Maryland State Department of Education

Division of Rehabilitation Services

Social Security Benefits Verification Process

DORS utilizes a batch process to verify consumer data for accuracy (including spelling of name, correct date of birth, correct Social Security number, and benefits information) via the State Verification Exchange System (SVES). This process automatically creates an event to run through a batch process, giving real time SSA data (both at intake and case closure).

Should a counselor require an update on consumer SSA benefits on an open case (in instances where the consumer indicates a change in the type of benefit, start or cessation of a benefit, etc.) the counselor may contact the Social Security Programs Unit at benefits.dors@maryland.gov, provide the PID for the case and a justification to add this case to a manual verification process.

In addition to verifying basic demographic information, the response includes information on benefit type, dollar amount, and representative payee. To accommodate all of this information, fields on the Intake and Closure will be populated by the batch process, in coordination with case-noting and management of the process by Social Security Programs Unit staff.

Field staff remain responsible for completion of the Primary Source of Support, Public Support Available and Gross Monthly Family Income in Section 5.

For open cases, benefits updates are populated in the Special Programs page and handled manually by Social Security Programs Unit, otherwise AWARE™ generates unwanted and unnecessary to-do items for field staff. Counselors can expect emailed coordination and case-noted updates on these requests.

It is important to note that this batch process takes time and follows a weekly schedule for compiling cases, receiving and interpreting results, and contacting staff if issues are identified. You can expect results on new cases approximately 10 days after they are created in the Participant Module. This will still allow for ample time for order of selection and eligibility decisions to be made and ensure that 100% of all cases are captured by the batch process. Requests on open cases undergo a separate verification process, but typically require a week or less to complete.

Helpful Tips!

Make every effort to ensure the spelling of the consumer’s first and last name are exactly as they appear on their Social Security card (since many intakes, etc., are being provided remotely, simply ask the consumer how their name appears on their card). If these steps are not correct, the batch process will produce an error resulting in a delay in receiving correct information for this consumer.

- If the last name is two parts, please include a hyphen only if it appears that way on the Social Security card.
- If the individual has a Jr., Sr., III, IV, Dr., etc., please DO NOT include that in the Last Name box in AWARE™. Those should appear in the Honorific box.
- If the individual goes by their middle name, a nickname, etc., you MUST still include their given first name (and ONLY their first name) in the First Name box.
- Double check your data entry. Any typo may result in an error and a delay to the verification process.

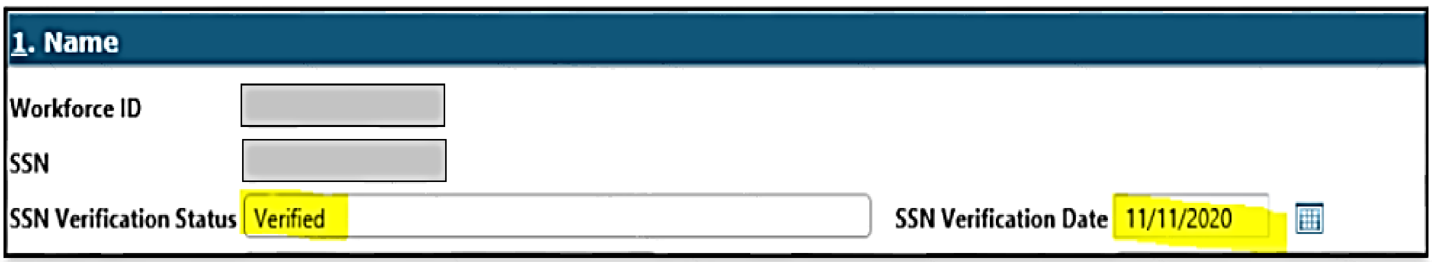
The SVES Batch Process: What Is It? What Do I Need To Look For?

The SVES batch process takes advantage of some existing data fields as well as some new fields which have been added. However, there are still some limitations to AWARE™. As such, these tips and screenshots will help you interpret the results so you can proceed with your case appropriately.

