



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance


MAURA T. HEALEY
GOVERNOR

KATHLEEN E. WALSH
SECRETARY

KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

MARY SHEEHAN
ACTING COMMISSIONER

Online Guide Transmittal 2023-30
April 7, 2023

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From:  Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
Re: SNAP: Return of SNAP Application Interviews (Phase One)

Overview

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department maintained an interview waiver with Food and Nutrition Services (FNS). This allowed SNAP application interviews to be waived when there were no outstanding mandatory verifications. This flexibility helped the Department to manage an increased workload and issue timely benefits. Now with the ending of the Public Health Emergency (PHE), many flexibilities will begin to sunset.

Effective April 7, 2023, all SNAP applications will require an interview and must be interviewed in advance of issuing eligible households expedited benefits. Interviews are important to ensure case accuracy, screen for special circumstances, and explain SNAP program requirements.

COVID-19 Recertifications are still being processed using Interim Report rules. This means interviews at recertification remain waived until further notice. For more information, see [COVID-19 Streamlined SNAP Recertification Process and Interview Waiver](#) in the Online Guide. This change only applies to the SNAP application interview.

Purpose

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff about:

- the return of SNAP application interviews,
 - the associated BEACON updates, and
 - the corresponding updates to the Online Guide.
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Key Updates

The return of SNAP application interviews will occur in multiple phases. For this phase, staff will still utilize the streamlined application workflow (which has been updated) that requires review and/or edit to fewer BEACON pages before wrapping the case. The Q & A Navigators remain deactivated. However, the following changes have been made:

- All references to the SNAP application interview waiver have been removed from the Online Guide, both in the COVID book and regular books. In removing these references, some of the revised pages do not have any substantive changes except for the removal of the reference.
 - The [SNAP Application Interview page](#) in the Online Guide now includes more detailed guidance on the SNAP application interview process.
 - The batch system has returned to auto-scheduling SNAP application interviews for all applicants unless they are coded as Heightened Level of Security (HLS), do not have a phone number listed, require an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter, or have a home visit accommodation.
 - For SNAP applications, “COVID-19 Interview Waived” is no longer a dropdown selection as a Not Held Reason in the Interview page. (This selection will still be available for recertifications only.)
 - The streamlined SNAP application workflow in BEACON now requires staff to visit the following pages: Disability, Earned Income (for all household members who are age 16 or older), Other Income, and Medical Expenses (for all household members who are age 60 or older, or coded as disabled). Other than these changes, the streamlined workflow has not changed.
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SNAP Applications Already in Progress

These updated procedures apply to applications being processed on or after April 7, 2023. Applications previously worked on that had an interview scheduled will follow this updated workflow. Applications already started prior to April 7, 2023, and that met the interview waiver requirements will continue to have their interview waived.

**Revised Online
Guide Pages**

Topic:	COVID-19
Page:	Standard Medical Deduction Waiver
Topic:	COVID-19
Page:	Temporary COVID-19 Verification Procedures
Topic:	COVID-19
Page:	Processing Cases with Paid Family and Medical Leave Income
Topic:	SNAP
Book:	Application Processing
Chapter:	SNAP Application Processing
Page:	The Application Interview
Topic:	SNAP
Book:	Application Processing
Chapter:	SNAP Application Processing
Page:	Expedited Benefits
Topic:	SNAP
Book:	Eligibility Requirements
Chapter:	Noncitizen
Subchapter:	Eligible Qualified Noncitizens
Page:	Cuban/Haitian Entrant
Topic:	Harper – ADA – Disability Access
Page:	ADA Accommodation Process: Staff Responsibilities During Temporary COVID Operations
Topic:	Business Process (BP)
Book:	Procedures
Chapter:	Processing Procedures
Page:	Scheduling/Cancelling Appointments

**Obsoleted
Transmittals**

- **OLGT 2022-15:** COVID-19 - SNAP Application Interview Waiver Update
 - **OLGT 2022-31:** SNAP – Application Interview Waiver Guidance – Additional Pages Updated and Clarifications Provided
 - **OLGT 2021-37:** COVID-19 – SNAP Application Interview Waiver and Streamlined Application Workflow
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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.
