Secure Access Management Services (SAMS)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Partner Portal

What is the SAMS Partner Portal? SAMS is a web site that allows public health partners and providers to access information and computer applications operated by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Many CDC Programs use the SAMS portal as their entry point for partner-only information and applications. Once your SAMS portal access has been approved, you will be able to start working with your application(s).

Why do I need a SAMS Partner Portal Account? Some of the applications or information made available to you through SAMS may be sensitive or non-public. For example, information might be displayed that could jeopardize a patient's privacy. The SAMS Partner Portal is one of the ways CDC controls and protects this information.

How do I get a SAMS Partner Portal Account? You must be invited by the Administrator(s) of the SAMS Application that you need access to. You will receive your invitation via email from sams-no-reply@cdc.gov with the subject "U.S. Centers for Disease Control: SAMS Partner Portal - Invitation to Register."
Once you receive the invitation via email, you must register online and be approved by the Application's administrator. In cases where you might be exposed to non-public information, you may also be required to provide proof of your identity as part of your registration.

What do I need to register with the SAMS Partner Portal? After receiving your invitation, you will begin registration, a process to complete your online SAMS profile. This information must be correct, as it may affect your eligibility to be ID Proofed.

SAMS will ask you to verify that your name is correct and to provide the following:

- Your current home address / mailing address
- Your organization / employer and their address
- Your telephone number

The registration process consists of several steps:

1. **Receive an Invitation:** You will receive an invitation to register and instructions in your email.
2. **Go Register:** You will go online and register with the SAMS Portal.

3. **Get Identity Verification:** If necessary, you will immediately receive a second email with instructions and a request to provide proof of your identity. SAMS supports two options for completing this step using Experian or a secure document submission process.
4. **Receive Access Approval:** Following registration and identity verification (if required) your information will be forwarded to a CDC administrator for approval.

Why do I need to supply information about myself when registering with the SAMS Partner Portal? The information you are asked to provide (your name, home address, your organization / employer, their address, and your telephone number) allows CDC and its programs to determine the kinds of applications most directly related to your role in public health. In addition, this information contributes to the verification of your identity and allows CDC to properly deliver any necessary notifications concerning your account. If applicable, you may also be required to establish a second factor token for added security which will be used in conjunction with your account username/password.

How is my registration information used? The information you supply during registration is used in the following ways:

1. To assist CDC and its programs in determining the kinds of applications and information that most directly relate to your role in public health.
2. To provide CDC and its programs with appropriate contact information.
3. To provide customization for your user experience with the SAMS Partner Portal and various applications. This could be as simple as greeting you by name or as complex as establishing the kinds of information or jurisdictions that are meaningful to you and your work.
4. To assist in the identity verification process.

Is there a charge for a SAMS Partner Portal account? No. SAMS is part of CDC's partner-facing web applications and is completely free to use.

I'm supposed to be given access to a public health computer application run by one of CDC's Programs. How does this relate to the SAMS Partner Portal? Many CDC Programs use the SAMS portal as their entry point for partner-only information and applications. Once your SAMS portal access has been approved, you will be able to start working with your application(s).

Once I get my SAMS Partner Portal account, will I also have to register with CDC public health applications(s)? CDC programs receive some basic information about you from the SAMS Partner Portal registration process. Since this information is very basic, some programs may require additional details related to your specific needs. These programs may request that you work with them directly to provide this information.

How long does it take to register with the SAMS Partner Portal? SAMS Partner Portal registration can be completed in as little as ten (10) minutes. If you are interrupted during the process, it is easy to start again at another time. After being invited to SAMS you have 30 days to complete the registration process.

Identity Proofing & Experian

When/Why might I be asked to provide proof of my identity? You will only be asked to provide proof of your identity (identity verification) if you will be given access to non-public information. In these cases, U.S. law requires federal government agencies, like CDC, perform an identity check on each person before giving them access. This check helps to protect you and the people represented by the information you see.

Is Identity Proofing required for all users? – No. The identity proofing process is only required for Level 2 and Level 3 users.

How will I know if I need to provide identity verification to CDC? If the computer application(s) you will be accessing contains non-public information, you will automatically receive an identity verification request from the CDC Proofing Authority following your registration. This request will be sent via email from sams-no-reply@cdc.gov and include instructions and options for completing the identity verification process.

