



**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 2023-44
June 22, 2023**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

From:  **Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management**

Re: Cross Programs: DTA Coverage for Fair Hearings and Administrative Disqualification Hearings

Overview

The Division of Hearings (DOH) is an impartial division within the Department that administers hearings and renders decisions for appeals requested by clients. Clients are given the opportunity to have a fair hearing, also known as an appeal, if they disagree with an action or inaction taken by the Department. Appeals Liaisons represent the Department for SNAP-only cases assigned to the First Available Worker model. Case managers represent the Department for all other fair hearing appeal types. Staff from the Program Integrity (PI) Unit represent the Department at Administrative Disqualification Hearings (ADH). Clients may choose how they would like to attend their appeal:

- telephonically,
- virtually, or
- in-person at a local office.

Purpose

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff of coverage expectations for appeals.

Methods for Hearings

The Department schedules all appeals to be held telephonically unless a client requests that their appeal be held virtually or in-person at a local office. The Department has found that the telephonic option has a much higher rate of clients being able to keep the scheduled hearing. However, a client may have a personal preference or ADA-related need for a virtual or in-person appeal instead of telephonic.

Department Representative in a Hearing

Department staff must attend the hearing in the method it is being held. If an appeal is scheduled to be held in-person at a local office, the Appeals Liaison, the client's case manager, or the PI staff must attend the hearing in-person. Where operations allow, this day will satisfy the employee's onsite obligation and can be switched for what would otherwise be their scheduled in office day.

To the extent feasible, DOH will schedule any in-person hearings for a local office, in a given week, to take place on the same day/date.

If the Appeals Liaison, assigned case manager, or PI staff is not working on the day of a scheduled appeal, an on-site supervisor for the program/appeal type will cover the appeal regardless of method in which it is being held.

Reminder: Staff must prepare and submit their copies of evidence/exhibits to DOH no later than 24 hours before the scheduled appeal, via secure email, with a cc to their supervisor.

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate local office personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or local office management email them to [DTA.Procedural Issues](#).

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