user or the entire agency losing access to SAVE.

Users must perform any and all additional verification procedures SAVE requires and/or the applicant requests. When SAVE returns a response of "Institute Additional Verification," "Resubmit Doc" or otherwise indicates that additional verification is required, or the benefit applicant requests additional verification, the user must continue the verification process to ensure that SAVE can conduct the necessary research on behalf of the benefit applicant. This is necessary because user agencies may not rely on a SAVE response to deny an application for benefits unless the agency has followed all SAVE verification procedures. Following SAVE verification procedures, requires user agencies to respond to a request for additional review when prompted by SAVE or requested by the applicant by submitting any additional information or documents and receiving SAVE's final response regarding the applicant's immigration status or records. Otherwise, the user agency may deny eligible persons benefits that they are lawfully entitled to receive. Accordingly, SAVE requires the agency to have instituted additional verification and followed all verification steps before it can deny a benefit based on the SAVE response. If an agency has alternative processes upon which to base its decision to grant or deny a benefit, additional verification in SAVE is not required.

User agencies must ensure that they have taken appropriate steps to identify the applicant and to ensure that the SAVE response matches the immigration status indicated on the applicant's immigration documents.

### **3.4.2 Determination of Benefits**

SAVE verifies the immigration status of benefit applicants, but does not make a recommendation regarding the applicant's eligibility for the benefit. The user agency has the responsibility to use the information provided by SAVE to determine the applicant's benefit eligibility based on the agency's criteria. Refer to the "Guide to Understanding SAVE Verification Responses" under Resources in the SAVE System for assistance with understanding the response.

### **3.4.3 Due Process**

All applicants who are denied benefits based solely or in part on the SAVE response must be provided with adequate written notice and the information necessary to contact DHS so that they may correct their records in a timely manner. SAVE has Fact Sheets that user agencies should give to all of their applicants who they deny a benefit based on SAVE's response regarding their immigration status. The Fact Sheets are available in Appendix B, as well as in "Resources" located on SAVE's System. Notice is sufficient if a user agency provides their applicants with the appropriate SAVE Fact Sheet in Appendix B or one they created that contains the information the applicant needs to correct their records.

User agencies should also provide all applicants who are denied a benefit based upon a SAVE response with the opportunity to challenge the denial through the agency's existing appeals process.

### **3.4.4 Non-discrimination**

It is the user's obligation to comply with any federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination against applicants. Responses from the SAVE System should not be used to discriminate against applicants based upon their national origin, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, disability, or other characteristics protected by law.

A user may not make any determination about an applicant's immigration or citizenship status, or the need to institute additional verification based upon the factors listed above, the applicant's ability to speak English, manner of dress, or any other prohibited factors.

### **3.4.5 SAVE Verification CaseCheck**

SAVE CaseCheck allows applicants to check their additional verification processing status online at the SAVE public website using their date of birth and the number from the document used by the agency to run their SAVE query. Users can find the notices to give applicants about this process in the SAVE System under "Resources." User agencies may also provide applicants with the 15 digit verification case number to check the status of their cases.

### **3.4.6 Training**

It is the user agency's responsibility to ensure that all users complete the necessary training prior to submitting requests for verification in the SAVE System. At a minimum, all users must:

- Complete the SAVE tutorial

- Read and understand this SAVE Program Guide; and
- Maintain a working knowledge of the verification process and procedures

To ensure compliance, user agencies must monitor SAVE notifications to be aware of updated requirements and training tutorials and to ensure that their users know about these updates. See the training options referenced in Section 6 of this guide.

### 3.4.7 Privacy Protections

User agencies must protect the privacy of applicants whose personal information is processed through SAVE. Users are responsible for ensuring that all personal information is safeguarded and used only for the purposes outlined in the MOA and by reference in this guide. Failure to protect an individual's information can result in identity theft or fraud and can cause considerable inconvenience, harm, or embarrassment to the individual.

