

**4. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS*****4A. Questions for Managers/Supervisors***

Name: Title: How long in position:	State/local agency:
Interviewer:	Date of interview:

**CLIENT SERVICES**Local Office Operations

1. What hours are applications taken?
  
2. Is there ever a restriction placed on when clients can be seen or file an application for any reason during office hours? If so, why? *Note to reviewer: Each household has the right to file an application form on the same day it contacts the SNAP office during office hours-7 CFR 273.2(c).*
  
3. How long do clients generally have to wait before they are served? *Note to reviewer: If a time is provided, how did the worker determine this? Compare the answer given to reviewer's observations of wait time.*
  
4. Please describe the procedures in place to accommodate households with special needs. *Note to reviewer: Some examples for accommodating persons with special needs include offering at-home visits, telephone interviews, signers on call for deaf clients, etc-7 CFR 273.2(a)(1).*
  - Elderly
  - Disabled
  - Homeless
  - Non-English speaking persons
  - Working persons
  - Persons living in remote areas or lacking transportation?

5. What other services are provided at this location? (For example, WIC, rental assistance, health department services, etc.)

#### Availability of Applications

6. If I want to apply for SNAP, how would I get an application? *Note to reviewer: If applications are not in plain view, follow up with more questions to find out how easily an interested person can obtain one-7 CFR 273.2(c)(3).*
7. When people ask for SNAP information (i.e., in person, phone call, letter, fax, or internet) or indicate food insecurity, who answers these requests and what information is provided? *Note to reviewer: Households must be encouraged to file an application form the same day the household or its representative contacts the SNAP office-7 CFR 273.2(c)(2)(i).*

#### Availability of Bilingual Services

8. Are applications, client services, and other program information materials available for people who don't speak English? *Note to reviewer: Obtain a list of all languages and what type of information and services are available for each-7 CFR 272.4(b).*

#### Level of Case Worker Services

9. How do you track or monitor applications to ensure timeliness?
10. How are complaints received by clients/advocates concerning poor customer service handled?
  - Is a complaint log maintained to record the date the complaint was received and resolved to ensure timely action is taken on all program complaints received?
  - Who is responsible for tracking and analyzing complaints?

11. Are clients able to contact their case workers when they need to communicate information or ask questions related to their application or case?

- If no, describe any alternate means of communication made available to clients by local office/State agency. (*Note to reviewer: e.g., call centers, email, voice mail*)

12. Does this office have a policy for returning customers' telephone calls within a certain time frame? If so, how do you monitor to ensure compliance with your policy?

13. Are individuals applying for SNAP ever referred to other programs or services? *Note to reviewer: If the answer is yes, find out what/where/why.*

#### Program Access Initiatives

14. (a). Has your office recently changed or adopted any processes to improve customer service in your office? (e.g. moving to or from case banking, increased telephone interviews, automated traffic registration such as Q-matic to monitor wait times, establishing a call/change center, install computers for applying/change reporting, have designated worker(s) deal with complaints rather than clerical support, etc.).

14. (b). Have you been able to evaluate the impact or benefit of the change(s)? (e.g., more interviews, less wait time, client satisfaction, phone response time, complaint volume, etc.)

15. Do you participate in any meetings with advocates or community organizations to discuss program access (or outreach)? If so, are these meetings at the local, regional, or state level?

Please explain how the meetings have benefited the SNAP clients at this office.

## Application Submission

16. (a). Describe all the ways in which applications and documents are accepted by your office (i.e., in person, through an authorized representative, by fax or other electronic transmission, by mail or by completing an on-line electronic application.) 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1)
16. (b). Describe how the application filing date is determined and documented.
17. Do you require potential applicants (those persons coming into the office to apply for help) to do anything before they actually file an application? If so, what do they have to do? *Note to reviewer: The State agency cannot impose additional application processing requirements, as a condition of eligibility-7 CFR 273.3(a)(1).*
18. Please explain how your office handles a SNAP application that has been sent to the wrong office. *Note to reviewer: If the household has mailed its application to the wrong office within a project area, the certification office shall mail the application to the appropriate office on the same day, or forward it the next day by any means that ensures the application arrives at the application office the day it is forwarded-7 CFR 273.2(c)(2)(ii).*
19. What is the minimum information necessary on the application form in order for your office to consider it a filed SNAP application? *Note to reviewer: Name, address and signature-7 CFR 273.2(c)(1).*
20. How does your office handle the situation when an applicant decides to withdraw his/her application? *Note to reviewer: The case file should be documented to reflect the reason for withdrawal, if any was stated by the household, and that contact was made with the household to confirm the withdrawal. The household shall be advised of its right to reapply at any time subsequent to a withdrawal-7 CFR 273.2(c)(6).*

## Application Screening

21. Describe your office's screening process for expedited services. *Note to reviewer: A receptionist, volunteer, or other employee shall be responsible for screening applications as they are filed or as individuals come in to apply-7 CFR 273.2(i)(2). Process should look at whether total household income for the month, before deductions, is less than \$150; household cash/savings is \$100 or less; total shelter costs exceed the monthly income and resources; and whether the household contains migrant/seasonal farm workers whose cash and savings are \$100 or less-7 CFR 273.2(i)(1). Expedited service must be made available to households in immediate need -7 CFR 273.2(a)(2).*

Continue with the following questions, if not provided in above response.

- When is screening done?
- Who is responsible for screening?
- Does this include applications filed online?
- Is the procedure for screening online applications/multi-program applications for expedited service any different?
- Is a form used to screen applicants for entitlement to expedited service? *Note to reviewer: If so, obtain a copy of the form.*
- What action is taken when applicants are not initially determined during the interview to be eligible for expedited benefits?

