

**Federal Parent Locator Service
Federal Case Registry
Making the Best Use of Social Security Administration (SSA) Information
Multistate Conference Call Notes**

Participating States

Alabama	Iowa	Nebraska	Rhode Island
California	Kansas	Nevada	South Dakota
Colorado	Kentucky	New Hampshire	Tennessee
Connecticut	Maine	New Jersey	Texas
District of Columbia	Maryland	New Mexico	Utah
Florida	Massachusetts	New York	West Virginia
Georgia	Minnesota	North Dakota	Wisconsin
Idaho	Mississippi	Ohio	Wyoming
Illinois	Montana	Oregon	

Purpose of the Call

The purpose of the call held on March 23, 2004 was to review data that are provided by SSA's State Verification and Exchange System (SVES), to discuss the misidentification of Federal Case Registry (FCR) Social Security Numbers (SSNs), and to relay upcoming changes to the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) related to SSN verification. Additionally, the agenda included a reminder about changes to case identifiers (IDs) on the FCR for seven states and the resulting proactive matches.

A. SVES

1. Data Match

The SVES data match began in May 2002 with FPLS Minor Release 02-01. Documentation for SVES, including the manifest and record specifications, can be found on the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement's (OCSE) web site at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/newhire/library/realmgmt/realmgmt.htm>. With this release, states gained automated access to Title II (SSA benefits), Title XVI Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Prisoner data. The SVES data are provided upon request and requires states to modify their systems to accept the new response record format with additional data elements.

There are currently 13 states accepting SVES data: California, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Maine, Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and West Virginia.

The above listed states that are receiving SVES matches are also getting SSA information more frequently. The SVES match is processed on a daily basis, whereas, the SSA external locate data is processed weekly. In addition, states receive information on pending claims as well and paid claims, making it possible


for caseworkers to initiate a withholding of lump sum initial payments by acting quickly on SVES information.

States were asked to comment on SVES data vs. the data obtained via “B” agreements with state IV-A agencies. One state indicated that they once had access to SSA data through IV-A, but it was terminated due to limits in the system’s ability to handle additional users.

Just like all the other external locate requests, SVES is available only for custodial parties (CPs), noncustodial parents (NCPs) and putative fathers (PF.) Recently we learned that some SSA District offices expected caseworkers to obtain children’s beneficiary information using the SVES external locate. However, this option is not currently available to states. OCSE is considering expanding the SVES locate source to include children, so that states can get children’s SSA benefit information for use in determining support order amounts.

2. Title II Information

Positions 96 through 103 of the SVES Title II Locate response record contain the Date of Death. This is verified death information for the SSA recipient. In addition, the Title XVI record also contains verified death information. There has been misunderstanding about the death information being sent to states proactively and the information states get upon request via SVES. A recent meeting with staff from SSA provided information that SSA updates the member records whenever they learn of a death from any source. The SSA death information is updated on the FCR once a month. This death information is forwarded to states in the monthly death file updates and in FCR-to-FCR proactive matches.

Where benefits are involved after a death is reported, SSA verifies the information, and the Master Beneficiary Death record is updated. It is this verified death information that is reported in the SVES response record. In summary, death information reported to states in proactive matches may not be verified by SSA and further research may be required. On the other hand, the death information in the SVES response record, forwarded to states as a result of a SVES locate request, is verified. 

Positions 119 through 265 of the SVES Title II Locate response record contain the Residence Address followed by the address scrubbing indicators. This is current and good address information for location of the person.

Positions 387 through 398 of the SVES Title II Locate response record contain SSA’s CAN/BIC numbers. This is a 12-character field made up of the nine-digit claim number (CAN) and the three-digit Beneficiary Identification Code (BIC). This information is useful if states need to follow-up with the SSA about an individual. The Data Dictionary in Appendix E of the Interface Guidance Document (IGD) contains a complete listing of BIC codes.

Positions 419 through 424 of the SVES Title II Locate response record contain the Date of Current Title II Entitlement. The Net Monthly Title II Benefit in positions 431 through 436. This information is valuable for a guideline computation. Additionally, Title II benefits are subject to withholding for child support payment. Guidance on withholding procedures when the NCP is an SSA beneficiary can be found in Information Memorandum 02-11 dated December 13, 2002. Essentially, states must serve income-withholding documents to any SSA District office. The documents will then be forwarded to the appropriate SSA regional office upon verification of the benefit information.

Position 464 and Position 471 of the SVES Title II Locate response record contain indicators if a person has Black Lung disability benefits or Railroad Retirement. Federal regulations allow withholding on both of these income amounts.

