
RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES MANUAL

GENERAL PROVISIONS

THIRD PARTY QUERY (TPQY) SYSTEM

SECTION 0120

DEFINITION OF THIRD PARTY QUERY SYSTEM

0120.05

REV:04/1985

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is an agency of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. SSA administers a variety of programs, including Retirement Survivors and Disability Insurance (RSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and assists in the Health Insurance program, generally called "Medicare."

SSA has instituted a procedure whereby State, county and other agencies administering health and income maintenance programs may request from SSA's benefit files information needed to implement the agency's programs. This procedure is called the "Automated Third Party Query Process," abbreviated "TPQY," which is the system used to obtain the information.

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) has negotiated with SSA an agreement under which SSA is to furnish information from its file as well as provide necessary materials and assistance. For its part, the Department of DHS has agreed to request the information according to set procedures and to insure that the information received is used only in connection with its programs.

Much of the contents of this section is taken from the TPQY User Guide, published by the Social Security Administration, Boston Region, December, 1984. If further information is needed, at least one copy of the Guide is available in each DHS district office for use by staff.

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Confidentiality of TPQY Information

REV:04/1985

The information furnished through the TPQY process must be kept confidential and secure and must not be used or disclosed without the written consent of the individual who is THE SUBJECT OF THE QUERY.

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GENERAL PROCEDURES

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The TPQY procedures involve the use of mark sense cards to request benefit and health information. The representative of the requesting or user agency prepares the mark sense card instead of the lengthy SSA-1610-U2 form or other written request. A mark sense card is a card on which holes are punched and/or on which pencil marks are made to represent essential data, for example, the Social Security number (SSN) and name of the individual about whom information is sought, the identifying symbol or code of the TPQY user, etc.

The mark sense card prepared by the agency representative is run through a mechanical card reader that can sense or read the blacked-out blocks of information entered on it. The card reader at the Providence District Office of SSA is connected to the central SSA computer in Baltimore, Md., to which the query or request for information is relayed. Generally, the computer responds rapidly, and by the next day the requested information has been typed out by the printer in the SSA district office. However, the computer will not respond with the requested information if the input document (mark sense card) is not readable, if the SSN that is input is not in the benefit file (NIF), or if the first five letters of the surname and the first-name initial do not match SSA records. These situations will generate a card reader edit, NIF or a NO MATCH response, respectively.

Accurate preparation of the mark sense card is essential to obtain the desired data. Properly marked, the card will generally elicit sufficient, detailed information on an individual entitled to SSA, SSI, or both.

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General Instructions

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Entries are made on the mark sense card by filling in each appropriate alpha or numeric block. Running along the bottom of the card are numbers from 1 through 80 indicating the mark columns of the card. Different shades of color and single or double lines are used to group certain related columns of the card together, such as the Social Security number, name, etc. These groups of columns are called fields and are referred to as the SSN field, the name field, etc. For ease of marking and reading, the SSN field is divided into three sub-fields, in the familiar SSN configuration, indicating area, group, and serial.

Because the mark sense card is designed for processing through a card reader capable of reading blocks blackened with soft pencil lead, only No. 1 or No. 2 soft lead pencils may be used. Unless the card is marked properly with a soft lead pencil, the markings will not be correctly discerned by the card reader. Ballpoint and felt-tip pens cannot be used, and extraneous marks on the card must be avoided or erased as they will often cause rejection of the card. Neither liquid paper nor correction fluid can be used, but clean erasures will not ordinarily cause rejection of the card.

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Specific Instructions

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Only one mark sense card need be coded and submitted for each individual about whom information is sought because the one card is routed to both the Master Beneficiary Record (MBR) and Supplemental Security Record (SSR) Systems. A combined response, pertaining only to the individual and not the household, is generated from the MBR and the SSR. Instructions for completing the individual fields are contained in 0120.10.15 through 0120.10.45.

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Prefix-Type of Action Field

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Agency staff need not complete this field as it will already be punched out on the cards received from the SSA district or branch field office.