## Interview Procedures

22. Who schedules application interviews?
23. Generally, how many days after the application is submitted is the interview scheduled? *Note to reviewer: The State agency must schedule all interviews as promptly as possible to insure eligible households receive an opportunity to participate within 30 days after the application is filed-7 CFR 273.2(e)(3).*

24. What is the local office policy on waiving face-to-face interviews? Who makes the decision to waive in each situation? *Note to reviewer: The applicant must be informed that the face-to-face waiver may be waived on a case-by-case basis because of household hardship as determined by the State-7 CFR 273.2(e)(2). Keep in mind that the State may have a waiver in place.*
25. Are applicants given a date and time for interviews, if they cannot be interviewed on the date they apply? *Note to reviewer: The State agency must schedule an interview for all applicant households who are not interviewed on the day they submit their applications-7 CFR 273.2(e)(3).*
26. What happens if a household fails to keep its scheduled application interview? *Note to reviewer: The State agency must notify each household that misses its interview appointment that it missed the scheduled interview and that the household is responsible for rescheduling a missed interview. If the household contacts the State agency within the 30 day application processing period, the State agency must schedule a second interview. 7 CFR 273.2(e)(3).*
27. Explain how privacy is provided for households during the interview process? *Note to reviewer: The State agency must protect the applicant's right to privacy during the interview. Facilities must be adequate to preserve the privacy and confidentiality of the interview. 7 CFR 273.2(e)(1).*
28. Are households permitted to bring another person to the interview? *Note to reviewer: The individual interviewed may be the head of the household, spouse, any other responsible member of the household, or an authorized representative. The applicant may bring any person he or she chooses to the interview. 7 CFR 273.2(e)(1).*
29. Are clients ever asked to come in for an interview during the certification period? If so, why? *Note to reviewer: State agencies may request but not require clients to do this-7 CFR 273.2(e)(1).*

## Verification

30. For households entitled to expedited service, what verification is required? *Note to reviewer: The applicant's identity shall be verified through a collateral contact or readily available documentation-7 CFR 272.2(i)(4)(i)(A); All reasonable efforts shall be made to verify residency, income statement and resources. Benefits shall not be delayed solely because these factors have not been verified-7 CFR 273.2(i)(4)(i)(B).*
31. Are applicant households being told/given something in writing to specifically identify what verification is required for SNAP purposes? *Note to reviewer: If the answer is yes, obtain a copy of any information provided to applicants concerning verification.*
32. How much time do applicants have to provide verification? *Note to reviewer: The State agency must give households at least 10 days to provide required verification for normal processing-7 CFR 273.2(2)(f).*
33. What is the procedure for verifying social security numbers? *Note to reviewer: The State agency shall verify the SSN(s) reported by the household by submitting them to the Social Security Administration for verification. The agency shall not delay the certification for or issuance of benefits to an otherwise eligible household solely to verify the SSN of a household member 7 CFR 273.2(f)(1)(v).*
34. What type of documentation is accepted to establish residency and identity? *Note to reviewer: specific documents such as birth certificates to verify identity are not required for SNAP-7 CFR 273.2(f)(1)(vi),(vii).*
35. For households that are cooperating but may be having trouble obtaining the necessary verification, how does your office assist? *Note to reviewer: The State agency must assist the household in obtaining this verification provided the household is cooperating with the State agency 7 CFR 273.2(f)(5)(i).*

36. Are households required to present verification in person? *Note to reviewer: Households may supply documentary evidence in person, through the mail, by facsimile or other electronic device, or through an authorized representative. The State agency must not require the household to present verification in person- 7 CFR 273.2(f)(5)(i).*

37. Is finger imaging used as a type of verification? If so, please explain the process.

#### Multi-Program Case Management

38. Are households applying for TANF notified of their right to apply for SNAP at the same time? *Note to reviewer: The State agency must notify households applying for public assistance of their right to apply for SNAP-7 CFR 273.2(j).*

39. What happens when a TANF sanction is applied to a member of a household also receiving SNAP? *Note to reviewer: Only the individual who committed the violation in the assistance program may be disqualified for SNAP purposes even if the entire assistance unit is disqualified for Title IV–A purposes-7 CFR 273.11(k)(5).*

#### Recertification:

40. How are recertification interviews arranged? *Note to reviewer: The options are in person, by phone, home visit. As part of the recertification process, the agency must conduct a face-to-face interview with a member of the household or its authorized representative at least once every 12 months for households certified for 12 months or less. Depending on the State's option, the State agency may choose not to interview the household at interim recertifications within the 12-month period.*

41. Briefly describe the steps of the recertification process. *Note to reviewer: Notice of expiration, application, interview and verification as detailed in 7 CFR 273.14(b)(1)(2)(3) and (4).*



42. Are any household's certification period extended without an interview or eligibility determination? *Note to reviewer: No household may participate beyond the expiration of the certification period assigned in accordance with §273.10(f) without a determination of eligibility for a new period. 7 CFR 273.14(a)*

43. If the clients do not attend the recertification interview, does the agency send a NOMI? *Note to reviewer: If a household misses its scheduled interview, the agency shall send the household a NOMI-7 CFR 273.14(b)(3)(iii).*

#### Work Requirements

44. How do you process mandatory E&T SNAP applicants?

- Please describe how applicants are referred to E&T.

45. How does your office determine whether a SNAP participant complied with work requirements? 7 CFR 273.7(i)