GEORGIA DEPARTMENT of COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

DCA ESG Program SAVE Policy and Procedures

Purpose

The Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program is an online service administered by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). SAVE provides immigration status and U.S. citizenship information to authorized government agencies to assist in determining eligibility for certain benefits and services.

In accordance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant agreement, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), as the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program recipient, is required to use SAVE or an equivalent verification system approved by the federal government to prevent federal public benefits from being provided to ineligible persons who entered the United States illegally or are otherwise unlawfully present in the United States.

These procedures apply to the following DCA ESG Program project types:

1. Emergency Shelter (ES)
2. Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)
3. Homelessness Prevention (HP)
4. Street Outreach (SO)
5. Hotel/Motel Voucher (HMV)
6. Supportive Services Only (SSO)

DCA ESG Program SAVE Screening Process

DCA ESG Program sub-recipients must follow the SAVE screening procedures established by DCA when a Head of Household presents for ESG assistance without a unique identifier.

The DCA ESG Program is responsible for conducting applicable SAVE verification requests. Sub-recipients are responsible for completing and submitting the required SAVE Screening Form to DCA.

Unique Identifier

For purposes of the DCA ESG Program SAVE screening process, a unique identifier is an identification number issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or another authorized federal agency that may be used to identify an individual during the SAVE verification process.

Examples of identifiers used by USCIS SAVE include:

1. Alien Registration Number (A-Number): A unique number assigned by DHS to certain noncitizens. It generally consists of seven to nine digits and may appear on immigration documents.
2. USCIS Number: An identification number that may appear on a Permanent Resident Card (Form I-551). It is generally the same as the individual's A-Number.
3. Form I-94 Admission Number: A number associated with an individual's arrival or departure record issued by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).
4. USCIS Receipt Number: A 13-character number assigned to certain immigration applications or petitions submitted to USCIS.
5. SEVIS Identification Number: An identification number assigned through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System.
6. Naturalization or Citizenship Certificate Number: A number appearing on a Certificate of Naturalization or Certificate of Citizenship.

Not all individuals will have each type of identifier. The availability and use of an identifier depend on the individual's immigration documentation and the applicable SAVE verification requirements.

When to Submit a SAVE Screening Form

If the Head of Household presents for ESG assistance and does not have a unique identifier, the sub-recipient must complete the DCA ESG Program SAVE Screening Form.

The sub-recipient must:

1. Complete Sections I and II of the SAVE Screening Form.
2. Provide all available information requested on the form, including the Head of Household's name, date of birth, and any available identifying information.
3. Indicate that no unique identifier is available, if applicable.
4. Submit the completed form to esg@dca.ga.gov.

Section III of the SAVE Screening Form is reserved for DCA use only.

DCA ESG Program Verification Process

Upon receipt of the completed SAVE Screening Form, the DCA ESG Program will review the information submitted and conduct the applicable verification.

The DCA ESG Program will provide an initial response to the sub-recipient within three (3) business days of receiving a completed form. Additional time may be required to complete verification through USCIS.

The DCA ESG Program will provide one of the following responses:

1. Verified – Proceed: The individual's information has been verified. DCA will notify the sub-recipient that the agency may proceed with the applicable ESG screening and eligibility determination.
2. Additional Information Required: Additional information or documentation is needed to complete verification. DCA will notify the sub-recipient of the information required and provide further instructions.
3. Resubmission Required: The information submitted is incomplete or must be corrected. DCA will instruct the sub-recipient to submit a revised SAVE Screening Form with the appropriate information.
4. Unable to Verify – Further Review Required: The individual's status could not be confirmed based on the information available. DCA will review the verification results and provide further instructions before making a final determination.

An inability to immediately verify an individual's status does not automatically establish ineligibility for ESG assistance.

Sub-Recipient Responsibilities

Sub-recipients must:

1. Complete and submit the SAVE Screening Form when the Head of Household does not have a unique identifier.
2. Ensure the information submitted is accurate and complete to the extent available.
3. Respond to requests from DCA for additional information or documentation.
4. Follow DCA instructions regarding verification and eligibility determinations.
5. Maintain required SAVE documentation in the participant's file.
6. Protect the confidentiality of participant information in accordance with applicable federal and state requirements.

Documentation and Record Retention

Sub-recipients must maintain documentation of the SAVE screening process, including:

1. The completed DCA ESG Program SAVE Screening Form.
2. The verification response provided by DCA.
3. Any additional correspondence or documentation related to the verification process.

Records must be maintained in accordance with applicable HUD ESG Program record retention and confidentiality requirements and made available for DCA monitoring or review.

Providing ESG Assistance

Sub-recipients must follow DCA instructions regarding the provision of ESG assistance when SAVE verification is required.

A pending or inconclusive SAVE verification response does not automatically establish that an individual is ineligible for assistance. DCA will provide instructions regarding any additional review or eligibility determination required.

SAVE Screening Form Submission

The DCA ESG Program SAVE Screening Form is required when the Head of Household presents for ESG assistance without a unique identifier.

Submission Email: esg@dca.ga.gov

DCA ESG Program Response Time: Within three (3) business days of receiving a completed SAVE Screening Form.

Sub-recipients should direct questions regarding the SAVE screening process to the DCA ESG Program at the email address listed above.