If identity verification is not required, you will receive your access approval confirmation with no identify verification request.

In all cases, you may contact the SAMS Help Desk using the information provided below if you have any related questions or concerns.

What is identity verification? Identity verification is process required by the U.S. federal government to help ensure that the person registering for access to non-public information is who they claim to be. The verification process protects individuals and the public at large by helping to ensure that only trusted persons are allowed access to non-public data. Verification also protects you (the person registering for access) by

helping to prevent someone from attempting to impersonate you and take actions in your name.

Is the identity verification process similar to a background check? Identity verification is only used to confirm that you have registered using your true identity and that no one else is attempting to impersonate you. SAMS offers two options for Identity Proofing. Option 1 leverages an Experian service to validate your identity based on information contained in your credit history. CDC does not have access to your credit information but instead relies on Experian if you select this option. Option 2 required the submission of identity documents directly to CDC after an in-person review by a notary or other trusted third party. The instruction to complete both options will be emailed to you after registration if identity verification is required.

How does the identity verification process work? The process depends on the option you select.

Option 1 - Using a secure interface, you will provide Experian your Social Security Number (SSN) and Date Of Birth (DOB). This information is sent directly to Experian and is NOT stored or saved by SAMS/CDC. Experian will attempt to validate your information and may ask you a series of questions based on your credit history. There is no impact on your credit score or credit worthiness. This is the <u>fastest and safest</u> method to complete the SAMS identity proofing process.

Option 2 – You will be required to complete a form included in the identity verification instructions email. This form, along with appropriate identification, will need to be reviewed by a notary or other trusted third party and copies submitted to CDC via secure upload or by mail. Once received by CDC, it will be reviewed and validated. This process can take several weeks to complete depending volume and how the documentation is sent to CDC.

How long does identity verification take?
Timing varies depending on the process selected. Experian (option 1) provides an instant verification if Experian can validate your identity using your credit history.   If Experian cannot validate your identity based on the information provided, you can retry the process (up to 3 times) or complete verification using Option 2. The manual Identity proofing (option 2) process can take several weeks to complete depending on a number of factors including how quickly you submit your information to CDC for review, the process used to submit your information (mail or secure upload), and the volume of other submissions.

What is a Proofing Agent and how do I find one? CDC currently accepts identity verification forms that have been signed by a Notary Public or by an authorized CDC employee. In addition, the CDC program you are working with may have other designated agents available in your area. Please contact your CDC program directly for more information.

Will I need any special documents to complete identity verification? No. Most people can complete the identity verification form with the information they carry with them every day. In some cases, such as a recent move or name change, you may need to provide an additional supporting document such as a utility bill.

How is my identity verification information used? The information you supply for identity verification is used only for this purpose and is not shared outside the CDC Proofing Authority.

What information do I need to complete Experian identity verification? To complete the Experian process, you will need to provide your social security number (SSN) and Date Of Birth (DOB). This information is sent directly to Experian and not stored by SAMS or CDC. Experian may also ask you a series of questions based off information in your credit history to validate your identity.

How long does Experian take to proof? Experian will provide instant identity verification if Experian is able to validate your identity based on the information you provide and details contained in your credit history.

What happens if Experian cannot validate my identity? In many situations Experian will be unable to validate your identity based on the information provided and your credit history. This does NOT indicate an issue with your credit report or credit worthiness. If this happens you can retry the Experian process a maximum of two addition times (total of 3 attempts). You can also complete the manual identity proofing process at any time if an Experian validation is not feasible.

Will users identity proofed prior to the introduction of Experian, also have to complete the Experian process? No, Experian is only an option for those required to complete identity verification. Anyone who has already completed the identity proofing process will retain their current level of access.

Is the Experian identity verification process available for international users? No, unfortunately Experian relies on credit history maintained by US based credit aggregators. Without credit history available to Experian, an applicant's identity cannot be verified.

Is the Experian identity verification process available for people located in US territories? Experian's ability to validate an identity depends on multiple factors associated with an individual's credit report and credit history. If an individual located in a US territory has a US based credit history an Experian validation may be possible.

Is there a charge/fees for using Experian Identity Proofing process? No. Costs associated with this service are not charged to SAMS users, applications, or Programs.