3. Title XVI Information

Positions 110 through 117 of the SVES Title XVI Locate response record contain a date of death with the source code of the death information in position 118. As discussed above, this date is verified and reliable. The various sources of this death information can be found in the IGD Data Dictionary.

Residence information is provided in positions 119 through 265 of the SVES Title XVI Locate response record.

Most of the information discussed in the SVES Title II section of the SVES response record is also available in the Title XVI section of the record with some additional data. Because many Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients have alternate payees, the SVES Title XVI Locate response record contains identifying information for payees beginning in position 387.

Position 551 of the SVES Title XVI Locate response record contains an indicator for the type of benefit the recipient is getting, followed by the date of eligibility in position 561.

The Amount of SSI is reported in positions 762 through 768 of the SVES Title XVI locate response record. There are eight possible occurrences of the SSI amount to capture the changes in benefit amounts over time.

4. Prisoner Records

Penal institutions are paid a bounty for reporting prisoners to the SSA for the purpose of discontinuing benefits and detecting fraud. About 6,500 penal institutions are part of the SSA bounty program, including some mental institutions. This information is provided to SSA at initial incarceration and is rarely updated by the penal institutions for transfers, paroles, or death.

Therefore, prisoner data should be used as a pointer for location and further verified for accuracy. The exception to this is the Federal Bureau of Prisons which routinely refreshes its prisoner data with SSA.

Positions 64 through 135 of the SVES Prisoner Locate response record contain the SSN, name, sex, and date of birth reported by the prison.

Note: Caseworkers should be aware that this data could differ from the information maintained in the statewide system.

Positions 397 through 404 of the SVES Prisoner Locate response record report the date of prison confinement that is fairly reliable as penal institutions are paid on a sliding scale based on the timeliness of their reports. However, the Release Date found in Position 405 through 412 of the SVES Prisoner Locate response record is not as reliable since this date is reported at the time of confinement and paroles and early releases are the norm.

The Prison Facility Name is reported in Positions 483 through 542 of the SVES Prisoner Locate response record, followed by the address.

5. SVES Enhancements

OCSE and SSA are encouraging all states to use the SVES response data. Automation will ensure that the data are presented to the caseworker in a timely manner and reduce the number of requests for information to local SSA District offices. Many states have not implemented the programming changes necessary to receive the SVES response record. For those states that have not programmed to receive the SVES data, OCSE has developed a print program that removes SVES data from the FCR response file and prints it to a report. States that are not prepared to receive the SVES response record may access the data using the printed report. The print program can be obtained by contacting your State Technical Support Liaison.

OCSE is also considering the following enhancements to the SVES response record layout to help improve states' ability to use the data:

- Changing the edits for the SVES external locate to allow SVES locate requests for children. States can use child benefit information in their guideline calculations to determine support order amounts; and
- Returning SVES data in a proactive match instead of upon request through the SSA external locate source. This option is costly and requires hours of computer processing time. Many IV-D agencies receive their own state's Title II and Title XVI beneficiary information on a monthly or weekly cycle now from their IV-A agency. Prior to implementing this change, OCSE is asking states to consider the following: what information is obtained from the IV-A agency, what information is obtained from the SSA District office and what information is obtained from the SSA and SVES external locate request.

B. Social Security Number Issues

OCSE is continually looking for ways to improve and to enhance the data returned to states through proactive matches and responses to locate requests. Several changes have been made to improve the quality of data maintained in the FCR and the NDNH. These changes are summarized below.

1. QW and UI Files: Suspension When Duplicate Records Exceed a Pre-set Threshold

On 12/3/03, the NDNH was modified to suspend a Quarterly Wage (QW) or Unemployment Insurance (UI) file when the number of duplicate records exceeds 10 percent of the total file. In order to determine whether records in a file are duplicates, the records of the received file are sampled methodically and then compared with the current and previous quarters in the NDNH for matching records.

A QW record in a submitted file duplicates a QW record in the NDNH if the content of the following fields in both records is identical: Employee SSN, Submitting State/Agency Code, Employee Name, Employee Wage Amount, Reporting Period, and Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN).

A UI record in a submitted file duplicates a UI record in the NDNH if the content of the following fields in both records is identical: Claimant SSN, Submitting State Code, Claimant Name, Benefit Amount, and Reporting Period.

This routine applies to all QW files submitted by states and Federal agencies, and all UI files. Once a file is suspended, the submitter is contacted about the content. Based on the severity of duplication, the submitter can resubmit a corrected file or request that the suspended file be processed as received.

