

DRAFT - FaDSS Program Policy 2.0 – Initial Program Eligibility

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the FaDSS Program that a family is eligible for FaDSS services when all of the following conditions are met:

1. The Family has a gross income at or below 175% of the federal poverty level based on family size at the time of enrollment into the program or through categorical verification of income. See Table 1.
2. The family has a dependent child in the household
3. The family resides in Iowa
4. Each member of the family has a social security number or proof of application (possession of a driver's license or ID card meets this criteria)
5. Each member of the family is a United States (U.S.) citizen or legal immigrant
6. The family meets one or more of the at-risk criteria established in Iowa Administrative Code 427-15.4(216A). See Appendix C.

A family is considered to be in recruitment status while the FaDSS program is verifying the above criteria. FaDSS specialists must complete the FaDSS Initial Eligibility Determination form when determining family eligibility. The form must be documented in Iowa FaDSS upon completion of the eligibility determination.

Categorical Verification of Eligibility Criteria

Categorical income verification and certain other eligibility criteria may be utilized if a family has been determined eligible for any of the following programs within 6 months of referral:

- Cash assistance through the Family Investment Program (FIP)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Head Start or Early Head Start programs
- Women, Infants, & Children programs (WIC)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Free Public School Lunch

The family may provide the FaDSS program with documentation that verifies that the family has been determined eligible for any of the approved programs within 6 months of referral. The FaDSS specialist may also contact any of the approved programs to verify that the family has been determined eligible if the family provides consent by signing a release of information.

Proof of categorical eligibility criteria must be documented on the FaDSS Initial Eligibility Determination form. The date of review, name of the document reviewed or what the FaDSS specialist listened to must be listed on the form. If the approved program provided written documentation, list that document in the family record.

Table 1 shows the categorical verification criteria for each of the approved programs.

TABLE 1	FIP	LIHEAP	Early Head Start (0-3)	Head Start (3-5)	WIC	SNAP	Free Public School Lunch
Income	✓		✓*	✓*	✓	✓	✓
Dependent Child(ren)	✓			✓			✓**
Iowa Residency	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Proof of SSN	✓	✓				✓	
U.S. Citizen/Legal Immigrant Status	✓	✓				✓	

*10% -20% of enrolled children may be above income guidelines. FaDSS specialists will need to verify the income with EHS or HS with the consent of the family.

**Federal law allows students with disabilities to remain in public school until age 22 (this would not meet age requirements for dependent child criteria).

Members of the Family

The following members of the family must be included when determining eligibility.

1. Head of the household
2. All dependent children
3. Other adults residing in the home

The FaDSS specialist will document this information in the Family Members tab in Iowa FaDSS and document the family size on the FaDSS Initial Eligibility Determination form.

Verifying Dependent Child(ren)

The Head of the Household will self-declare dependent children. A child is considered a dependent child until the age of 18. An 18-year-old is considered a dependent child if they are a full-time student in a secondary school (or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training) and reasonably expected to complete the program before reaching age 19.

The FaDSS specialist will document this information in the Family Members tab in Iowa FaDSS and note it on the FaDSS Initial Eligibility Determination form.

Verifying Social Security Number

FaDSS specialists must see the social security number for all family members on at least one of the documents listed in Appendix A. If a family member does not have a social security number, the family must show proof that they have applied for a social security number. Requirement for an SSN is waived for a child 120 calendar days old, or younger, at the time of intake.

The FaDSS specialist will document the date of review and the name of the document(s) reviewed on the FaDSS Initial Eligibility Determination form.

Verifying U.S. Citizenship or Legal Immigrant Status

Proof of Social Security Number will meet the verification criteria for U.S. citizenship. Legal immigrants and refugees must provide proof of lawful admittance into the U.S. with either a current I-94 number, I-571 form or other documents listed in Appendix A.

The FaDSS specialist will document the date of review and the name of the document(s) reviewed on the FaDSS Initial Eligibility Determination form.

Verifying Iowa Residency

FaDSS specialists should consider the family a resident of Iowa if the family provides an address in Iowa or they self-declare that they are living in Iowa voluntarily and intend to make a home in the state.

The FaDSS specialist will enter the family address in the Contact Information tab in Iowa FaDSS or document in a contact narrative that the family has self-declared they are living in Iowa and intend to make a home in the state. The specialist must also document that the criteria is met on the FaDSS Initial Eligibility Determination form.

Verifying At-Risk Criteria

At-Risk criteria will be documented on the FaDSS Initial Eligibility Determination form. The family may self-declare the at-risk criteria that pertain to their family. See Appendix C.

Verifying Family Income at Eligibility

If the FaDSS specialist cannot verify income categorically through an approved program, the FaDSS specialist must verify that the family's gross income is at or below 175% of the federal poverty level based on family size.

**Note: The income of dependent children is not counted.*

The family must report all earned and unearned income at the time of intake. See Appendix B for a list of income sources that are considered to determine eligibility and the required verification documentation. Documentation may be provided directly from the family. If documentary evidence is not available from the family, verification will be obtained for the source of income if the family consents by signing a release of information. Employment income verification, whether provided by the family or verified by the source of income, should include identification of the payee, date of payment, gross amount of payment and source of payment.

For purposes of determining eligibility for the FaDSS program, the family may elect to use any of the following reporting periods:

Option 1: Most recent 30 days

When electing to use the most recent 30 days, specialists should consider all earned and unearned income sources received by the family during the reporting period. See Appendix D for monthly federal poverty level guidelines.

Option 2: Most recent 12 months

When electing to use the most recent 12 months, specialists should consider all earned and unearned income sources received by the family during the reporting period. See Appendix D for annual federal poverty level guidelines.

Option 3: Most recent calendar year (tax year)

When electing to use the most recent calendar year, the family may provide a Federal Tax Return from the Internal Revenue Service. If the date of referral falls on or before April 15th of the current year, the prior filing year's tax return may be used. If the date of referral falls after 15th, the current filing year's tax return must be used. For example, if a family applies in FY 21, they may present their 2019 Federal Tax Return through April 15th. After 15th, the 2020 Federal Tax Return must be presented. See Appendix D for annual poverty guidelines.

If the family is not eligible under the time period first selected, other reported periods outlined above may be selected to review. The family must be informed of the right to select different reporting periods.

The FaDSS specialists will document the date of review, the name of the document(s) reviewed, and the reporting period option used on the FaDSS Initial Eligibility Determination form. If the family enrolls in the FaDSS program, the FaDSS specialist must enter income information in the Family Information at Enrollment tab in Iowa FaDSS.

No Income

If the family reports no earned or unearned income in any of the above reporting periods, the specialist must document this in the contact narrative and record no income in the Family Information at Enrollment tab in Iowa FaDSS. No income must be documented on the FaDSS Initial Eligibility Determination form.

Exceptions to Policy

Unique situations may present themselves when determining eligibility for the program. Specialists are encouraged to seek guidance from supervisors and FaDSS Program Managers at DCAA. In some situations, exceptions to policy may be granted at the discretion of DCAA.

Appendices

Appendix A: Approved documentation of Social Security numbers and legal immigrant status

Appendix B: Countable Income Sources

Appendix C: At-Risk Criteria

Appendix D: Federal Poverty Level Guidelines