**DATE: ~~April 1, 2020 May 29, 2020~~ October 9, 2020**

**OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #20-04-01**

**SUBJECT: Revised** Temporary Changes to Interview Requirements for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Applications and Renewals due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) Emergency

**TO:**  Executive Directors

**FROM:**  Inez Titus

 Director

 Bureau of Operations

**PURPOSE**

To inform County Assistance Offices (CAOs) about temporary changes to SNAP interviews for applications and renewals due to the COVID-19 emergency. These changes are effective immediately and will remain in effect through ~~May 31, 2020~~ June 30, 2021.

**BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION**

H.R. 8337 was passed by Congress and signed by the President on September 30, 2020. H.R. 8337 allows states to continue certain waivers introduced due to COVID-19 without prior approval from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). ~~The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has waived~~ The Department of Human Services has chosen to waive the requirements that an interview be completed before issuing Expedited SNAP (EXFS), ongoing SNAP, or at renewal. FNS has also waived the requirement to offer a face-to-face interview or grant a request for a face-to-face interview. If a client requests a face-to-face interview, the caseworker should inform the client that at this time interviews are being waived for SNAP benefits.

During this waived period, if a caseworker needs to clarify any information, they may attempt contact with the client to gather more information. If contact to clarify unclear information is unsuccessful, the caseworker should pend for that information.

Caseworkers should follow verification guidance in the following Handbook chapters:

● At application – SNAP Handbook section 578.32

● At renewal – SNAP Handbook section 578.34

**NOTE:** Caseworkers should not be sending the Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI) or failing any cases 047 – Failure to Interview during this time. To avoid a system generated NOMI, caseworkers should indicate that the SNAP interview has been completed when completing work in Case Processing. In addition, the procedures outlined in OPS 20-08-04 are no longer in effect.

**Instructions for Processing SNAP benefits with waived interviews**

Application – Eligible for EXFS, pending ongoing

 1. Process the case normally, marking the interview question on the Program Request Questions screen as ‘~~no~~ yes’.

2. Continue through the case pending for required information.

3. Issue EXFS, pend ongoing.

4. Process ongoing benefits when required information is received.

 ~~Change the answer to the interview question on Program Request~~

 ~~Questions to ‘yes’.~~

5. On the SNAP Budget Authorization screen enter Interview Code ‘Application Interview Waived’.

6. Before submitting, in case comments, enter ‘The interview for this application has been waived per FNS guidance due to COVID-19 .

Application – Eligible for EXFS and ongoing OR Ineligible for EXFS and able to process ongoing – same workflow

 1. Process the case normally, marking the interview question on the Program Request Questions screen as ‘yes’.

2. On the SNAP Budget Authorization screen enter Interview Code ‘Application Interview Waived’.

3. Before submitting, in case comments, enter ‘The interview for this application has been waived per FNS guidance due to COVID-19 .’

Application – Ineligible for EXFS, pending ongoing

 1. Process the case normally, marking the interview question on the Program Request Questions screen as ‘yes’

2. Continue through the case pending for required information.

3. Stop and unlock case on SNAP Budget Authorization.

4. Process ongoing benefits when required information is received.

5. On the SNAP Budget Authorization screen enter Interview Code ‘Application Interview Waived’.

 6. Before submitting, in case comments, enter ‘The interview for this application has been waived per FNS guidance due to the

 COVID-19.’

Renewal – All information received case ready to process

1. Process the case normally.

2. On the SNAP Budget Authorization screen enter Interview Code ‘Reapplication Interview Waived’.

3. Before submitting, in case comments, enter ‘The interview for this renewal has been waived per FNS guidance due to the COVID-19.’

Renewal – Pending for information

1. Process the case normally, pending for required information.

2. Stop on Eligibility screen and unlock the case.

3. Finish processing when required information is received.

4. On the SNAP Budget Authorization screen, enter Interview Code ‘Reapplication Interview Waived’.

5. Before submitting, in case comments, enter ‘The interview for this renewal has been waived per FNS guidance due to the COVID-19.’

**NEXT STEPS**

1. Share and review this information with appropriate staff members.
2. Direct questions regarding this Operations Memorandum to your Area Manager.
3. This Operations Memorandum is in effect until further notice.