

Going to the Source for Key Benefit Programs

The Center for Benefits Access [April 2012 webinar](#) on *Finding the Answers When You Need Them* offered benefits counselors tips on how to research authority language – that is, the law or statute, regulations, and policy guidance.

Knowing what the authoritative resources are, where to find them, and how to read them builds your skills as a benefits counselor and can help you better engage in informed discussions with eligibility agencies and other experts.

To further help you in your researching endeavors, we've compiled a list of the authoritative resources on the following key benefit programs:

Part D Low Income Subsidy (LIS)/Extra Help

Statute: Social Security Act, Section 1860D-14,
http://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title18/1860D-14.htm

Regulations: 42 CFR Part 423, Sections 771-780
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2010-title42-vol3/pdf/CFR-2010-title42-vol3-chapIV.pdf>

and 20 CFR Part 418, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2010-title20-vol2/pdf/CFR-2010-title20-vol2-part418.pdf>

Policy Guidance: Program Operations Manual (POMS),
<https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/subchapterlist!openview&restricttcategory=06030>

Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs)

Statute: Social Security Act, Section 1902(a)(10)(E),
http://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title19/1902.htm
and Section 1905(p), http://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title19/1905.htm

Regulations: None!

Policy Guidance: *State Medicaid Manual* (Paper-Based Manual, Publication No. 45), as amended by policy transmittals,
<http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Paper->

[Based-Manuals-Items/CMS021927.html](#) (see Chapter 3 - Eligibility, Sections 3490-3492 for eligibility info on MSPs)

SSI (Supplemental Security Income)

Statute: Social Security Act, Title XVI,

http://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title16b/1600.htm

Regulations: 20 CFR Part 416, <http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=a2775c0c99417a2e4622f327571f1c61&rgn=div5&view=text&node=20:2.0.1.1.9&idno=20>

Policy Guidance: Program Operations Manual System (POMS):

<https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/chapterlist!openview&restricttocategory=05>

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

Statute: United States Code, Title 7, Chapter 51,

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/7/chapter-51>

Regulations: 7 CFR Parts 271 -285,

http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?sid=c5778aa81303fbd390e16a1c181a9bef&c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title07/7cfrv4_02.tpl

See especially Part 273 on eligibility and certification of participants:

http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?sid=c5778aa81303fbd390e16a1c181a9bef&c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title07/7cfrv4_02.tpl

and Part 274 on issuance and use of benefits:

<http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=df2877d32ebc86af16c622e7d26cbc4d&rgn=div5&view=text&node=7:4.1.1.3.22&idno=7>

Policy Guidance: Food and Nutrition Service at U.S. Dept. of Agriculture,

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/government/Policy.htm>

LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program)

Statute: Energy Policy Act of 2005, United States Code 8621-8630,
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap/guidance/statue_regulations.html

Regulations: 45 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 96,
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap/guidance/regulations/regh.html>

Policy Guidance: Information Memoranda,
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap/guidance/information_memo_randa/indexim.html
and Action transmittals,
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap/guidance/action_transmittals/indexat.html

Additional Resources

You can find a guide to state regulations and policy manuals on the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities website (scroll down to “Online Links”) at:
<http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=1414>

Also, the Center offers a compilation of references, including statute, regulations, and policy guidance for Medicare, by topic:

- Original Medicare at: <http://www.ncoa.org/assets/files/pdf/center-for-benefits/medicare-general-references.pdf>
- Part D at: <http://www.ncoa.org/assets/files/pdf/center-for-benefits/part-d-general-references.pdf>
- Medicare Advantage at: <http://www.ncoa.org/assets/files/pdf/center-for-benefits/medicare-advantage-general-references.pdf>