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HIR - Health Information Request Field

0120.10.20

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If this field is coded (by filling in the H-block), Medicare and disability information will be included on the response. If left blank, only financial information will be returned. DHS staff must always code this field.

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0120.10.25

Social Security Number Field

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This field is divided into three sub-fields for the 3 - 2 - 4 configuration of the nine-digit SSN. Nine (9) blocks must be marked, one for each printed block column, to reflect accurately the SSN of the person who is the subject of the query.

If the SSN is unknown, this field may be completed with the Claim Account Number (CAN). The CAN is a nine-digit number followed by the Beneficiary Identification Code (BIC). The nine-digit CAN is the number under which the subject individual may be receiving Social Security benefits. Whenever this field is completed with the CAN, the BIC field must also be completed.

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BIC Field

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This field is left blank unless a query is submitted on the basis of a Claim Account Number. (See 0112.10.25.) Appendix 1 of the TPQY User Guide contains a list of Beneficiary Identification Codes.

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0120.10.35

Identification (ID) Field

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Up to the first five (5) letters of the surname of the SSN or CAN holder must be entered in columns 30 through 48. The initial of his/her first name must be entered in columns 50 through 52.

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User Code Field

0120.10.40

REV:04/1985

This field is divided into five (5) sub-fields and identifies, by means of a code, the third-party office originating the query. SSA has assigned a two-character user code prefix to each full-service DHS district office and to the Department's Quality Control Unit. Staff must consult the User Code Prefix list in 0112.10.45, select the appropriate alpha or alpha/numeric prefix, and enter it in the first two sub-fields (columns 54-64) of the User Code Field.

The remaining three (3) sub-fields (Columns 66-80) of the User Code Field may be utilized at the discretion of the Regional Manager to further identify the office or unit initiating the query or to designate the program for whose purposes the information is required. If the latter option is exercised, the following codes might be used, for example:

- Code PUM - Public Medical
- Code QUC - Quality Control
- Code ADC - Aid to Families with Dependent Children
- Code GPA - General Public Assistance
- Code MAS - Medical Assistance
- Code NIC - Nursing and Intermediate Care

Since this is an alpha/numeric field, either letters or numbers or a combination of the two may be used to make up the codes.

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Code Prefixes for Entry

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PREFIX USER CODE	REQUESTING OFFICE (RO)	RO ADDRESS	RO TELEPHONE NUMBER	SSA SERVING Office
R1	Bristol	9 Court Street Bristol, RI 02809	253-3970	Providence
R2	Central Falls	509 Broad Street Central Falls, RI 02863	728-2500	Pawtucket
R3	Coventry	65 Sandy Bottom Road Coventry, RI 02816	828-2440	W.Warwick
R4	Cranston	1090 Cranston Street Cranston, RI 02920	943-3000	Providence
R6	E.Providence	75 James Street E. Providence, RI 02914	438-7500	Providence
R7	Johnston	1514 Atwood Avenue Johnston, RI 02919	861-6180	Providence
R8	Newport	Welfare Center, Elm Street Newport, RI 02840	849-6000	Newport
R5	N.Kingston	7734 Post Road N.Kingston, RI 02852	884-7250	Warwick
R9	Pawtucket	225 Main Street Pawtucket, RI 02860	728-2000	Pawtucket
RA	Providence	111 Fountain Street Providence, RI 02903	272-2000	Providence
RB	Warwick	100 Meadow Street Warwick, RI 02886	739-9530	W.Warwick
RC	W Warwick	152 Washington Street W.Warwick, RI 02893	828-0500	W.Warwick

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RD	Westerly	36 Canal Street Westerly, RI 02891	596-2081	New London Ct.
RE	Woonsocket	162 Main Street Woonsocket, RI 02895	769-3500	Woonsocket
RF	Quality Control Unit	46 Aborn Street Providence, RI 02903	277-6740	Providence

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SUBMISSION OF TPQY CARD

REV:04/1985

Once the TPQY mark sense card is completed and reviewed for accuracy, it is sent, along with a TPQY Cover Form Letter (DHS-16) to the SSA Card Reader Office:

District Office
Social Security Administration
380 Westminster Mall
Providence, RI 02903

Attention: SSADARS Operator

The TPQY Cover Form Letter (DHS-16) must be completed with the originating agency's address, telephone number, user code prefix, and the name and district office code of the appropriate SSA Servicing Office. The DHS-16 must be signed by an agency representative. A batch of TPQY mark sense cards may be sent with a single Cover Form Letter.

