**Sample Template Checklist/Procedure addressing Missing Participants in a Defined Contribution Plan**

This template is meant to assist plan fiduciaries in meeting its fiduciary obligations under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act ("ERISA") with respect to missing participants of a defined contribution plan.

Issues arise when a participant fails maintain up to date demographic information needed for the plan fiduciary's required plan communications. This results in undeliverable mail. When this occurs the Plan fiduciary has an obligation to make reasonable efforts to locate all missing participants, consistent with Field Assistance Bulletin No. 2021-01 ("FAB2021-01") issued by the Department of Labor ("DOL"). FAB 2021-01 can be found here: www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/ebsa/ebsa20210112.

For purposes of this document, the term "missing participant" will include beneficiaries and alternate payees under a qualified domestic relations order who are entitled to benefits.

For additional information regarding this Procedure & Checklist, contact your Plan Consultant or visit our Employer Help Center resource found here:

[https://employerhelp.sentinelgroup.com/help/lost- participant-tracking-and-maintenance](https://employerhelp.sentinelgroup.com/help/lost-%20participant-tracking-and-maintenance)

**PROCEDURE**

Plan fiduciaries of a contribution plan should complete the Checklist below for each missing participant. If the plan fiduciary reasonably determines that a missing participant cannot be located after completing the "Required Search Steps" and "Additional Search Steps" (if required), then the plan fiduciary may cease mailings on the account until the point updated contact information is obtained.

Note, plan fiduciaries may charge a missing participant's plan account for any reasonable expenses incurred attempting to locate the individual. The summary plan description for the plan should notify participants of this potential expense.

Retaining a copy of the completed checklist for each missing participant within the Plan's fiduciary file is vital to demonstrating the plan is moving through a repeatable process to address missing and lost participants.

**CHECKLIST**

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| **Required Search Steps**  *Instructions*: The plan fiduciary **must** take all of the following steps before determining that a missing participant cannot be located. The DOL allows fiduciaries to take the following steps in any desired order. **Failure to take all of the following steps before distributing a missing participant's benefit will constitute a violation of the plan fiduciary's obligations under ERISA**. | |
| **1. Check Related Plan and Employer Records**  Check other records (e.g., employment, other benefit plans) for more current contact information.  NOTE: If there are privacy concerns (e.g., under HIPAA), the plan fiduciary may ask that the employer or other plan fiduciary contact or forward a letter to the missing participant. | *Description of Actions Taken/Notes*: |
| *Attach*:   Returned letter and envelope **(Send returned recipect)** |
| *Date Taken*: |
| *Preparer:* |
| *Located Participant?* Yes\* No  *\*If yes, no further attempts to locate required.* |
| **2. Use Certified Mail**  Send notice via certified mail  to last known address on file. | *Description of Actions Taken/Notes*: |
| *List Other Records Checked*: |
| *Attach*:   Returned letter and envelope |
| *Date Taken:* |
| *Preparer:* |
| *Located Participant?* Yes\* No  *\*If yes, no further attempts to locate required.* |

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| **3. Check with Designated Plan Beneficiary**  Identify and contact any individual designated as the missing participant's beneficiary to find updated contact information.  NOTE: If the beneficiary is concerned about the missing participant's privacy, the plan fiduciary may ask that the beneficiary contact or forward a letter to the missing participant. | *Description of Actions Taken/Notes*: |
| *Attach*:   * Beneficiary Designation Form(s), if any * Letter sent to designated beneficiary |
| *Date Taken* |
| *Name of Plan Sponsor Contact:* |
| *Located Participant?* Yes\* No  *\*If yes, no further attempts to locate required.* |
| **4. Use Free Electronic Search Tools**  Online services could include Internet search engines, public record databases (e.g., for licenses, mortgages and real estate taxes), obituaries and social media. | *Description of Actions Taken/Notes*: |
| *List Search Tools Used*: |
| *Attach*:   "Screen Shot" of results pages generated from search tools |
| *Date Taken:* |
| *Preparer:* |
| *Located Participant?* Yes\* No  *\*If yes, no further attempts to locate required.* |

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| **Additional Search Steps (May be Required)**  *Instructions*: If the plan fiduciary is unable to locate the missing participant using the above "Required Search Steps," the plan fiduciary **must *consider*** if additional search steps should be taken. In deciding whether to take additional search steps, the plan fiduciary should consider (1) the size of the missing participant's account balance, and (2) the cost of further search efforts.  *Size of Account Balance*: $ *Anticipated Cost of Further Search Efforts*: $ *Will Fiduciary Take Additional Steps?*   * Yes * No   *Reasoning:* | |
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| **5. Use Paid Electronic Sentinel can assist in providing a paid search through 3rd party** vendor **tools and commercial locator services.** | *Description of Actions Taken/Notes*: |
|  | *List Additional Tools/Services Used*: |
|  | *Attach*:   Information received using additional search tools/services |
|  | *Date Taken:* |
|  | *Preparer:* |
|  |  |
|  | *Located Participant?* Yes\* No  *\*If yes, no further attempts to locate required* |