

Section 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known and may be cited as the “An Act to Restore Hope, Opportunity, and Prosperity for Everyone (HOPE),” or the HOPE Act.

Section 2. Enhanced eligibility verification for Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

- A. Prior to awarding assistance under **{insert state program name for Medicaid and SNAP}**, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall verify eligibility information of each applicant.
- B. The information verified by the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Earned and unearned income;
 - a. Employment status and changes in employment;
 - b. Immigration status;
 - c. Residency status, including a nationwide best-address source to verify individuals are residents of the state;
 - d. Enrollment status in other state-administered public assistance programs;
 - e. Financial resources;
 - f. Incarceration status;
 - g. Death records;
 - h. Enrollment status in public assistance programs outside of this state; and
 - i. Potential identity fraud or identity theft.
- C. The **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall sign a memorandum of understanding with any department, agency, or division for information detailed in subsection B.
- D. The **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** may contract with one or more independent vendors to provide information detailed in subsection B. Any contract entered under this subsection shall establish annualized savings that exceed the contract’s total annual cost to the state.
- E. Nothing in this section shall preclude the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** from receiving, reviewing, or verifying additional information related to eligibility not detailed in this section or from contracting with one or more independent vendors to provide additional information not detailed in this section.

Section 3. Real-time eligibility monitoring for Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

- A. On at least a quarterly basis, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall receive and review information concerning individuals enrolled in **{insert state program name for Medicaid and SNAP}** that indicates a change in circumstances that may affect eligibility.
- B. The information provided to the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Earned and unearned income;
 - b. Employment status and changes in employment;
 - a. Residency status;

- b. Enrollment status in other state-administered public assistance programs;
 - c. Financial resources;
 - d. Incarceration status;
 - e. Death records;
 - f. Lottery winnings; and
 - g. Enrollment status in public assistance programs outside of this state.
- C. The **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall sign a memorandum of understanding with any department, agency, or division for information detailed in subsection B.
- D. The **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** may contract with one or more independent vendors to provide information detailed in subsection B. Any contract entered under this subsection shall establish annualized savings that exceed the contract's total annual cost to the state.
- E. The **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall explore joining any multi-state cooperative to identify individuals who are also enrolled in public assistance programs outside of this state, including the National Accuracy Clearinghouse.
- F. Nothing in this section shall preclude the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** from receiving or reviewing additional information related to eligibility not detailed in this section or from contracting with one or more independent vendors to provide additional information not detailed in this section.
- G. If the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** receives information concerning an individual enrolled in **{insert state program name for Medicaid and SNAP}** that indicates a change in circumstances that may affect eligibility, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall review the individual's case using the following procedures:
- a. If the information does not result in the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** finding a discrepancy or change in an individual's circumstances that may affect eligibility, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall take no further action.
 - b. If the information results in the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** finding a discrepancy or change in an individual's circumstances that may affect eligibility, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall promptly redetermine eligibility after receiving such information.
 - c. If the information results in the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** finding a discrepancy or change in an individual's circumstances that may affect eligibility, the individual shall be given an opportunity to explain the discrepancy; provided, however, that self-declarations by applicants or recipients shall not be accepted as verification.
 - d. The **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall provide written notice to the individual, which shall describe in sufficient detail the circumstances of the discrepancy or change, the manner in which the applicant or recipient may respond, and the consequences of failing to take action. The

applicant or recipient shall have 10 business days, or the minimum required by state or federal law, to respond in an attempt to resolve the discrepancy or change. The explanation provided by the recipient or applicant shall be given in writing. After receiving the explanation, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** may request additional documentation if it determines that there is risk of fraud, misrepresentation, or inadequate documentation.

e. If the individual does not respond to the notice, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall discontinue assistance for failure to cooperate, in which case the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall provide notice of intent to discontinue assistance. Eligibility for assistance shall not be established or reestablished until the discrepancy or change has been resolved.

f. If an individual responds to the notice and disagrees with the findings, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall reinvestigate the matter. If the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** finds that there has been an error, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall take immediate action to correct it and no further action shall be taken. If, after an investigation, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** determines that there is no error, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall determine the effect on the individual's case and take appropriate action. Written notice of the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}**'s action shall be given to the individual.

g. If the individual agrees with the findings, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall determine the effect on the individual's case and take appropriate action. Written notice of the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}**'s action shall be given to the individual. In no case shall the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** discontinue assistance upon finding a discrepancy or change in circumstances until the individual has been given notice of the discrepancy and the opportunity to respond as required under this Act.

Section 4. Enhanced authentication for Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

- A. Prior to awarding assistance under **{insert state program name for Medicaid and SNAP}**, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall require applicants to complete an identity authentication process to confirm that the applicant owns the identity presented in the application.
- B. The identity authentication process shall be conducted through a knowledge-based quiz consisting of financial and/or personal questions. The quiz must attempt to accommodate non-banked or under-banked applicants who do not have an established credit history.
- C. The identity authentication process shall be available to be submitted through multiple channels, including online, in-person, and via phone.

Section 5. Fraud reporting.

- A. The **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall provide information obtained under sections 2 through 4 of this Act to **{insert Medicaid inspector general, attorney general, state’s attorney, or other agency responsible for prosecuting eligibility fraud}** for cases of suspected fraud.

Section 6. Work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

- A. The **{insert department of welfare administering SNAP}** shall not seek, apply for, accept or renew any waiver of requirements established under 7 U.S.C. § 2015(o).

Section 7. Federal resource limits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

- A. In no case shall the resource limit standards of the **{insert state name for food stamp program}** exceed the standards specified in 7 U.S.C. § 2014(g)(1), unless expressly required by federal law. In no case shall categorical eligibility exempting households from these resource limits be granted for any non-cash, in-kind or other benefit, unless expressly required by federal law.

Section 8. Federal income limits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

- A. The **{insert department of welfare administering SNAP}** shall not apply gross income standards for food assistance higher than the standards specified in 7 U.S.C. § 2014(c) unless expressly required by federal law. In no case shall categorical eligibility exempting households from this income standard be granted for any non-cash, in-kind or other benefit, unless expressly required by federal law.

Section 9. Child support cooperation requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

- A. The **{insert department of welfare administering SNAP}** shall require individuals to cooperate with **{insert department of welfare administering the child support enforcement program}** as a condition of eligibility, pursuant to 7 C.F.R. § 273.11(o) and 7 C.F.R. § 273.11(p).

Section 10. Implementation and reporting.

- A. The Department shall promulgate all rules and regulations necessary for the purposes of carrying out this Act.
- B. Six months following this Act’s implementation, and annually thereafter, the **{insert department(s) of welfare determining Medicaid and/or SNAP eligibility}** shall publish a written report detailing the impact of sections 2 through 4, including the number of cases reviewed, the number of cases closed, the number of fraud investigation referrals, and the amount of savings and cost avoidance that have resulted from implementation.