All users must comply with the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. Section 552a, and other applicable laws, policies and regulations. To that end, agencies must at minimum implement the following safeguards:

- Allow only authorized users to access SAVE
- Secure access to SAVE by protecting passwords
- Use and distribute personal information only for official purposes on a need-to-know basis
- Copy or print personal information only when necessary and mark all documents with "For Official Use Only"
- Use a coversheet when faxing personal information and notify the recipient before transmitting
- Report suspicious or inappropriate requests for personal information immediately by calling Customer Support at (877) 469-2563

Users must only use SAVE for the purposes outlined in their agency's MOA. In addition, under the Privacy Act, all users must:

- Notify individuals applying for benefits that the personal information that their agency is collecting will be used to verify their immigration status through SAVE
- Advise individuals applying for benefits that they do not have to provide the information
- Advise individuals applying for benefits of the consequences of not providing the information

For additional guidance, refer to the Fact Sheet, "Information for SAVE Users: Your Responsibilities for Handling and Protecting Personal Information," in the SAVE System under Resources.

## 3.5 Dispute Resolution

DHS-USCIS procedures for reaching final resolution of a dispute concerning an MOA are based on the Department's delegations of authority. In the event that a dispute cannot be resolved between the SAVE Program and your agency, the dispute would be elevated within USCIS and possibly to DHS, with legal assistance from the USCIS Office of Chief Counsel and, if necessary, the DHS Office of General Counsel. The DHS General Counsel has final authority to settle and decide all legal matters within the Department. DHS General Counsel can issue a final DHS decision regarding a dispute over the interpretation of an MOA provision.

## 4. SAFEGUARDS

USCIS, user agencies and contractors must protect rights of benefit applicants to the fullest extent of the law.

### 4.1 USCIS

SAVE Program has been implemented in a manner that provides for verification of immigration status without regard to sex, color, race, religion, national origin, disability and other protected characteristics of the individual involved. USCIS stores information in a secure area in order to safeguard its confidentiality. Data usage is restricted to persons whose duties and responsibilities indicate a need for its review.

### 4.2 Participating User Agencies

User agencies must provide an applicant with a reasonable opportunity to furnish evidence of satisfactory immigration status. The user agency should apply any relevant legal authority to determine for itself whether benefits should be provided on an interim or temporary basis to an applicant pending completion of the SAVE process. For example, IRCA's statutory provisions requiring use of SAVE for Medicaid, unemployment compensation, and other federal benefit programs generally prohibit the agency responsible for determining eligibility for these benefits from delaying, denying, reducing, or terminating benefits pending SAVE verification.

### 4.3 USCIS Record Keeping

To comply with the Privacy Act, USCIS retains records submitted for any additional verification process. USCIS may duplicate and forward any documentation a user submits to a status verifier that indicates criminal misuse of government documents, information, or the SAVE Program to U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) or other law enforcement agencies to initiate an investigation or prosecution under federal criminal law. The user agency should follow its own guidelines for investigation and prosecuting cases of fraudulent documentation.

SAVE cannot update or correct records. If there are data discrepancies in an applicant's records, USCIS can update the record as necessary; but generally, the applicant will be required to interact with USCIS to correct their record.

### 4.4 SAVE Monitoring and Compliance (M&C)

SAVE's M&C Branch monitors all system use to ensure compliance with policies and procedures. User agencies agree to allow M&C to monitor and review all system usage patterns, training records, user access, and other relevant data; conduct site visits and/or desk audits to review compliance; and take corrective measures in a timely manner to address all lawful requirements. Refer to your agency's MOA, SAVE notifications, SAVE Self-Assessment Guide and other documents incorporated by reference in the MOA and this guide for more information regarding SAVE's monitoring and compliance activities.

## 5. VERIFICATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

### 5.1 The Verification Process

SAVE offers electronic access to information verifying an applicant's status when requesting public benefits under normal circumstances. SAVE uses online systems to check a benefit applicant's immigration status information against records contained in DHS databases.

When applying for public benefits or licenses at an agency that uses SAVE, non-immigrants, immigrants, naturalized or derived citizens must present information from an immigration document. This may be a Permanent Resident Card or Alien Registration Receipt Card (Form I-551), also known as a "green card", an employment authorization document (Form I-766), a valid foreign passport, or some other immigration document. Additionally, naturalized or derived citizens may present information from a certificate of naturalization or citizenship, in which case their citizenship could be verified through SAVE. In order to verify an applicant's immigration status or U.S citizenship, SAVE requires a numeric identifier (such as an Alien Number, Arrival-Departure Record I-94 Number, SEVIS ID Number, Certificate of Naturalization Number, Certificate of Citizenship Number or Unexpired Foreign Passport Number) from the applicant, the applicant's first and last name, date of birth and the benefit that the applicant is seeking. The user agency should enter the name that appears on the applicant's most recent immigration document. Nevertheless, if SAVE finds a match on initial verification, it will return the name used by the user agency to run the verification, regardless of the aliases that SAVE may encounter when checking the records available to SAVE. SAVE cannot verify status using only the applicant's name and date of birth or social security number.