AWARE™ Intake Screen: Section 1 (Name)

<u>SVES Verification Status</u>

SVES Verification Status (not editable) is auto-populated by the batch process.



The following may appear in this field:

- **Verified** – SSA has confirmed that the name, SSN, and date of birth for the consumer in AWARE™ matches their records. If our information is correct, SSA also provides a response regarding any benefits this individual is receiving and those results are included in Section 5: "Financial" on the Intake page in AWARE™ (discussed later).

- **Not Verified** – SSA was unable to give us a response due to an error we have in the system; more work needs to be done. The Social Security Programs Unit handles these cases and will reach out via email for more information and case note any findings.

- **Blank** – The batch process has not yet been run and results have not been imported into AWARE™. Counselors will need to check back later. A good rule of thumb is to check back 10 days after the intake page was created.

- **Name Mismatch, Wrong SSN or No SSN Match** – the batch process indicated that the name and SSN in AWARE™ do not match the expected result in the SVES system. The Social Security Programs Unit will first review the SVEW response and AWARE™ to locate a correct SSN if possible. If able to, Social Security Programs Unit staff will update the SSN and the batch system will rerun (and this label will be replaced with "**Not Verified**" until the batch process reruns). If unable to locate a correct SSN, Social Security Programs Unit staff will contact the field counselor to request an update. Once provided, Social Security Programs Unit staff can update AWARE™ and the batch process will rerun.

<u>SSA Benefits Verification Date</u>

SSA Benefits Verification Date (not editable) is auto-populated with the date in which the SSA response data was obtained.

1. Name			
Workforce ID			
SSN			
SSN Verification Status	Verified	SSN Verification Date	11/11/2020

This field will remain blank until the batch process is complete.

AWARE Intake Screen: Section 5 (Financial)

<u>SSDI Status and SSI Status</u>

Counselors/administrative staff are still able to select **SSDI Status** and **SSI Status** on the dropdowns as well as enter dollar amounts into the boxes next to **Benefit Type**. These fields, as well as additional new fields, will be updated once a verified response is returned by the batch process.

5. Financial

Income and Household Information

Number of Dependents	1
Gross Monthly Family Income*	$426.00
Primary Source of Support*	Public Support (SSI,SSDI,TANF,etc)

Public Support

Public Support Available*	Yes
SSDI Status	Applicant - Denied Benefits
SSDI Verification Status	Not a Beneficiary
SSI Status	Applicant - Allowed Benefits
SSI Verification Status	Beneficiary
SSA Benefits Verification Date	11/11/2020

Benefit	Cash	Other
SSI Aged	$0.00	☐
SSI Blind	$0.00	☐
SSI Disabled	$783.00	☑
SSDI Disabled	$0.00	☐
VA	$0.00	☐
TANF	$0.00	☐
General Assistance	$0.00	☐
Worker's Compensation	$0.00	☐
Unemployment Insurance	$0.00	☐
Other Disability	$0.00	☐
Other	$0.00	☐

BIC Code	
Representative Payee	

Below each dropdown you will find non-editable fields entitled **SSDI Verification Status**, **SSI Verification Status**, and **SSA Benefits Verification Date**. These fields will be populated by the batch process, or by Social Security Programs Unit staff, and will indicate whether the individual is a **Beneficiary** or **Not a Beneficiary** for a specific type of benefit, as well as show the date when these results were made available by SVES. Further down in the financial section, you will see the **Benefit Type** and **Cash Amount** fields and the **Other** checkbox.

SSI Disabled and SSDI Disabled

SSI Disabled and **SSDI Disabled** fields will automatically populate an amount if SSA has provided that information. Due to limitations in AWARE™ and in the SVES process, the system cannot distinguish between SSI types and between SSDI and other Title II benefits (such as retirement, survivor's benefits, etc.). Social Security Programs Unit staff will be providing clarification in specific instances, but a good rule of thumb is that if the individual is over age 65 and the system indicates an SSI amount, then this is **SSI Aged**. If the individual is over age 67 and receiving SSDI, then this is likely **Retirement** (if between 65 and 67 then this may be retirement based on the retirement age calculator).

