



**DATE:** July 8, 2022

**OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #22-07-03**

**SUBJECT:** Cash Assistance Interview Procedures

**TO:** Executive Directors

**FROM:** Robert Patrick  
Acting Director  
Bureau of Operations

**PURPOSE**

To inform County Assistance Offices (CAOs) that a face-to-face interview is no longer required at application and renewal for cash assistance. Effective April 23, 2022, the new cash assistance requirement is to conduct a personal interview which may be in person or by telephone.

**BACKGROUND**

Regulations in 55 Pa. Code §§123.22 and 133.23 previously required a “face-to-face” interview at application and renewal. The regulations now require a “personal interview” which is defined as a meeting or discussion between an applicant or recipient and an eligibility worker, in person, by telephone, or by other means defined by the Department of Human Services. The final rulemaking was published in the [Pennsylvania Bulletin April 23, 2022](#).

**DISCUSSION**

Effective April 23, 2022, cash assistance applicants/recipients may choose to participate in a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview at application and renewal. CAO staff should encourage but not require applicants/ recipients to complete interviews via phone.

When scheduling interviews for application or renewals, a telephone interview should be selected and information provided on how to request a face-to-face interview. Forms updates are planned to replace face-to-face interview language to reflect personal interview options.

Regardless of type, an interview for cash assistance is still required for all applications and renewals. When the applicant/recipient chooses a phone interview, the following applies:

- During the interview, the CAO worker will ask for the individual's verbal agreement that they intend to sign and return the Agreement of Mutual Responsibility (AMR) and narrate that the applicant/recipient completed a phone interview and verbally agreed to the completion and return of the AMR.
- The CAO will mail a copy of the AMR to the individual(s) and grant 30 days of good cause to return the AMR if the individual(s) agrees to complete and sign the AMR at the time of the interview.

**Note:** The CAO should manually set an alert to review at 31 days.

- The CAO will authorize cash assistance beginning the date of the interview if the applicant provides verbal agreement to complete and sign the AMR within 30 days and all other verifications are present.
  - If all verifications are not present, the CAO will wait to authorize cash until all verifications are present.
  - If all verifications are not received within 30 days from the application date, CAO staff will follow normal procedures to reject on day 31 with reason code 042 – Failure to provide.

**Note:** The signed AMR is not treated as a pending verification for these scenarios.

- If authorized and the signed AMR is not returned within 30 days of the interview date then the CAO will:
  - Exclude the individual in a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) budget. The reduction in the grant amount will be effective one day prior to the next payment date that allows proper advance notice.
  - Close an Extended TANF budget. The budget closure will be effective one day prior to the next payment date that allows proper advance notice.

**NEXT STEPS**

1. Review this Operations Memorandum with appropriate staff.
2. Direct questions regarding this Operations Memorandum to your Area Manager.
3. This Operations Memorandum is obsolete once all changes are incorporated into the cash assistance handbook.