

Prince George's County Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Dependent Verification Audit

Q: Why is the County doing a dependent verification audit?

A: The County is conducting a dependent verification audit for compliance purposes and to ensure that only eligible dependents are covered under the County's health benefit plans. To maintain the quality and affordability of health benefit coverage, the County has a responsibility to ensure only eligible dependents are covered.

Q: Is the dependent verification audit legitimate?

A: Yes. It was announced during our quarterly HR Town Hall meetings in April that in an ongoing effort to provide affordable health benefits to all employees, the County must ensure its health plans are covering eligible dependents only. As part of this effort, the County has engaged its health care consultant to conduct a full dependent verification audit.

Q: Why is the County requiring documents that were required at the start of employment?

A: The County requires that all employees submit documents to verify their eligible dependents upon hire and if you experience a qualifying life event during your career. Eligibility of dependents changes over time for a variety of reasons and that change is not always communicated with the Benefits Unit. The County has an ongoing responsibility to ensure that only eligible dependents are covered under our health plans.

Q: Will we have to do this again?

A: Audits are good business practice. Yes, you will most likely have to participate in another dependent verification audit in the future.

Q: Why does the audit require additional documents to prove I am married?

A: Verification for a legal spouse is two-fold. The marriage certificate verifies the existence of the relationship at its inception, and the tax return or proof of joint ownership verifies that the relationship currently exists.

Q: Who must complete the documentation required?

A: All employees and retirees who cover dependents must complete the documentation verification. There are over 12,000 dependents that need to be verified.

Q: I got married and had a baby in early June. Why can't I verify the eligibility of my new dependents ?

A: The audit covers all dependents that were in our system as of June 1, 2021. If you got married or had a baby any time after that date you do not need to verify that new dependent through this audit.

Q: What are the security requirements of the vendor?

A: Prince George's County takes your security concerns seriously. The Dependent Verification Center's (DVC) security meets or exceeds our security requirements for our vendors. The verification platform's security is reviewed and tested regularly and to date has never had a security breach of data. DVC will never sell or use your personal data that is not related to this project.

Q. Why can't the third party do the legwork?

A: It is more cost effective for employees to provide their documents and there are just some things that a third party may not be able to locate to show that your relationship is still valid. An example would be if you are divorced and adopted your stepchild and you are still covering them. There would be no way to locate this data.

Q: I am worried about identity theft of my information.

A: The DVC has implemented the best available security within its process, and the DVC system has the same security protocols used to protect personal information of over 23 million employees of the company's 3,000 clients. The company has provided dependent eligibility verification audits for over 800 clients and has never had a security breach.

Protecting your data is paramount and the DVC follows strict industry practices for data security and encryption. The portal to upload documentation is secure and encrypted, although you could also fax or mail via US postal service the documents for verification. Review your documentation before sending - all account numbers and social security numbers should be blacked out.

Q: Do I have to send in social security numbers or my income on my tax documents?

A: No. In fact, in the paperwork, the vendor instructs you to "black out" that information.

Q: Can the third party access our personnel files?

A: No. The personnel files are stored electronically and not accessible by anyone outside of OHRM.

Q: What will happen if I do not submit the required documentation / do not verify my dependents?

A: All unverified dependents will be terminated from coverage.

Q: If my dependents' coverage is terminated for non-compliance with the audit, will they be eligible for continuation of coverage through COBRA?

A: Yes. Even though this is not a legal requirement to do so, we will offer your terminated dependents COBRA coverage. COBRA is at 102% the true cost of benefits.

Q. What if I do not have any dependents?

A: You are not part of the audit. There is nothing you need to do.

Q: Why can't I just show you the paperwork to verify?

A: All documents are required to be loaded into the DVC system for review. This ensures documents are reviewed consistently across all employees and, in the case of a legal dispute, all documents are on file for reference. The verification process is driven by an automated system to ensure accuracy and consistency in document review and eligibility decisions. The initial review of submitted documentation is completed using the automated system and is not a manual review. Documents for dependents that fail the automated process are flagged in the system, and then reviewed by senior auditors to determine if there is a clerical error on the document or if the document just does not prove the dependent's eligibility.

Q: When is the deadline to verify my dependents?

A: October 12, 2021 is the deadline to verify all dependents. Anyone not verified by that date will be terminated as of December 31, 2021 and mailed COBRA paperwork if they don't verify their dependents in the appeals process.

Q: What do I do if I find out that one of my dependents isn't eligible? Can I remove them?

A: Yes, you can remove any ineligible dependents by logging on to the Dependent Verification Center's portal and changing their status to ineligible.

Q: How much time does it take to upload the documents?

A: It depends on you, but most employees have stated that it is easy and takes less than 10 minutes to upload documents.

Q: If I fax my documents, where is the proof that I sent them?

A: Please keep the fax confirmation sheet as proof that you have faxed your documents.

Q: Who can I talk to if I have questions about the audit?

A: Please feel free to call the Dependent Verification Center at 1-800-725-5810.