

R&D Glossary: Automating Enrollment Proofs

This glossary contains terms and their definitions relevant to the Automating Enrollment Proofs product idea.

This is an internal document to help onboarding team members understand key concepts that are related to automating enrollment. The goal here is to establish a shared understanding of this complex and complicated space!

If you find a term not in this glossary, please add it or request its addition if you're unsure of the definition.

R&D Glossary: Automating Enrollment Proofs

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Foundational Terms

Terms relevant to the benefits landscape.

Administrator (noun)

Personnel responsible for managing and overseeing the delivery of public assistance programs and benefits. Within this category, there may be specialized roles such as Eligibility Administrators, who focus on assessing and determining program eligibility, and Benefits Administrators, who oversee the overall management and operation of benefits programs.

Application (noun)

A formal request submitted by an individual or family to a benefits program to initiate enrollment. This often looks like inputting eligibility criteria information onto paper documentation or electronically, including supplemental documentation (e.g., ID cards, proof of residency/address, W-2 or paystubs).

Benefits (noun)

Various forms of assistance, services, or resources provided by government agencies to support individuals and families in need. There are 80+ federal benefits programs, with even more at the state and local levels. Income of a specific level is typically a required eligibility requirement across programs. Common benefits programs we discuss are:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

*Also known as: **public benefits, social safety net***

**Note: Because of our position and funding, The Public Benefits Studio can only really support “federally administered benefits” This largely means that a benefit program has to have some tie to federal authority and/or funding.*

Caseworker (noun)

Personnel, typically frontline workers, who help connect individuals and families to resource programs and can perform screening assessments to determine eligibility for benefits. In some programs, caseworkers may also perform the duties of an Eligibility Administrator, and make eligibility determinations. Caseworkers can also provide direct support and assistance to individuals and families once enrolled in social services.

*Also known as: **Case manager, eligibility worker***

Data automation

The process of replacing manual checks for data with automated processes. This includes through softwares such as application

programming interfaces (APIs), algorithms, fuzzy logic or artificial intelligence.

**Joint Application
(noun)**

An application that lets people provide the same information once when they are applying for multiple programs.

For example, many state human services agencies offer a joint application process for TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid, and sometimes other programs

Manual Check (verb)

A process by which personnel must take physical actions to verify information about applications, eligibility, or enrollment.

For example, this can look like:

- Cross-referencing spreadsheets or databases
- Calling a hotline or other benefits agency office
- A client telling a case worker via a form field about existing enrollment

*Also known as: **Manual intervention***

Means Test

A method for a benefits granting agency considers your monetary resources (e.g., income, assets) for purposes of determining your eligibility for the program. Programs which require a means test are referred to as means-tested benefit programs.

*Also known as: **Income test, Eligibility test, Needs test***

Processing Staff

Personnel responsible for managing and executing the various administrative tasks associated with the enrollment and eligibility determination processes for programs, services, or benefits.

Our Proposed Solution

Terms relevant to our proposed solution for Automating Enrollment Proofs.

Automating Enrollment Proof (verb)

A process that uses technology and data systems to verify an individual's enrollment for a particular benefits program based on other eligibility (e.g., categorical eligibility, reciprocal eligibility) without requiring manual intervention or additional paperwork.

Our product team will focus on researching and developing a product that can automate enrollment proofs.

Federal shared solution (noun)

A specific product or service offered to multiple government agencies or departments, streamlining operations and improving efficiency. This is in contrast to building for one particular agency or program.

Verified Upon Receipt

Verified upon receipt means that information is not questionable, and the provider is the primary source of the information. In addition, the state agency may determine what other sources provide information that is considered verified upon receipt. One of these sources could be the household itself, when it reports changes in household composition and deductible expenses ([USDA](#))

Examples:

- *BENDEX, from the Social Security Administration*
- *SDX, from the Social Security Administration*
- *SAVE, from the Immigration and Naturalization Service*
- *Unemployment compensation, from the state UC agency*
- *Worker's compensation, from the state WC agency*

Eligibility

Terms relevant to "eligibility".

Eligibility (noun)

The requirements that an applicant must demonstrate in order to be found qualified or entitled to participate in or receive a particular program, service, or benefit.

Full Eligibility refers to a situation where an individual or household meets all the necessary criteria to qualify for a program or benefit. This means they are entitled to receive the full range of services or assistance available under that program without any limitations or conditions. Partial eligibility refers to a situation where an individual or household meets some, but not all, of the eligibility criteria for a program or benefit.

