



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


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Commissioner

**Online Guide Transmittal 2020-51
July 1, 2020**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From:  **Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management**
Re: SNAP: Resumption of Application and Recertification Interviews

Overview

In response to the surge of SNAP applications received as a result of COVID-19, the federal government authorized a number of waivers to support the timely processing of these cases and the continuity of benefits for existing clients. One of these waivers which provided for the temporary suspension of interviews (per Transmittal 2020-29) has expired. Effective immediately, SNAP applications must have an interview completed before eligibility can be determined.

Recertification interviews are also resuming effective with the issuance of this OLG transmittal

Purpose

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

- the Department's reinstatement of the interview requirement for applications and recertifications;
 - system changes to support the resumption of this requirement; and
 - the impact of this change on existing procedures.
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**Interview
Procedures &
BEACON
Changes**

Effective immediately, all SNAP applications must have an interview completed prior to determining eligibility. The interview requirement must be applied to all applications, even if the application was received prior to the issuance of this transmittal. Applications that have already had the **Interview Held** field marked as **No** with the reason of “COVID-19 Interview Waived”, will remain waived.

The “COVID-19 Interview Waived” option is not to be newly selected for applications or recertifications being initiated. This option is in the process of being removed from BEACON.

Note: With the resumption of SNAP recertifications, interviews must also be conducted for those households who are required or who have requested one.

**Verification
Procedures**

Besides the recent wage verification instructions provided in OLG 2020-48, the temporary COVID procedures are still in place for all other verification factors.

**Expedited
Benefits**

Staff are reminded that applicants must be interviewed to determine eligibility for expedited benefits, regardless if or how the expedited questions were answered on the application a client submits. Staff must answer the expedited screening questions. If the household is determined eligible, expedited benefits must be issued.

Identity remains the only factor that must be verified prior to issuing expedited benefits.

Remember: For expedited benefits, income that is countable may be self-declared.

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.