Will using the Experian option impact my Credit Score? No. Your selection of the Experian identity verification service, for the purpose of Identity Proofing, will not impact your credit score. This type of check, called a soft inquiry, will not show up on your credit report and does not impact your credit score.

Entrust Soft Token & Grid Card

How do I request a new GRID card? If a grid card is lost or stolen a replacement can be requested via the Entrust Mobile Soft Token & Grid Card link located on the SAMS homepage after successfully logging in. This is the easiest and fastest way to request a new card. As soon as a new card is requested the old card will be immediately deactivated. Alternatively, you can email or call the SAMS helpdesk for a new card. Before doing so, please verify the home address associated with your SAMS profile is correct.

Can level 3 users who already have a grid card also configure an Entrust soft token (mobile authenticator)? Yes, users can configure multiple soft tokens across up to three devices in addition to having an issued grid card. To issue a soft token or grid card select the Entrust Mobile Soft Token & Grid Card link located on the SAMS homepage.

Miscellaneous

Will the SAMS Portal share my registration information with anyone outside of CDC?
No. The SAMS Partner Portal will not share your registration information with anyone

except as listed below. The only exception to this is if you explicitly approve information be sent to Experian as part of the Experian identity verification process.

- The SAMS Partner Portal will share your name and business contact information with CDC programs.
- The SAMS Partner Portal will share your full registration information with the CDC Proofing Authority (if you are required to provide proof of your identity)

Will the SAMS Partner Portal share my email address outside of the CDC or send me SPAM? No. The SAMS Partner Portal will not distribute your email address to anyone outside of CDC.

The SAMS Partner Portal will only send you email communications in reference to your portal account. All emails will begin with the following subject line: "U.S. Centers for Disease Control: SAMS Partner Portal."

How is my registration and identity verification information protected? CDC has implemented a wide variety of controls to protect the information, computer systems, and applications it maintains. These controls include, but are not limited to:

- **Technical Controls** such as firewalls, virus protection, and encryption.
- **Policy Controls** such as rules and requirements for data sharing and distribution.
- **Process Controls** such as user identity verification.

Will SAMS or the CDC Proofing Authority ever ask me to submit my identity verification by email? No – The CDC Proofing Authority will never ask you to send your identity information by email. CDC will also not accept any identity information submitted via email. Instead, you should always use the secure upload option or postal mail. The upload option is the fastest and best way to submit documents to CDC if you are not using Experian.

Where can I find more information or details about the SAMS Partner Portal and the registration process? Your CDC program team or representative can provide you with a copy of the SAMS User Guide. In addition, each step of the registration process provides clear instructions as well as details about what to expect next. If, along the way, you have additional questions or concerns, please contact the SAMS Help Desk or your CDC program.

How do I get help/contact the SAMS Help Desk? You can reach the SAMS Help Desk between the hours of 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM EST Monday through Friday (excepting U.S. Federal holidays) at the following:

Toll Free: 877-681-2901
Email: samshelp@cdc.gov

How do I update my NAME in SAMS? You cannot change your First or Last name after completing the SAMS registration. You can update your Preferred Name. If a name change is required, the creation of a new account will need to be requested. Please contact your Program for more information.

How long will my account be "DISABLED" if I try my password too many times? After a total of three consecutive incorrect login attempts, regardless of when, your SAMS account will lock. The account will remain locked for 2 hours. Contact the SAMS helpdesk if you still have issues or cannot wait.

How do I find out who has looked at my credit report and why?
All you have to do to find out who has looked at your credit report and why is to get a copy of your report directly from Experian. Every time a business accesses your credit report, Experian adds an inquiry to your report. An inquiry is simply a record of who has requested your credit report. An inquiry remains on your credit report for two years.

Who can access my credit report? Do they have to have my permission?
Federal law recognizes that businesses have a right to check your credit references, in the form of a credit report, before they agree to do business with you. However, the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) strictly limits who can access your credit report and under what circumstances.

NHSN

Why can't I see my facility? If you do not see the facility/facilities that you expect or you need to add a facility, email NHSN at NHSN@CDC.GOV . Please provide your userid, name, and organization in the email.

How do I add a new user? Email NHSN at NHSN@CDC.Gov with the new person's email address, name, organization, and facility information.