Online Guide Transmittal 2022-15
March 7, 2022

To:	**Department of Transitional Assistance Staff**
From:	**Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management**
Re:	**COVID-19: SNAP Application Interview Waiver Update**

Overview

As part of the continued effort to mitigate the difficulties the surge in pandemic-related applications has created, the Department is modifying the COVID-19 procedures for SNAP applications with an interview waiver (last detailed in OLGT 2021-37). These changes are expected to help the Department connect with more clients to obtain the necessary information/ verifications and are effective on March 8, 2022.

Purpose

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff of the procedural changes to the COVID-19 SNAP application interview process, and to encourage outreach in anticipation of Emergency Allotments expiring to help clients maximize their benefits.

Substantive Changes in SNAP Application Procedures

- **Staff must no longer send a VC-1 when a SNAP application is missing mandatory verifications (or information) and all three cold calls are unsuccessful**. When a SNAP application is missing mandatory verifications (or information), you must cold call the client three times before scheduling the interview. If all three cold calls are unsuccessful, an appointment letter must be sent. **The application must not be completed until an interview is conducted.** When the interview is completed, a VC-1 must be sent if the caseworker determines that verification is outstanding and cannot be obtained via telephonic signature.

Substantive Changes in SNAP Application Procedures (Continued)

> **Note: Staff must continue to issue expedited benefits before the scheduled interview,** provided that there is enough information on the application to do the screening and staff determine that the household qualifies for expedited benefits.

- BEACON will automatically schedule a telephone interview for <u>certain</u> SNAP web applications with earned income.

- BEACON will create the Action, "SNAP Application No Interview Held" regardless of whether a VC-1 was printed, as long as the interview has not been scheduled or marked as waived.

If all mandatory verifications are provided, the previously-established COVID-19 procedures for waiving interviews at application must continue to be followed.

These system and procedural changes will help to address applications in a more streamlined and expeditious manner. They will also reduce instances of staff requesting verification that is later determined to be unnecessary.

Preparing for the Emergency Allotment Expiration

As the Department gradually rolls back on COVID-19 procedures such as the SNAP application interview waiver, staff are encouraged to prepare for the eventual expiration of SNAP Emergency Allotments by **proactively helping SNAP applicants receive credit for every deduction that they are qualified for**.

For example, staff must **strongly emphasize** to households with elderly and/or disabled members that they can maximize their benefits by verifying medical expenses that are more than $35 per month. Furthermore, if verification of an allowable and self-declarable expense is missing, staff must strongly encourage the applicant to provide the verification via telephonic signature (if otherwise allowed per the guidance in <u>Self-Declarations</u>).

Note: The actual expiration date of the SNAP Emergency Allotments is unknown. When this occurs, staff will receive a separate notification from Central Office.

Job Aid

For quick reference to the SNAP Application Interview Waiver procedures, staff are encouraged to use this job aid: <u>Attachment A</u>.

Revised Online Guide Pages	**Topic:**	COVID-19
	Page:	SNAP Application Interview Waiver

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email them to DTA.Procedural Issues.

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.