

Dependent Eligibility Verification FAQs

1. Who is Mercer?

The Mercer HR **consulting** firm has been retained by King County to conduct a Dependent Eligibility Verification. Mercer is responsible for the entire project and is your point of contact for information and questions. Mercer is sending multiple communications to your home address and your email address. **These communications are legitimate—please do not ignore or delete.** Failure to complete the dependent eligibility verification will result in your family member losing coverage.

2. Why is a Dependent Eligibility Verification being conducted?

King County and its labor partners have engaged our trusted vendor Mercer Consulting to conduct this process to ensure only eligible dependents are provided coverage under the plan. Ineligible dependents enrolled in the plan can increase costs – costs that both you and your employer share. It's each employee's responsibility to ensure covered dependents continually meet the plan's eligibility requirements and to provide supporting documentation upon request.

3. What should I do if I did not receive communications from Mercer?

If you cover a family member on your King County medical, dental, or visions plan, you should receive a letter in the mail and an email to the addresses you have listed in PeopleSoft. If you did not receive either of these communications, please contact Mercer at 866-703-3763.

4. How are you handling my personal information?

Mercer adheres to strict confidentiality and data security protocols to ensure the security of personal information. The information you provide will only be used by Mercer for the purpose of conducting the Dependent Eligibility Verification process. Once the process is complete, the secure destruction of all paper documentation will be facilitated by Mercer in 30 days. In addition, Mercer's operations comply with HIPAA privacy guidelines.

5. Why is the Benefit Access Fee being audited and who is required to respond?

There are two parts to the eligibility audit, with one part verifying dependent eligibility and the other part verifying the Benefit Access Fee. If the Benefit Access Fee is not applied correctly, health care costs can increase for both you and King County. If you have a spouse or state-registered domestic partner enrolled in the KingCare PPO medical plan, you are required to respond to both parts of the audit. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the Benefit Access Fee being applied.

6. Why is my spouse/domestic partner listed twice on page 2 of the letter?

Your spouse or domestic partner is listed twice so that 1) They can be verified as an eligible dependent on your medical plan; and 2) It can be verified if a Benefit Access Fee should apply.

7. Are ineligible dependent(s) entitled to COBRA coverage?

Ineligible dependents are not entitled to COBRA continuation coverage.

8. When ineligible dependents are removed, what other coverage options are available?

Dependents being removed from coverage may consider medical insurance options available through the Health Insurance Marketplace. For more information, call 800-318-2596 or go to healthcare.gov.

9. If my spouse or domestic partner is also a King County employee, are we both required to complete the dependent eligibility verification process?

If you and your spouse or domestic partner are both employees covering dependents, you both need to submit documents separately, even if the supporting documentation is the same.

10. Will I be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses—such as postage costs or fees for obtaining the required supporting documentation—I may incur as a result of this process?

No, you will not be reimbursed for the time or expense involved in securing and/or submitting the necessary supporting documentation.

11. What if I am unable to provide sufficient documentation for one or more of my dependents?

Dependents for whom acceptable documentation is not received by the due date are scheduled to lose their coverage effective Sept. 30, 2024. This means *all* coverages (medical, dental, vision, life, etc.) will be dropped for the ineligible dependent(s).

12. What are my options for submitting documents to Mercer?

You may submit your response by secure upload, which is the fastest, or by U.S. mail. Documents will be reviewed within 2–3 business days after the documents arrive at Mercer.

A. Securely upload materials to the Dependent Eligibility Verification Website:

dependentverification.mercer.com/kingcounty/client/default.aspx. Make sure document names contain only letters, numbers, spaces, or dots. Other characters will cause the upload to fail.

B. U.S. Mail: Use the provided pre-addressed envelope. Make sure your Audit ID or your employer's name appears on each document.

13. What are the consequences if I am found to be covering an ineligible dependent?

Employees who are covering ineligible dependent(s) will have their ineligible dependent(s) removed from the plan effective Sept. 30, 2024. Furthermore, if you are found to be intentionally covering an ineligible dependent, this may be considered fraud or intentional misrepresentation and could result in the termination of coverage. If coverage is terminated retroactively you may be responsible for repayment of claims and any costs associated with providing coverage to the ineligible dependent.