IMPORTANT NOTE: For consistency with the batch process, if a consumer indicates they receive a dollar amount for SSI, only enter that amount in the **SSI Disabled** box.

"Other" Checkbox

If the **Other** box is checked:

- **Check the age of the individual** – If over 65 (or 67) as described above, then this amount is likely tied to retirement or aged benefits. Retirement and aged benefits, alone, do not meet the criteria for presumption, but the individual may be receiving other cash or needs based benefits which would.
- **If not over age 65 (or 67), check your case notes** – The case note will explain the benefits your consumer is likely receiving, such as survivor's benefits, etc., which may or may not meet criteria for presumption of eligibility.
- **Confirm the type of benefit** – Ask the consumer if they can provide a copy of their most recent benefit letter from Social Security. This is the best way to confirm the type of benefit if presumption of eligibility is in question.

Additional Fields

BIC Code (not editable) Beneficiary Information Code – This field was left in AWARE™ by Alliance. It will most likely always remain blank and you do not need to use this in any way.

Representative Payee (not editable) – If provided by SSA, this field includes information about a consumer's representative payee, responsible for managing their benefits. The Rep Payee should be included in benefits planning services. Due to character limitations and formatting in SVES, the entire name of the payee may not be available. SVES shows the first five characters of first name, then the middle initial, then the last name. There will be no spaces between the names. It may be necessary to coordinate with the consumer to clarify the representative payee.

In some instances, even if the individual is no longer receiving an SSA disability benefit, the SVES system still reports a Representative Payee. This does not mean they are a beneficiary. It is recommended that field staff review the Public Support dropdowns and amounts to confirm benefit status.

Next Steps

There will typically be three types of work to do once a batch verification has been completed and verified based upon the intake screen and case notes or emails from Social Security Programs Unit staff.

1. **No case note and no email** – The batch process completed successfully and the benefit status of the consumer is clear.

    - **Benefits Amount**, **Benefits Type**, and "**Beneficiary**" are clearly indicated on the intake screen – Counselors may proceed with eligibility, order of selection, and case services (such as benefits planning as appropriate).

    - No **Benefits Type** or **Benefits Amount** are provided and "**Not a beneficiary**" is listed in the SSDI and SSI Benefits status fields – This indicates that the individual is not receiving disability benefits, benefits planning would not be required, and the counselor can proceed with next steps in their case.

2. **Case note and no email** – The batch process completed successfully but a minor change was made or is being monitored.

    Counselors will receive a case note. However, they don't have to follow up with anything further and so will not receive an email. Counselors may note the change the next time they are actively in the AWARE™ case. Examples of this include the correction of a date of birth or situations where the individual has an application for benefits pending but has not yet been allowed benefits (in those cases Social Security Programs will continue to monitor the case and then email if a change is made in the future).

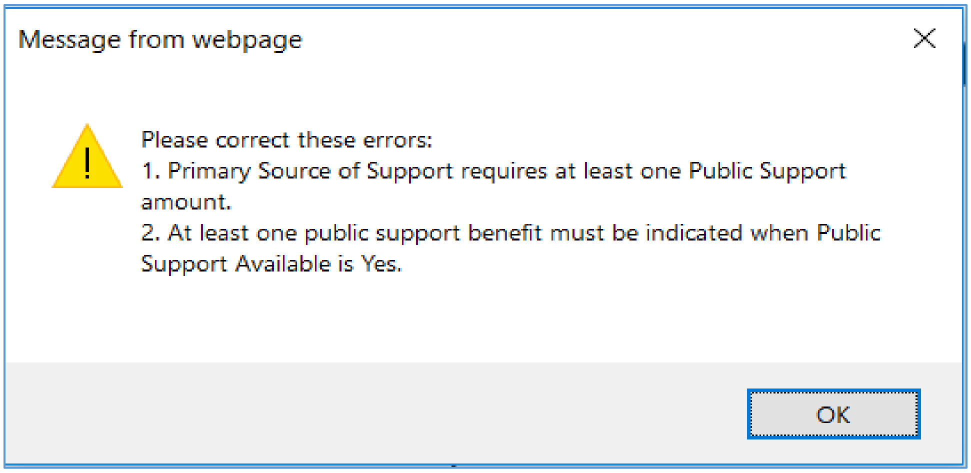
3. **Case note and email** – The process may or may not be complete. Further work is needed.