2. QW and W-4 Records: Swap the First and Last Names for SSNs That Are Not Verified

On 12/30/03, the NDNH was modified to swap the First Name and Last Name associated with SSNs submitted on QW and W-4 records that are not initially verified. The "swapped name" record is resubmitted for verification. Those SSNs that are verified with this process are returned to the submitter with warning code 0004. If the swapped name and SSN do not verify, then the originally submitted name and SSN are returned with error code 0001.

3. QW Records: Warning for Use of Consecutive Nines in the Wage Amount Field

On 12/30/03, the NDNH was modified to edit incoming QW records for Wage Amounts that are all nines (that is, from 3 to 11 consecutive nines, e.g., 999 or 99999). The NDNH accepts the record, but returns warning code 0035 to the submitter. This warning code is suppressible; submitters may notify the NDNH that they do not want to receive the warning. To suppress the warning,

submitters should complete and submit a "QW Output Suppression Options Form." Contact your State Technical Support Liaison for a copy of this form.

4. QW and W-4 Records: Retrieval of Employer Address Information for Federal Agencies

On 12/30/03, the NDNH was modified to retrieve employer address information for a Federal agency that submits with a FIPS code instead of a FEIN. In the past, W-4 or QW proactive matches or locates returned from the NDNH did not contain employer address information associated with a FIPS code. The Child Support Enforcement (CSE) agencies will now receive employer address information for all Federal agencies for enforcement activities.

C. FCR Verified SSN Match to NDNH Unverified SSNs

One state has volunteered to pilot a project to match persons with verified SSNs on the FCR with persons from the NDNH with unverified SSNs. If successful, this new match will provide the state with employment data that otherwise would have gone unrecognized.

Additionally, OCSE is considering the possibility of incorporating new SSN verification routines into the FCR SSN verification processes. By implementing these new routines, more SSNs may be identified and verified, thus adding more participants and cases to the FCR and uncovering more locate information for states.

D. Misidentified SSNs

Occasionally, SSA's routines may identify an SSN for a person that is not the correct SSN. OCSE's teams ask that states report these instances so that the errors can be researched and any deficient processes corrected. Sometimes the misidentification of SSNs cannot be avoided. There are persons with the same or similar names with the same date of birth, which could result in the identification of the incorrect SSN. Often, this occurs for persons with common surnames and given names. However, that which is considered a common name in one part of the country may not be considered common in another part of the country. So, every instance of misidentified SSNs should be reported and researched.

An enhancement to the FCR to allow states to update misidentified SSNs and flag them as incorrect is under consideration. However, this enhancement will only work in instances where an SSN was provided by a state and the SSA routines identified and verified a different SSN. The enhancement will not work when no SSN was provided and SSA identified and verified an SSN. Further research is required to resolve this issue and state input is invited.

E. FCR Proactive Matches

States were reminded of the changes to case IDs in the FCR in preparation of the national Interstate Case Reconciliation. Those states for which changes

were made in the FCR are: Hawaii, Kansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and Wyoming. (These case ID changes triggered FCR proactive matches to states.)

F. Questions and Answers

1. Does SSA verify the SSN for prisoner matches?

Yes, SSA does verify the SSN because the bounty is paid to the prison based on the verified match.

2. Is the daily return on the SVES matches only new information?

Yes, the data provided in a SVES match is new information, but it is returned upon request, not proactively.

3. Are the SSA data that are returned through the state's online access to the TANF agency the same as SVES data?

No. However, the information provided is similar, and states must have a verified SSN for both processes, but states will receive information only for their own IV-A participants.

4. How long will it take to get an SSN identified by SSA if we did not provide one to the FCR?

If SSA is able to identify one and only one SSN, the identified SSN will be returned to the state within a few days of submission of the participant to the FCR. If a manual review is needed to select one of several SSNs, the process may take several weeks. (This time frame does not include SSN's identified via IRS-U.)

5. Of the SVES data that are provided, which fields are considered valuable?

The State TS team will facilitate a conference call with states currently receiving SVES data to gain insight into the value of each SVES data field. This information will be helpful in planning changes to the SVES interface.

6. How reliable would the self-employment indicator be?

As reliable as what is provided by the IRS.

7. Would the self-employment indicator be annual?

Yes, SSA obtains that information once per year.

8. Do we have to request "all" locate sources to receive SVES data?

No. Any state currently receiving SVES data may ask for the SVES external locate by itself.

9. What information is provided in the SVES external locate?

The SVES response record contains information on Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security benefits, Black Lung benefits and Railroad Retirement, and prisoner information from the BOUNTY program.

10. Is the date of death in a SVES response record verified?

Yes, SSA verifies the date of death for an SSA beneficiary.

11. Does the Federal Bureau of Prisons submit prisoner SSNs through the BOUNTY program.

Yes, 6,500 Federal, state, and local institutions report through the BOUNTY program.