

5101:4-2-07

Food assistance: initial interview process.**(A) What is the process for an initial interview?**

- (1) Upon receipt of the JFS 07200 "Request for Cash, Food, and Medical Assistance" (rev. 3/10), the county agency shall conduct an interactive interview with the primary information person (PIP) who is either a member of the household or an authorized representative for the assistance group making application.
- (2) The county agency shall schedule an interview for all applicant assistance groups who are not interviewed on the day they submit an application. The interview notice shall contain the date and time of the interview. The notice shall also list the phone number the county agency will call if completing a phone interview.
- (3) If separate applications are filed for assistance groups residing in the same household, each assistance group which has applied on its own application shall be interviewed or scheduled for an interview.
- (4) The county agency shall consider and attempt to accommodate any special circumstances or requests from an assistance group when scheduling an interview including the assistance group's work schedule.
- (5) The county agency shall schedule all interviews as promptly as possible to ensure eligible assistance groups receive an opportunity to participate within thirty days after the application is filed.

(B) What are the options for conducting an initial interview?

- (1) The county agency may conduct an:
 - (a) Office interview;
 - (b) Telephone interview; or
 - (c) Home visit (as long as it is scheduled in advance with the assistance group).
- (2) The type of interview conducted is left to the county agency's discretion unless the applicant requests a face-to-face interview. The county agency shall grant a face-to-face interview to any assistance group which requests one.

(C) What are the standard interview practices?

- (1) Interviews may be conducted at the food assistance office, another mutually acceptable location, or by telephone.

- (2) The JFS 01846, "Case Worksheet- Cash, Food Stamp, and Medical Assistance Interview" (5/05), shall be completed by the county agency if the system is down for an extended period of time or a home visit is necessary. The JFS 01846 shall be completed by the county agency and reviewed and signed by the applicant.
- (3) The interview may be conducted with the head of the assistance group, spouse, any other responsible member of the assistance group, an authorized representative or a primary information person.
- (4) When it is obvious the applicant is not mentally competent or due to a language barrier is not able to understand his/her hearing rights, the applicant shall be required to name an authorized representative to receive notices.
- (5) An applying assistance group shall report all changes related to its food assistance eligibility and benefits at the certification interview.

(D) What are the county agency's responsibilities during an interview?

- (1) Review the information appearing on the application, and explore and resolve unclear and incomplete information.
- (2) Perform necessary collateral contacts and collect required verifications.
- (3) Advise assistance groups of their rights and responsibilities during the interview, including the appropriate application processing standard and the assistance group's responsibility to report changes.
- (4) Conduct the interview as an official and confidential discussion of assistance group circumstances.
- (5) Protect the applicant's right to privacy during the interview. Facilities shall be adequate to preserve the privacy and confidentiality of the interview.
- (6) Advise assistance groups that are also applying for or receiving Ohio works first (OWF) cash assistance benefits that time limits and other requirements that apply to the receipt of OWF benefits do not apply to the receipt of food assistance, and that assistance groups which stop receiving OWF benefits because they have reached a time limit, have begun working, or for other reasons, may still qualify for food assistance benefits.

(E) What happens if an assistance group misses its interview?

- (1) The county agency shall notify an assistance group of its missed interview appointment by using the JFS 04218 "Notice of Missed Interview" (rev. 11/10) or its CRIS-E equivalent, in accordance with rule 5101:4-5-07 of the

Administrative Code and inform the assistance group they are responsible for rescheduling a missed interview.

- (2) If the assistance group contacts the county agency within the thirty-day application processing period, the county agency shall schedule a second interview.
- (3) The county agency shall not deny an assistance group's application prior to the thirtieth day if the assistance group fails to appear for the first scheduled interview.
- (4) If the assistance group requests a second interview during the thirty-day application processing period and is determined eligible, the county agency shall issue prorated benefits from the date of application if a JFS 07200 was not obtained to secure the original application date.

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