The user agency submits an initial request for verification based upon the information provided by the applicant. SAVE compares this information to federal government records and returns a response with the corresponding immigration status information. The majority of SAVE requests are resolved on initial verification. However, in some instances, status cannot be verified immediately through initial verification and SAVE requires additional information or copies of the applicant's immigration document in order to complete the verification. This result does not necessarily mean that the applicant is not authorized to be in the United States or is ineligible to receive the benefit. It means that the user must submit an additional verification request so that SAVE can conduct further research. **Note:** Refer to 3.4.1 for guidance on proper use of SAVE and when additional verification is required.

When submitting documents to SAVE for additional verification, users only need to provide copies of the original cards, forms, and documents the applicant provided. Refer to "*A Guide on Immigration Documents Commonly Used by Benefit Applicants*" under "Resources" in the SAVE System for examples of these documents. The user must return the original document to the applicant. If an applicant does not have documentation because, for example, the document was lost or stolen, users should refer the applicant to USCIS to obtain new documentation before submitting a verification request.

Refer to the SAVE System User Guide and Frequently Asked Questions under "Resources" in the SAVE System for additional information about the Verification Process.

### 5.1.1 Electronic Verification

SAVE provides agencies with the appropriate method to access SAVE based on the agency's needs. Currently, the SAVE Program offers two access methods:

- Web-based Access – Offers secure Internet access to SAVE using a Web browser such as Internet Explorer or Google Chrome.
- Web Services – A type of interface designed to support a machine-to-machine connection over a network, such as the Internet. Web Services agencies must build their connection to meet the SAVE Interface Control Agreement (ICA). Agencies have one year to incorporate new requirements when the ICA is updated based on changes to the SAVE System.

Under either access method, users may submit both initial verification requests and additional verification requests based upon the information provided by the applicant.

#### 5.1.1.1 Initial Verification

For initial verification, the user submits a request using information contained in the document presented by the benefit applicant. SAVE searches databases available to DHS for records that match the applicant's information. Within seconds, SAVE will provide an electronic response with the applicant's current immigration status or a message prompting the user to "Institute Additional Verification."

If the applicant's immigration status is confirmed, the verification process is complete. If the status is not confirmed, or the user or applicant has a concern about the verification response, the verification process can continue by the user requesting additional verification.

#### 5.1.1.2 Additional Verification

There are times when it may be necessary to conduct additional verification steps to complete the verification process. Some examples include:

- When the user receives the response "Institute Additional Verification" (IAV). Users must not interpret an IAV response to mean that the applicant is not in an eligible immigration status
- When the user receives a response to "Resubmit Doc"
- If the applicant is concerned about the response
- If the user has concerns about any information returned by the SAVE System - For example, if the SAVE response does not match the applicant's immigration document information

**Note:** Refer to 3.4.1 for guidance on proper use of SAVE and when additional verification is necessary.

SAVE has two additional verification levels, which are referred to as second and third level verification.

Second level verification offers the user agency the option to submit additional information. The user may submit:

- Special Comments - the user may send comments regarding the case to the status verifier
- A copy of the front and back of the applicant's document, with or without providing additional information for verification using Scan and Upload. This could avoid the possibility of having to go to third level verification

Once the user submits the additional information (or submits the request without any additional information) for second level verification, a status verifier searches the appropriate databases for the applicant's records. Within 3 to 5 federal working days, SAVE will respond with the applicant's status or a request to "Resubmit Doc." If the applicant's immigration status is confirmed, the verification process is complete and the case is closed.

However, if the response from SAVE is "other" and the user has concerns about any information provided by SAVE on the second level response, the user may request third level verification or contact SAVE at 877-469-2563. Under any other circumstances when an agency has concerns about a SAVE second level response, the agency may contact SAVE at that telephone number.

If the documents were not submitted by Scan and Upload at the second level, third level verification may be required to complete the request. If the user receives a response to "Resubmit Doc", they must attach a copy of the front and back of the applicant's document with or without providing additional information and submit the verification request by Scan and Upload.

Under extraordinary circumstances as determined by SAVE, a user agency may be allowed to submit the third level request for verification by printing and mailing the Form G-845 to the agency's designated Status Verification Operations (SVO) Office address along with photocopies of the front and back of the applicant's immigration document(s). If a G-845 is not submitted without prior approval by the SAVE Program, it will be rejected.