Sometimes there are emergency flexibilities that can be put in place (e.g., a victim of a natural disaster may have lower proof requirements to enroll), but these applicants are still fully eligible – just under a different set of requirements.

Reciprocal Eligibility (noun)

An umbrella term our team uses to help explain the various eligibility types. This is not a regulated term.

Automating Eligibility (verb)

A process that uses technology and data systems to determine an individual's eligibility based on eligibility criteria for a program or service without requiring manual intervention or additional paperwork.

Adjunctive Eligibility (noun)

A type of eligibility by which eligibility criteria from one benefits program proves meeting the eligibility criteria for another.

For example, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) considers applicants adjunct *income* eligible if they receive Medicaid benefits. However, if there are additional eligibility criteria beyond income, the applicant must meet those as well to be considered fully eligible.

“If I have this factor as part of program A, I can skip this step in program B”

**Categorical Eligibility
(noun)**

A type of eligibility where one's eligibility for a benefit is proven by the applicant's participation in another benefits program or designation (e.g., homeless, foster-child, runaway), without needing to provide more documentation.

For example, a family receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) may automatically qualify for other benefits programs without needing to provide additional documentation, simply because they are receiving TANF.

"If I am in program A I qualify to be in program B"

*Also known as: **Automatic eligibility***

**Eligibility Criteria
(noun)**

Eligibility Criteria refer to the specific requirements or standards that individuals must meet to qualify for a particular program or benefit. This may include factors such as income, age, disability status, household size, residency, among others.

*Also known as: **Eligibility factors***

**Eligibility
Determination (verb)**

The process by which an eligibility administrator makes a determination for whether an individual or household meets the established eligibility criteria for a program or benefit. Steps in this process can include reviewing applications, verifying information, and making a final determination for receiving the benefit.

**Eligibility Verification
(verb)**

The process of confirming eligibility to meet the requirements for a program, service, or benefit.

Enrollment

Terms related to "enrollment".

Enrollment (verb)

The process of officially registering or signing up for a program, service, or benefit. This is supported by the enrollment system, which is an organized framework or software used by agencies or organizations to manage the enrollment process for programs or services.

Enrollment Proof (noun)

The documentation or evidence that confirms an individual's successful enrollment in a program, service, or benefit. This could look like an ID card or having your name registered in a database.

*Also known as: **Proof, Existing enrollment (in another program)***

Cross-enrollment (noun)

A status by which if you are in one program, you are eligible and enrolled into another.

***Integrated Eligibility And Enrollment Systems (I&E) (noun)**

Systems designed to streamline the application and eligibility determination processes across multiple programs and services. IE&E programs are exceptionally complex, expensive, and take years to complete. They also only serve less than 5 of the 80+ safety net programs that exist.

These are usually prompted by Medicaid 1115 waivers.

Background article:

<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/insights-into-better-integrated-eligibility-systems>

Linkages

Terms related to "linkages".

Linkage (noun)

An existing federal eligibility rule that permits or requires one program to adopt in whole or in part another program's eligibility findings at the initial application stage to allow the applicant to

bypass some or all of the eligibility determination process to reduce duplicative information gathering.

There are two linkage groupings:

- **Automatic/Streamlined** – refers to linkage process
- **Mandatory/Optional/Pilot** – refers to linkage status

Automatic Linkage (noun)

A linkage type that enables participants in one program to be enrolled in another without a separate application process. This occurs through established data-sharing mechanisms, requiring little to no participant involvement.

For example, if you are enrolled in SNAP, you are automatically eligible for NSLP without any further action needing to prove eligibility.

Optional Linkage (noun)

Linkages that state or local agencies can choose to implement but are not required to.

For example, a linkage between two benefits programs may exist in a specific locality (e.g., county-level) or state. While this linkage exists, it is not mandated across all 50 U.S. states.

*Also known as: **State/local option***

Mandatory Linkage (noun)

Linkages that states are required to implement under specific eligibility rules to enhance enrollment efficiency across programs.

Pilot Linkage (verb)

Linkages that require a state agency to apply for participation in a temporary project, subject to federal agency approval. These are often experimental and may evaluate the effectiveness of new enrollment strategies.

*Also known as: **Pilot/waiver option***

**Streamlined Linkage
(verb)**

A linkage type that reduces the steps in the application process by allowing enrollment in one program to satisfy eligibility criteria for another program. A key difference with Automatic Linkages is that it requires action: participants must still complete additional steps to enroll in the second program.

For example, if you are enrolled in Medicaid, you are automatically eligible for WIC with proof of...[income, etc].