

Belit Stockfleth  

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**Authorized Signature**

**Number:** SS-AR-08-006  
**Issue Date:** 04/03/2008

**Topic:** Food Benefits

**Due Date:** Upon Receipt

**Subject:** Face-to-Face Interview Waivers

**Applies to (check all that apply):**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All DHS employees                        | <input type="checkbox"/> County Mental Health Directors       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area Agencies on Aging                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children, Adults and Families | <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors and People with Disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County DD Program Managers               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):              |

**Action Required:** In the past couple of years, the Food and Nutrition Service has asked the State to utilize the option of offering hardship waivers to conduct phone interviews instead of in-office interviews or FS. Recently our hunger advocates and the Oregon Law Center asked that we inform local offices of this option. It is not new. The policy is in place in the FS Chapter B.8.

To inform clients of this option, the form Interview for Redetermination (DHS 6608A) is being added to the FS Recertification packets (DHS 6608) and to the cash and medical redetermination packets (DHS 6623) beginning with the April 2008 revision. Please use existing supplies before the new packet. The DHS 6608A form is currently available on the forms server.

The DHS 6608A form asks clients to identify any hardships to coming to the local office for their food stamp recertification interview. In place of the in-office interview, they may receive a phone interview. They are asked to provide a phone number and the days and times of the week they will be available. They may also state that they wish to come to the local office for the interview. Whenever a client states the desire to come in for a face-to-face interview, we must honor their request.

If your office does not already have a procedure in place for phone interviews, you need to establish a process. When conducting the phone interview, **the worker must narrate the hardship reason.** Again, this is not new policy. If a phone interview is attempted and the client is not available, send the notice writer form GS1090A with a scheduled appointment date and time.

Remember, all applicants (even at food stamp recertification) must have an interview within the first 20 days of the filing date. (Seven calendar days if the case is eligible for Expedited Service.) All applicants must be given an interview date and time. If they fail to appear for that scheduled interview appointment, a notice of missed appointment (DHS 411) must be given.

Applicants for initial certification, or who have more than a 30-day break in benefits may also receive a hardship interview. Branches must carefully verify the identity of the applicant. In this situation, the identification may be obtained from the client: (1) with the first contact, if the applicant explains a hardship reason and leaves their completed application; (2) when the applicant comes to the office for their EBT card; (3) cases may be pended for the verification of identity. Again, narrate the client's stated hardship reason for the phone interview and the type of identification used.

**Reason for Action:** The federal regulations require the state give an applicant timely access to benefits when they have a stated hardship to going to a local office for the intake interview. All offices must have a process in place for identifying and conducting a hardship interview for food stamp certification and recertifications.

**Field/Stakeholder review:**       Yes       No

**If yes, reviewed by:**

*If you have any questions about this action request, contact:*

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