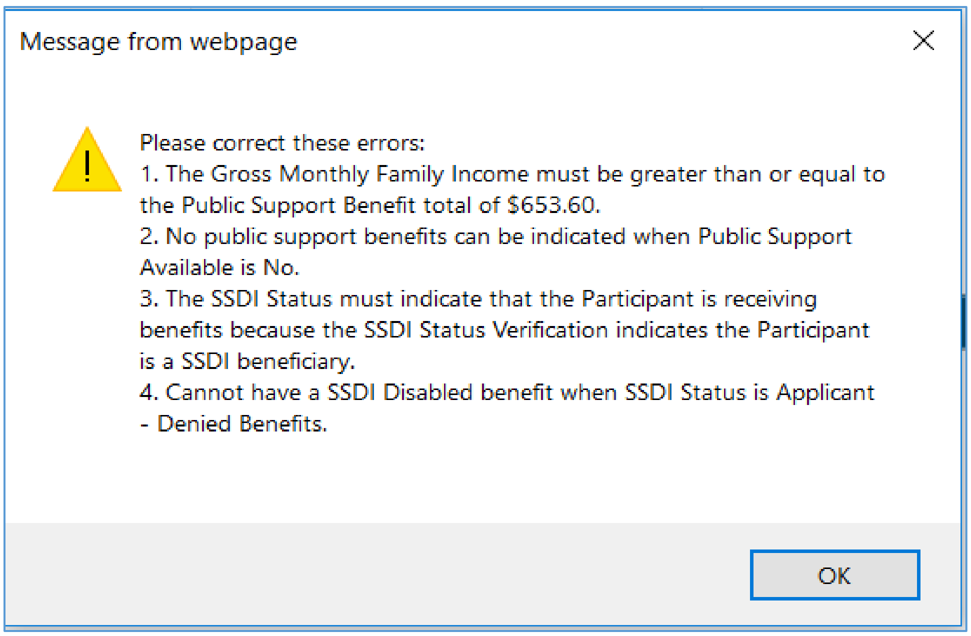
    Counselors will receive a case note and email regarding the circumstances in which the counselor will need to make a change or reach out the consumer to correct an error. Examples of situations that may require a case note and email to the counselor include: an incorrect SSN, an incorrect spelling, SVES indication that the consumer is deceased, or if SSA indicates an issue that may require the consumer contact SSA (such as suspended benefits due to a change of address, not providing updated forms, etc.).

Navigating Away From The Intake Screen

Once the batch process has been completed for a consumer, the next time a counselor accesses the intake screen, they may need to update certain fields or will receive an error when attempting to leave the screen.

Two examples:





The text in the error box will tell you what needs to be corrected. These are usually very simple corrections such as updating amount totals or selecting the appropriate type of support from the dropdown menu.

A Note about Medical Insurance (Medicare/Medicaid)

In general, if an individual is receiving SSDI or another type of Title II benefit, they will most likely be receiving Medicare. If an individual is receiving SSI (Title XVI benefits of any type), they will most likely be receiving Medicaid. Occasionally, individuals receive both types of cash benefits and health insurances. Further, there are also other ways to access these benefits, so it is best to confirm with the consumer as to what type or types they receive.

INQUIRIES:

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