

Categorical Eligibility Tips

When eligibility is established by a FoodShare Wisconsin (SNAP) case number, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations case number (FDPIR), Wisconsin Works (W-2) Cash Benefits (TANF) case number, the child is categorically eligible as “Needy.” Eligible W-2 Cash Benefits programs are Trial Job, Community Service Job (CSJ), Caring for a Newborn (CMC), and W-2 Transition (W-2 T). **Forward Card numbers, Medicaid, SSI, Quest Card numbers or W-2 Childcare case numbers cannot be used to establish categorical eligibility.**

FoodShare Wisconsin case numbers are 10 digits long. Wisconsin Works (W-2) Cash Benefits case numbers are 10 digits long. Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations case numbers (FDPIR) are the applicant’s 9 digit Social Security number. The determining official needs to be familiar with the format of valid case numbers. If there is any doubt concerning the validity of a case number, the determining official may contact local FoodShare, FDPIR, or W-2 officials. Only the case number may be used to determine eligibility.

Extended Categorical Eligibility: If a child receives FoodShare Wisconsin, FDPIR, or W-2 Cash Benefits, he/she would be claimed as needy regardless of where he/she is residing (i.e. if the child moves to another household). That categorical eligibility extends to other children residing in the household as well; meaning all children in that household would also be free. Children with extended categorical eligibility retain their needy status when moving to a different household for the duration of the approval period on the application. This does not apply to foster children.

If a child participating in the Program is a foster child (whose care and placement is the responsibility of the State or who is placed by a court with a caretaker household), participates in a Federal or State HeadStart Program, or is considered Homeless, Migrant or Runaway, the child can be claimed as needy. However, this eligibility status does not extend to other children residing in the household, it only applies to the applicable child.

For Sponsors with participants residing in Illinois or Minnesota; please follow the case number guidelines detailed below.

Illinois Guidelines

When eligibility is established by a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) case number, a child is categorically eligible as “Needy.” You will find your SNAP or TANF case number on the letter of eligibility for benefits. **Link Card case numbers cannot be used to establish categorical eligibility.**

Valid SNAP or TANF case numbers listed on the Household Applications must be based on the following criteria:

- Case numbers must contain 9 digits.
- Household Applications cannot be accepted with Medicaid case numbers or Link Card numbers.

Minnesota Guidelines

When eligibility is established by a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (**SNAP**) case number, Minnesota Family Investment Program (**MFIP**) case number, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations case number (**FDPIR**), a child is categorically eligible as “Needy.”

- **SNAP or MFIP case numbers:** In Minnesota, benefits are assigned one case number that contains between 4 and 8 digits with no letters.
- **FDPIR case number:** 4 or 9 digits in length. Indian tribal organizations assign a FDPIR case number. In Minnesota, the FDPIR case number is the head of the household's social security number or the last 4 digits of the head of household's Social Security number.

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card numbers (16 digits), WIC numbers and Medical Assistance case numbers cannot be used to establish categorical eligibility. Medical Assistance case numbers may contain up to 8 digits and do not contain a letter prefix.

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