

DATE: January 27, 2022

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #22-01-03

SUBJECT: Changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
Application Interview Process

TO: Executive Directors

FROM: Robert Patrick
Acting Director
Bureau of Operations

PURPOSE:

To inform County Assistance Offices (CAOs) of updates to the SNAP Application Interview process and to introduce the new PA 253 to be utilized in this process. This change is expected to reduce the number of applications rejected for failure to complete an interview and enhance the customer service that DHS provides to applicants by allowing them to complete the interview at the date and time most convenient for them.

BACKGROUND:

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has been approved for a statewide waiver by the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to conduct on-demand SNAP application interviews. Effective February 1, 2022, a new procedure will be in place for all SNAP applications that do not include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance.

DISCUSSION:

Effective February 1, 2022, all SNAP applications received that do not also include an application for cash will follow the new On-Demand interview format. The PA 253 pending letter will be updated to reflect the changes. Applicant households must still be

given the opportunity to have a face-to-face interview in place of a telephone interview upon request.

When an application is received, the CAO must attempt a cold call to conduct a SNAP interview on the same day. If the interview is attempted and cannot be completed on the day the application is received, a PA 253 will be sent to inform the client they must call a specified phone number to complete their SNAP interview by the pending verification due date listed.

PROCEDURES:

Clerical Responsibility at Application Submission:

- When an application is submitted in-person, the clerical staff will ask if the client is able to stay and be interviewed.
 - If the client cannot stay, the clerical staff will verify the phone number on the application and inform the applicant that a telephone interview will be attempted today.
 - If the client does not have a phone number or is homeless, the clerical staff will inform the client that they can be interviewed now in the office.
- When an application is entered in Application Processing (AP), the clerical staff will also create an Additional Work Item on the Workload Dashboard. This work item will be titled “SNAP APP-Interview Required” and have a due date of 13 days after the application date.

Please Note – The CAOs will need to implement plans to check their drop off boxes frequently throughout the day to ensure sufficient time operationally to complete the same day cold call and interview.

Income Maintenance Caseworker (IMCW) Responsibility on the day the SNAP Application is Received:

- Minimum of at least one cold call will be made to complete an interview on the date of application.
- If client contact is made:
 - Conduct the SNAP interview.

- Process case for ongoing benefits, if possible, or front-load and send a PA 253 requesting additional verification. If additional verification is requested and the household is eligible for Expedited SNAP benefits, immediately process the Expedited SNAP.
- Clear the “SNAP APP-Interview Required” work item.
- If client contact is **not** made:
 - Front-load the application and send a PA 253 informing the applicant of the required On-Demand interview along with requesting any additional verification.
 - **NOTE:** The PA 253 will now contain language informing clients they must call a specified telephone number to conduct their interview by a specified date, instead of a scheduled appointment.
- Narrate all case actions.

IMCW Responsibility When Conducting Telephone Interviews:

Each CAO or Area will have staff members assigned to answer the phone calls from applicants and conduct the On-Demand interviews. The designated caseworkers will:

- Conduct the SNAP interview.
- Clear the “SNAP APP-Interview Required” work item.
- If additional verification not already requested is required, send another PA 253. The VERF 062 alert already in place will alert the caseworker to whom the application is assigned to review for pending information.
- If no additional verification is required, process the application.
- Narrate all case actions.

When the Customer Contacts the CAO in Person or Calls the IMCW Directly:

- IMCW assigned the customer contact will review to determine if the interview was completed – Additional Work Item not cleared, case record and comments, etc.
- If the interview was not completed – Conduct the SNAP Interview.
- Clear the “SNAP APP-Interview Required” work item.
- If additional verification is required send/provide another PA253.

- If no additional verification is required, process the application.
- Narrate all case actions.

When Work Item “SNAP App-Interview Required” Reaches Due Date:

- The caseworker to whom the application is assigned should review case comments to see if an interview was completed but the Additional Work Item was not cleared.
- If the interview was not conducted, attempt a cold call to the applicant.
- If unable to reach the applicant, send a Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI) and clear the “SNAP App-Interview Required” work item.
- Narrate all case actions.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Review this information with the appropriate staff.
2. Implement CAO staffing and local procedural changes to support implementation of this new policy.
3. Forward questions to your Area Managers.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: [PA 253 – Production – UFPA 253](#)