§ 134-a. Conduct of investigation. 1. In accordance with regulations of the department of family assistance, any investigation or reinvestigation of eligibility for public assistance and care, other than medical assistance, shall be limited to those factors reasonably necessary to insure that expenditures shall be in accord with applicable provisions of this chapter and the regulations of the department and shall be conducted in such manner so as not to violate any civil right of the applicant or recipient. Such regulations of the department shall provide that where inconsistencies and gaps in the information presented by a recipient or where other circumstances in the particular case would indicate to a prudent person, that further inquiry should be made, additional necessary information is to be sought except further that the department shall provide by regulations which are consistent with federal law for matching of data supplied by or about recipients with information contained in the wage reporting system established pursuant to section one hundred seventy-one-a of the tax law and similar systems in other geographically contiguous states, and such regulations shall further provide to the extent mandated by federal law for matching with the non-wage income file maintained by the United States internal revenue service, with the benefits and earnings data exchange maintained by the United States department of health and human services, and with the unemployment insurance benefits file. In making such investigation or reinvestigation, sources of information, other than records maintained by a public agency, shall be consulted only with the permission of the applicant or recipient. However, if such permission is not granted by the applicant or recipient, the appropriate social services official may deny, suspend or discontinue public assistance or care until such time as he may be satisfied that such applicant or recipient is eligible therefor. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit activities the department reasonably believes necessary to conform with Federal requirements under section one thousand one hundred thirty-seven of the social security act. The activities authorized by this section may be initiated only with regard to those clients who have been given appropriate notice of verification activity under article six-A of the public officers law.

2. At the time he applies for public assistance and care, an applicant

shall, as a condition of receiving such aid, present proof of his identity to the social services official as the department may by regulation require, and he shall provide such proof thereafter whenever required by such official.

3. The social services official shall require that persons applying for or receiving public assistance and care be interviewed personally at a time and in a manner provided by the regulations of the department, and the social services official may provide the option of a phone interview or other digital means for such interview at the request of the applicant or recipient.

4. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, the department may provide for a comparison of information identifying a recipient of benefits under any program authorized under this chapter with identifying information possessed by state agencies in other states administering programs similar to those authorized by this chapter regarding recipients of such programs. Such a comparison shall be authorized only with regard to clients who have received appropriate notice under the personal privacy protection law, which notice shall be deemed compliance with the provisions of subdivision one of this section. Should the comparison of identifying information indicate that the client in question is or has been simultaneously receiving benefits in both states, the department may, in its discretion, authorize exchange of income, benefit, and other case information with the state agency of the other state.

5. The social services official upon receipt of information concerning a sentence of imprisonment imposed upon a person receiving public assistance shall make a reinvestigation of eligibility.