When the documents are sent by routine Scan and Upload, the response will occur within three to five business days. If the G-845 and copies of the document(s) are mailed because of extraordinary circumstances and pre-approval from SAVE, the response will be mailed within 10 to 20 Federal working days from the date of receipt of the Form G-845 and the attached immigration document(s).

If the applicant's immigration status is confirmed, the verification process is complete. If the status is not confirmed, SAVE will provide additional information or guidance concerning how to proceed. Examples of such responses and instructions include "Unable to Verify, Advise Applicant to visit local USCIS office to inquire" or "Unable to Verify, Advise Applicant to visit local CBP office to inquire about incorrect data on I-94."

Additionally, if the user has concerns about any information provided by SAVE on a third level response, the user may contact SAVE Customer Service at 877-469-2563.

### **5.1.2 Paper-based Verification**

SAVE provides a paper-based verification method that may only be appropriate for agencies in extraordinary situations as determined by the SAVE Program. Submissions of paper-based G-845 verification requests without prior approval by SAVE will be rejected. When approved, user agencies may submit a request to verify an applicant's immigration status by mailing a USCIS Form G-845, Document Verification Request, with photocopies of the front and back of the applicant's immigration document(s) to a designated SVO Office. The SVO office has 10 to 20 federal working days from the date of receipt to review the Form G-845 and copies of any related immigration document(s) and mail the Form G-845 to the agency with the applicant's current immigration status or the action necessary to complete the verification process.

If the applicant's immigration status is confirmed, the verification process is complete. If the status is not confirmed, the Form G-845 will provide additional information or guidance concerning how to proceed.

### 5.1.3 Verification Response Times

The design of the verification process allows USCIS to respond quickly to submitting agencies' requests. Initial verifications take a few seconds. Additional second level verifications take three to five federal working days. Depending on the complexity of the case, the third level verification will take approximately three to five federal working days following receipt of the electronically scanned and uploaded document. If the documents were submitted by mail with specific approval by SAVE, the response should be mailed within 10 to 20 working days.

### 5.1.4 Special Circumstances

In certain situations, such as when a user suspects fraud or when an applicant is medically disabled, the standard verification process may not be applicable. The following sections describe how to handle these situations.

#### 5.1.4.1 Lack of or Expired Documentation

If an applicant presents an expired document or is unable to present any immigration documentation evidencing his or her immigration status, refer the applicant to the local USCIS office to obtain documentation of his or her immigration status. If the applicant can provide other identifying documentation, such as marriage records, court orders, or similar evidence, the user can choose the "other" document type and put all zeros for the Alien Number. SAVE will not be able to verify the document on initial, but the agency can submit it using Scan and Upload on additional or third level verification. This should only be done if securing immigration documentation would constitute an undue hardship on the applicant, such as when the:

- Applicant is hospitalized or medically disabled and cannot obtain an immigration document; or
- Applicant can otherwise show good cause for their inability to present necessary documentation that would constitute an undue hardship

**Note:** The expiration of a Lawful Permanent Resident's Permanent Resident card does not affect the lawful permanent residence status of the individual. If an individual has not lost status, SAVE can verify lawful permanent residence status from an expired card.

#### 5.1.4.2 Counterfeit or Altered Documents

A document that appears to be counterfeit or altered (e.g., it shows characteristics such as photograph substitution or ink discoloration) can be used for an initial verification with a request for additional verification and comments that the user suspects the document to be fraudulent and will submit the document to SAVE for verification.



## 6. SUPPORT

SAVE is committed to providing outstanding customer service. To that end, SAVE offers the following training options and customer support.

### 6.1 Training Options

SAVE provides users with several training opportunities including webinars and customized training to meet an agency's specific needs. All trainings are available upon request. To make arrangements for training:

- Visit the [SAVE Website Resources](#) or
- Contact us at: (877) 469-2563; or
- E-mail us at: [SAVE.help@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:SAVE.help@uscis.dhs.gov). Include "TRAINING REQUEST: *Desired Course Title*" in the subject line. Provide your agency's name, telephone number and e-mail address.

All users are required to take the SAVE Tutorial which is available when a user logs on to SAVE. On an as-needed basis, SAVE will tailor training to your agency's specific needs. Training courses (including the Tutorial) are subject to change, so user agencies should monitor SAVE notifications for tutorial updates.

