

February 18, 2021

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ALL COUNTY LETTER**

This letter issues a temporary change in the status of the Payment Verification System (PVS) match for the CalFresh program, as being verified upon receipt. This letter informs County Welfare Departments (CWDs) that information provided on the PVS match is temporarily considered unclear and must be independently verified for the CalFresh program. The PVS match processing requirements for the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program remains unchanged.



**KIM JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • [www.cdss.ca.gov](http://www.cdss.ca.gov)



**GAVIN NEWSOM**  
GOVERNOR

February 18, 2021

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 21-09

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS  
ALL CALFRESH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS  
ALL COUNTY IEVS COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: TEMPORARY CHANGE TO PAYMENT VERIFICATION SYSTEM  
(PVS) MATCH PROCESSING FOR CALFRESH

REFERENCE: [ALL COUNTY LETTER \(ACL 17-41\)](#); [COUNTY LETTER \(ACWDL\) \(JUNE 5, 2020\)](#); [MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES \(MPP\) Sections 20-004; 20-005; 20-006.533; 20-006.54; 44-316.324\(b\)\(2\)](#)

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to notify County Welfare Departments (CWD) of the temporary change to the processing requirement for the PVS match in the CalFresh program. The data provided on the PVS match must temporarily be considered unclear and be independently verified. Until further notice, the PVS match must not be considered Verified Upon Receipt (VUR) for the CalFresh program.

## **Background**

The PVS match is one of ten Recipient Income and Eligibility Verification System (R-IEVS) data matches. The PVS match contains Retirement, Survivors and Disability Insurance data from the Social Security Administration, State Unemployment Insurance, and State Disability Insurance data from California's Employment Development Department (EDD).

[ACL 17-41](#) provides CWDs with guidance on processing Income and Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) match information and identifies the PVS match as VUR.

## **COVID-19 Pandemic Effect on the PVS Match**

There has been an unprecedented increase in unemployment insurance (UI) claims because of the effect of COVID-19 on business closures, which has resulted in an

increase in volume of the PVS match. EDD also issued additional UI benefits in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The three types of UI pandemic benefits EDD issued include the:

- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) for workers that were not eligible for UI;
- Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC) was at \$600 per week, issued in addition to regular unemployment benefits through July 31, 2020; and
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) that was an additional 13 weeks of unemployment after state benefits were no longer available.

The PVS match, provided by EDD, has not included the three types of UI pandemic benefits above. This has caused the UI data in the match to be unclear.

Additionally, CWDs have employed COVID-19 health precautions to help ensure the health and safety of their staff. Moreover, some CWD staff have also been called to volunteer in emergency disaster responses. These two factors have limited CWD staff's access to county offices and their ability to process this information timely.

### **Temporary R-IEVS PVS Match Processing Guidance**

Upon the issuance of this letter, and until further notice, CWDs must follow the requirements in [MPP Section 20-006.54](#) and [ACL 17-41](#), regarding verifying unclear information, when processing the PVS match. CWDs must independently verify any PVS match indicating the household missed a mandatory report, such as income over the household's Income Reporting Threshold (IRT), prior to taking any action on a CalFresh case.

CWDs are required to compare PVS data against the household's case record to determine if there is a discrepancy based on what the household reported at certification or on the household's mandatory reporting requirements, such as IRT. If, after comparing the case file to the PVS match, there is no indication to show the household missed a mandatory report, no verification is necessary, and the match must be closed and marked as non-discrepant.

CWDs are only authorized to request verification of information reported on the PVS match. CWDs must not request verification of any additional UI benefits that are not reported on the PVS match. However, if anyone in the household independently reports UI information, then the CWD must take action based on the household's mandatory reporting requirements.

When the CWD identifies a potential discrepancy between the PVS match and the case record, the CWD must send a recipient verification letter to provide the household the opportunity to verify the information. If the household fails or refuses to respond, the

CWD must notify the household of the termination of their participation in the CalFresh program for failure to comply.

The mandatory processing guidance provided applies to all new and backlogged PVS matches and is effective upon issuance of this letter.

### **Processing the PVS Match for the CalWORKs Program**

CWDs have reported cases where recipients have stated that UI claims were filed using their personal information without their knowledge or consent. In those cases, CWDs are reminded the rules regarding the processing of the PVS match in the CalWORKs program remain unchanged. Per [MPP Section 44-316.324\(b\)\(2\)](#) unearned income reported in the PVS match must be paired with earned income, and over the assistance unit's (AU) IRT, in order to be considered potentially discrepant. CWDs are not authorized to consider the pandemic benefits issued by EDD not reported on the PVS match, when determining if a CalWORKs AU missed a mandatory report.

### **Suspected UI Fraud and Identity Theft**

CWDs should assist households in reporting suspected UI fraud and identity theft. CWDs are reminded a signed affidavit is an acceptable means of determining eligibility and resolving reporting discrepancies. In cases of identity theft, CWDs are not authorized to require households to provide any other proof, such as a police report, to resolve any reporting discrepancies.

For more information about reporting UI fraud, the CWD should direct clients to California EDD's toll-free Fraud Hotline at 1-800-229-6297. Alternative ways to report can also be found at the following website: <https://askedd.edd.ca.gov/ReportFraud.aspx>

For more information about reporting identity theft, CWDs can direct clients to The California Attorney General's website: <https://oag.ca.gov/idtheft/facts/victim-checklist>.

CWDs are reminded that nothing in this letter precludes the CWD from referring cases for fraud investigation, in accordance with [MPP Section 20-005](#), when there is reason to suspect fraud exists. For questions regarding the completion of this new process, please contact the CDSS Data Stewardship and Integrity Bureau, at [PIBPolicyUnit@DSS.CA.GOV](mailto:PIBPolicyUnit@DSS.CA.GOV), or call (916) 653-1826.

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By:***  
**NATASHA NICOLAI**  
**Deputy Director, Chief Data Strategist**  
**Research, Automation, and Data Division**