

# Personalized Cards

Human Centered Engagement Strategies



As we continue to experience life amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to connect with people face-to-face is extremely challenging. Though face-to-face connections will remain the preferred way to engage individuals and develop meaningful relationships, we find ourselves needing to fall back on creative solutions to connect virtually.

Connecting in ways that work for people and ensuring referrals and connection to relevant services can help individuals and families to not fall through the cracks; especially those most in crisis. We need to continue to use a variety of communication methods, making multiple efforts to reach out to people and find what works best for them.

This resource was developed to support engagement during the pandemic and is also intended to be used when we return to face-to-face engagement.

In the rare event it is deemed essential and critical to connect with someone in person, please consult with your manager and adhere to all safety and physical distance protocols.

One of the strategies proposed to engage people is handwritten cards, in which offer a compassionate and empathic approach. **This should not be tied to any program expectations**, rather it is a way to recognize the events, challenges and issues people may be experiencing. Let them know you are available and invite them to reach out when needed. Again, this is a tool to authentically engage people and show genuine care, not a method of outlining program expectations (*appointment reminder, PDP...*).

While less personal than a handwritten note, email cards or “e-cards” could also be used to connect with individuals and families. The guidance below applies to both handwritten notes and e-cards.

Because equity should always center our work, staff are asked to connect with ODHS staff that are paid a language differential to help provide communications in the preferred language of the family. The resource for that list can be found here: [Bilingual and Multilingual Employees](#).

Some things to consider:

- Use this message to show support, build confidence and recognize their situation.
- Don't assume you know how someone feels. This journey is uniquely theirs and respecting that may help them feel recognized.
- Be optimistic, yet real. You can show your support without making any predictions about what's going to happen in the future or trying to artificially "fix" their current situation.
- Let them know you are thinking of them.
- Place all program expectations aside and focus on the individual or family.
- Add your telephone number or email and when you are typically available as a way for them to reach out if/when needed.
- Recognize families come with varying levels of literacy. Keep messaging simple and use imagery if/when possible.

When would a card be appropriate or helpful?

- First time meeting an individual or family
- To connect with individual/family before initial appointment
- To note celebrations, and sympathies
- To recognize individuals or families in severe crisis
- To intentionally reach out to monolingual non-English speakers
- To connect with individuals or families who have not been engaged

To help you when writing a card to an individual or family, some suggested wording is included below:

- *Thank you for sharing some of your story with me the other day. I look forward to working alongside you in your next chapter.*
- *This is a tough time (for you or your children) to be starting school. If you need any support such as clothing, school supplies or transportation assistance, please reach out.*

- *Hi! I am your new family coach for the TANF program. I really look forward to supporting you and getting to know you and your family. Here is my contact info\_\_\_\_\_*
- *In the event you are seeking issues such as housing, childcare, medical provide, or transportation, I'd love to help you through this transition.*
- *(Sympathy) My heart goes out to you and your family through this difficult time.*
- *Congratulations on your new job! I am so excited for this new chapter!*

To offset costs associated with the card writing process such as purchase of cards/envelopes, please use the following Index/PCA #:

- Index: 24154 - SS DELIVERY - MISC BRANCH PAYMENTS
- PCA 10464-JOBS SPT SVC/BASIC (FF/GF) FY22 LN 10 WS

**Blank cards are now available through ODHS/OHA Publications Unit.** They come in six different designs. The cards may be viewed and ordered on the following website:

<https://dhsopublications.amercommerce.com/self-sufficiency-programs.aspx>

### **Option 1 – printed cards with envelopes**

Printed cards with colored envelopes are available to order in packs of 25, (with a limit of 100 per card). The printed stock may be shipped to SSP branches only. To order please contact the forms coordinator for your office. That person can access the website above to submit an order for the branch.

### **Option 2 – electronic cards**

Electronic versions of the cards are available for download. You may access them through the same website: <https://dhsopublications.amercommerce.com/self-sufficiency-programs.aspx>. Click on the card image and then click the link to download. You can also access the cards on the [form server](https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/forms/), (form numbers de3957A through F): <https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/forms/>

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact [ODHS-SSP-Design.Implementation@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:ODHS-SSP-Design.Implementation@dhsoha.state.or.us).