### 6.2 Resources

In addition to the above training options, SAVE provides various resources and reference materials to assist you with using the system. The following resources, among others, are available by selecting "Resources" on SAVE's Homepage:

- **Glossary of Terms** – Defines all terms and concepts used throughout the online system
- **Class of Admission (COA) Code Table** – Provides a listing of COA codes and a description of the immigration status associate with each code
- **User Reference Guide** – Provides detailed instructions on proper use of the SAVE System
- **Self-Assessment Guide** – Offers a tool for agencies to perform internal monitoring and compliance assessments to support proper use of SAVE and improve the overall integrity of their SAVE verifications. It identifies general SAVE requirements that must be followed by agencies
- **A Guide on Immigration Documents Commonly Used by Benefit Applicants**- Provides assistance in identifying the immigration documents commonly used by benefit applicants
- **Guide to Understanding SAVE Verification Responses** - Provides general guidance for interpreting SAVE responses.
- **Fact Sheet: Information for SAVE Users: How to Verify Citizens of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands** – Provides guidance on how best to verify these individuals in SAVE.
- **Fact Sheet Information for SAVE Users - Evidence of Immigration Status for Temporary Protected Status Beneficiaries** - Provides guidance on how to identify automatically extended Form I-766, Employment Authorization documents issued to individuals with Temporary Protected Status when verifying immigration status with SAVE.

## 6.3 Contact Information

SAVE is always available to assist you with any additional questions. Please direct your inquiries to the appropriate contact sources listed below:

### Program Assistance

- Program-wide inquiries
- Program policies and procedures
- Registration questions/concerns

**Phone:** (877) 469-2563 from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm Central Time, Monday through Friday

**Email:** [SAVE.help@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:SAVE.help@uscis.dhs.gov) – Please include the name of your agency

### Technical Support

- Technical problems or questions regarding the SAVE system
- Inability to gain access
- System failures
- Unusually slow response times

**Phone:** (800) 741-5023 available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

### Case Status Support

- Status of electronic verification requests pending over 10 Federal working days
- Form G-845 requests pending over 20 Federal working days
- DHS Case in Continuance pending over 20 Federal working days
- Congressional inquiry cases
- Any concerns about a SAVE second or third level response

**Phone:** (877) 469-2563 7:00 am to 5:00 pm Central Time, Monday through Friday (**Agency Use Only**). Please have the case verification number available when making your inquiry.

### SAVE Website

- SAVE Program information, including governing laws, transaction charges, the verification process, registration process, SAVE Resources and SAVE CaseCheck

### USCIS Website

- USCIS policies and resources
- Immigration and naturalization information

## 7. APPENDIX A: ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
ACA	Anticipated Collections Addendum
Benefit Applicant	An applicant (whether a noncitizen or U.S. citizen) applying for a public benefit
CMA	Computer Matching Agreement
COA	Class of Admission
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IIRIRA	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
IRCA	Immigration Reform and Control Act
M&C	Monitoring and Compliance
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
PRWORA	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act
SAVE	Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements Program
SVO	Status Verification Operations (DHS-USCIS)
USCIS	United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
User Agency	An agency that maintains access to SAVE

## 8. APPENDIX B: FACT SHEETS

### General Records Content



## Fast Facts for Benefit Applicants Where to Go for Help to Correct, Obtain, Renew or Replace a Record

### What is SAVE?

The Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program provides a fast, secure and efficient verification service that federal, state and local benefit-granting and licensing agencies use to verify your status as a non-immigrant, immigrant or naturalized/derived citizen when you apply for a license or government benefit. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) administers SAVE. To learn more about SAVE, visit the SAVE website at: [www.uscis.gov/save](http://www.uscis.gov/save).

### What does SAVE need in order to verify your immigration status?

To verify your status, the benefit-granting/licensing agency must provide SAVE with your current biographic information (first name, last name and date of birth) **and** a numeric identifier (such as; Alien Number, Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record Number, Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) ID number or Unexpired Foreign Passport Number).