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Social Security Administration Offices

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SSA SERVICING OFFICE	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NUMBER	CODE
Providence	Social Security Administration 380 Westminster Mall Providence, RI 02903	528-4501	072
Pawtucket	Social Security Administration 55 Broad Street Pawtucket, RI 02860	724-9610	074
West Warwick	Social Security Administration 90 Quaker Lane West Warwick, RI 02893	822-1456	075
Newport	Social Security Administration 366 Thames Street Newport, RI 02840	849-3487	A89
Woonsocket	Social Security Administration Room 156, PO Building Woonsocket, RI 02895	767-2100	073
New London	Social Security Administration 24 Eugene O'Neill Drive South New London, CT 06320	203-443-8454	084

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The TPQY Process

REV:04/1985

The Providence District SSA Office, which is the destination for all TPQY cards, processes the mark sense cards through the card reader. The TPQY System routes the printed replies to the appropriate SSA Servicing Office, whence they are relayed to the requesting agency office. Mark sense cards are returned to the requesting agency and retained in the case record for possible future use if updated SSA information is needed.

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THE TPQY RESPONSE

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The printed TPQY response does not require deciphering or decoding. If guidance is needed in interpreting the data, however, staff should consult the TPQY User Guide. In the event further assistance is necessary, staff may contact the appropriate SSA Servicing Office and identify the inquiry as a TPQY question.

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Card Reader Edit

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A card reader edit response may be received in lieu of a normal query reply. It indicates that the card reader could not read the card for some reason. If the reason is that some part of the SSN, ID, or BIC field could not be read, the reply will so indicate by a question mark or blank space in the column. For example, 41? 33 2222 indicates that the third digit of the SSN could not be read. In such cases, the worker who completed the card should endeavor to identify the individual about whom information was requested and submit a corrected card for re-input.

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A No Match Response

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A NO MATCH reply means that, even though either the Master Beneficiary Record (MBR) or Supplemental Security Record (SSR) contains a beneficiary record for the input SSN, the first five (5) letters of the surname and the first-name initial as input by the requester do not exactly match the surname and initial on record for that beneficiary. An exact match is required because privacy considerations dictate that SSA may only give information about the individual for whom information is requested. It is possible to receive a full reply from the MBR and a NO MATCH or NIF response from the SSR, or vice versa. When a NO MATCH response is received, staff must check the SSN and name against the information in the case record or with the beneficiary. A corrected TPQY card should then be submitted.

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Not In File (NIF) Response

REV:04/1985

A NIF reply means that the TPQY System did not find a corresponding record in the on-line benefit file for either the MBR or the SSR. It is possible to receive a full reply from the MBR and a NIF or NO MATCH response from the SSR, or vice versa. In cases where a worker suspects that a record exists, s/he should ascertain if the input card was correctly marked. If so, the worker must contact the client, verify the correctness of the SSN number in the case record, and learn the approximate date of filing an SSA/SSI claim. If the claim was filed recently and an eligibility decision is pending, a computer record may not be established. If the SSN is verified as correct and two weeks have elapsed since the request, the worker should submit the TPQY card again.

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OBTAINING SUPPLIES OF THE TPQY CARDS

0120.40

REV:04/1985

Supplies of the TPQY mark sense card (SSA-491TC) are furnished through the SSA Servicing Offices to DHS Central Mailing from which they can be ordered in the usual manner. Alternatively, an DHS district office may obtain the cards directly from SSA by calling the appropriate Servicing Office in advance and arranging to pick up a supply of the cards as needed.

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