14. If my ineligible dependent is removed from coverage, will I be refunded for previous premiums paid?

Previous premiums paid for ineligible dependents will not be refunded; however, premiums for the ineligible dependent will not be charged moving forward.

15. Do I need to send original documents?

Please send only copies of required documentation, as we are unable to return originals. Make sure you copy all pages (both sides) and the copied document is legible.

16. How do I obtain the required documentation?

An official certificate of every birth, death, marriage, and divorce should be on file in the state, city, or county where the event occurred. Contact information is listed on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention webpage cdc.gov/nchs/w2w/index.htm, or you can also use [Vitalchek.com](https://vitalchek.com). For a copy of your tax return, go to irs.gov/taxtopics/tc156.html?portlet=1 or call the IRS at 800-829-1040.

17. What information must be included on birth and/or marriage certificates?

A birth certificate must include the child's name and list the employee or employee's spouse/domestic partner as a parent. A birth record or "short form" is not accepted. A marriage certificate must be presently valid and include the marriage date and the recording county or state agency.

18. My dependent documentation is not in English. Do I need to provide a translation?

Please send a copy of the original document and Mercer will make every attempt to translate it. If Mercer is unable to translate it, you will be placed in an incomplete status and you will be required to provide an official English translation.

19. What type of tax form should I submit and what information must be included?

Submit a copy of your 2022 or 2023 filed federal income tax form 1040, 1040A, 1040X. To support your spousal relationship, you may submit a copy of your filed 1040EZ or official transcript of your tax return. Form 8879 is NOT acceptable.

The entire tax return is not required—only the page that shows your filing status, marital status, spouse's name, and dependent names is required, as applicable.

Please block out personal financial data and Social Security numbers before submitting.

20. How will I know if my response to Mercer is sufficient?

You can confirm receipt of your documents and monitor the verification progress by visiting <https://dependentverification.mercer.com/kingcounty/client/default.aspx> or by calling Mercer at 866-

703-3763. During the review, if additional documentation is required, you will be contacted by mail. Upon completion of the process, you will receive written notification if no further action is required.

If you want to receive updates through text messaging, go to the Notifications tab of the website and, select Receive SMS Text Notifications.

21. What if my documentation is received by Mercer after the deadline?

Documentation received by Mercer after the deadline will not be audited and will be securely destroyed. If you have verification documentation and want to add an eligible dependent, you can only do this during Open Enrollment, Nov. 1–15, unless you have a qualifying life event.

22. How do I access the Dependent Eligibility Verification website for the first time?

- To register, go to <https://dependentverification.mercer.com/kingcounty/client/default.aspx> and select “Need a Password?” Create a username and password by entering your Audit ID (on page 2 of the Dependent Eligibility Verification Checklist), date of birth (MM/DD/YYYY), and the case-sensitive security code displayed on the screen.
- Enter your username and password then enroll in Multifactor Authentication (MFA) by entering an email and/or a mobile number that will be used to deliver a temporary verification code. **It is recommended that you enter both contacts for notifications.**
- Select the desired option for delivery of the one-time verification code and click “Send Code.”
- Enter the 6-digit code that was sent and click “Confirm.” You can now access your account.
- Log in to your account and select and answer 3 security questions that you will be required to answer if you forget your password.
- If you experience any issues when enrolling, please call 855-835-0758.

23. How do I upload documentation to the website?

To submit your response electronically, scan your Dependent Eligibility Verification Checklist and supporting documents for each eligible dependent and upload them to the website using the latest version of one of the following internet browsers: Edge, Chrome, Firefox, Opera, or Safari. Note the following requirements when uploading files. Each file:

- Must be less than 10 MB in size. If your document file is larger than 10 MB, you can:
 1. Save and send your documents as separate smaller files.
 2. If you are taking photos of your documents with a smart phone, you can reduce the size by saving the photo as a smaller size or lower resolution.
 3. If saving a document as a pdf, Save as Other, then select Reduced Size PDF.
- Must be one of the following file formats: .PDF, .JPEG, .JPG, .GIF, .PNG, .TIF, .TIFF, or .BMP.
- File names can contain only letters, numbers, spaces, or dots.
- Can not be password-protected.

24. The URL in the communications is giving me an error or not working.

You might need to clear the browsing data or “cookies” in the internet browser you are using.