### What happens if SAVE cannot verify your status?

If SAVE cannot verify your current immigration status, you may correct or update your immigration record with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). **SAVE cannot correct, renew or replace records. You must contact the DHS agency that issued your record.**

## WHERE TO GO FOR HELP TO CORRECT, OBTAIN, RENEW OR REPLACE A RECORD

### U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS)

For instructions and forms on how to obtain, correct, renew or replace a:

- **Certificate of Citizenship or Certificate of Naturalization** visit: [www.uscis.gov/N-565](http://www.uscis.gov/N-565) or [www.uscis.gov/n-600](http://www.uscis.gov/n-600)
- **Form I-551, Permanent Resident Card** visit: [www.uscis.gov/I-90](http://www.uscis.gov/I-90)
- **Form I-766, Employment Authorization Card** visit: [www.uscis.gov/I-765](http://www.uscis.gov/I-765)
- **Form I-94 issued by USCIS** visit: [www.uscis.gov/I-102](http://www.uscis.gov/I-102)

#### For questions and assistance:

- ☑ Call the USCIS Call Center at: **1 (800) 375-5283**
- ☑ For information about scheduling an appointment to talk to a USCIS officer in person at a local USCIS office using INFOPASS visit: <https://my.uscis.gov/appointment>

### U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Contact CBP if you need to replace or correct your Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record.

- ☑ CBP will correct the Form I-94 records that originated at CBP's Deferred Inspection Sites (DIS). Visit the CBP website at: <https://www.cbp.gov/document/guidance/deferred-inspection-sites> for a list of all DIS's
- ☑ Or visit the CBP INFO Center at <https://help.cbp.gov>. The INFO Center staff is dedicated to responding to Form I-94 issues

### Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)

If you are a student or exchange visitor and need to correct your record:

- ☑ Contact your designated school official (DSO) or responsible officer (RO). If that person cannot help you, contact the SEVP Response Center (SRC) at: **1 (703) 603-3400** or at [SEVP@dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@dhs.gov)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Verification Division Washington, DC 20024



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

# Fact Sheet

## Information for Registrants: Verification of Citizenship Status and How to Obtain Your Document or Correct Your Record with USCIS

Many federal, state and local agencies verify the immigration or citizenship status of benefit applicants to ensure that only qualified aliens or naturalized and derived citizens receive benefits. These agencies verify immigration or citizenship status by using the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The voter registration agency in your state has submitted information to the SAVE Program for verification of your citizenship. Because the USCIS cannot confirm your citizenship status based upon information provided by the agency, you must be given an opportunity by the voter registration agency to provide the correct documentation or correct your records with USCIS and/or appeal the denial of your voter registration. Please note that there are a number of reasons why USCIS may not be able to verify your citizenship, e.g., USCIS cannot confirm your naturalization record because the record is still in process. The inability of the SAVE Program to verify your citizenship does not necessarily mean that you are not a citizen of the United States and are ineligible to vote.

If you need a replacement of your Naturalization Certificate or Certificate of Citizenship or believe that the USCIS response to the voter registration agency did not provide accurate information about your citizenship status and you need to make corrections to your citizenship record, please contact USCIS by using one of the following methods:

1. **File a Form N-565 to obtain a replacement of your Naturalization Certificate or Certificate of Citizenship.** The Form N-565 and instructions for filing can be found on the USCIS Website at: [Form N-565](#) and [Form N-565 Instructions](#)
2. **Schedule an appointment for an in-person interview at a local USCIS office to correct your record.** You may schedule an appointment at a local USCIS office on the USCIS website, [USCIS Infopass](#) or by calling the National Customer Service Center, **1-800-375-5283**. Scheduling an appointment is the fastest way to correct your records. We recommend that you bring to your appointment this Fact Sheet, documentation evidencing your

citizenship status, and any information provided by the voter registration agency concerning why your citizenship status could not be verified.

3. **Submit a request in writing to correct your record.** If you know the information that needs to be corrected in your record, you may submit a request to correct your records to the Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act (FOIA/PA) Office at the following address:

Privacy Act Amendment  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
National Records Center  
FOIA/PA Office  
P.O. Box 648010  
Lee's Summit, MO 64064-8010

**We recommend that you include the following information in your submission, if available:**

- State that you were denied benefits
- Information that is inaccurate
- Proposed change(s) to the record
- Date and place of birth
- A return address
- Copies of your immigration/naturalization status documents
- Reason it is inaccurate
- A-File number and/or the full name
- Notarized signature of the applicant
- Other information that may assist in locating the record

If you do not know the information you need to correct, you may submit a written request to obtain your records by submitting Form G-639, *FOIA/PA Request*. This form is available from the nearest USCIS office or USCIS Website [Form G-639](#). You should use the address specified above, but mark the envelope "*Privacy Act Request*" rather than "*Privacy Act Amendment*."