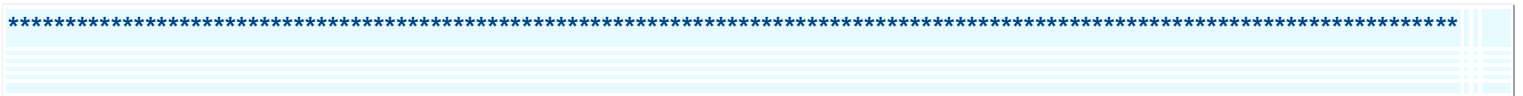


Department of Social and Health Services  
Community Services Division  
**EA-Z Manual**

Revision: # 1065  
Category: **Interview Requirements**  
Issued: March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Revision Author: Corinna Adams  
Division: CSD  
Mail Stop: 45440  
Phone: 360-725-4609  
Email: [corinna.adams@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:corinna.adams@dshs.wa.gov)

**Summary**

Revised for Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) Updates. Corrected some other errors.



## Interview Requirements

Revised ~~January 4, 2017~~ March 5, 2020

### Purpose:

This section explains when someone must have an interview for benefits, when we schedule an interview, and when Basic Food households can have an authorized representative complete the required interview on the household's behalf.

### [WAC 388-452-0005](#)\_ Do I have to be interviewed in order to get cash and Basic Food benefits?

- [Clarifying Information and Worker Responsibilities](#)

## WAC 388-452-0010 What does the family violence option mean for TANF/SFA recipients?

- [Clarifying Information and Worker Responsibilities](#)
- 

### Clarifying Information - [WAC 388-452-0005](#)

#### 1. When we require interviews

- a. For cash assistance and Basic Food, we must interview a person at:
  - i. Application; and
  - ii. Eligibility review or recertification, if we have not interviewed them in the last twelve months, unless they meet the ESAP criteria listed in #2.

#### 2. When we don't require interviews:

- a. **Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP).** Basic Food assistance units that meet the following ESAP or Elderly Interview Waiver criteria do not need to complete an interview for their Basic Food Eligibility Review:
  - i. All members of the household are elderly (age 60) or disabled, as defined in [WAC 388-400-0040](#), at the time of processing the review;
  - ii. No mandatory or applying household members have earned income;
  - iii. The paper or electronic eligibility review is complete;
  - iv. The household has provided all necessary verification or the verification is available through interfaces available to the department; and
  - v. No information provided is questionable.

Household member, for purposes of this waiver, include only mandatory members and members who are applying for or receiving benefits in the assistance unit (even if not mandatory).

We cannot terminate Basic Food benefits for households meeting the waiver criteria for failure to complete an interview.

**EXAMPLE:** Claire meets the ESAP waiver criteria. However, the worker that completed her application certification did not change the system indicator to make her recertification mail in only. Because the system wasn't changed, Claire was sent a notice that she needs to call in for her Eligibility Review. The worker processing her Eligibility Review notes that Claire meets the ESAP waiver criteria and processes her Eligibility Review without an interview.

We cannot terminate Basic Food benefits for households that appear to be ineligible at recertification without interviewing them.

**EXAMPLE:** Stan meets ESAP Waiver criteria. His Eligibility Review ~~review~~ indicates an increase in his pension amount. The worker is able to verify the income and the change would terminate Stan's Basic Food benefits. The worker must attempt to interview Stan, following interviewing procedures.

We must verify excess medical expenses for ESAP waiver households. See [Income - Effect of income on Eligibility and Benefit Level](#).

**EXAMPLE:** Bill and Erma submit a review for Basic Food. Bill is 60 and Erma is 63. Each of them get Social Security and Bill gets a pension from his union. Their claimed excess medical expenses have not changed since their initial application. Bill is not claiming a change in his pension income. The worker is able to verify the Social Security income, and Bill's pension was previously verified. Bill and Erma are not required to complete an Eligibility Review interview.

**EXAMPLE:** Claire submits an Eligibility Review for Basic Food. Claire lives with her son Robbie, but he is on his own Basic Food AU. Claire is 71 years old. Her only income is Social Security. She claimed no medical expenses at her initial interview. Now she is claiming \$250 monthly payment to St Joseph's Hospital. The worker is able to verify her income, however, they are not able to verify medical expenses. The worker calls Claire to complete an Eligibility Review interview.

**2. Application for medical assistance only.** We do not require an interview if someone applies for medical assistance **only**.

**EXAMPLE:**

Fran is 65 and her spouse is 60. The couples only source of income is Fran's Social Security. Fran does not need to complete an interview for her Basic Food application and will be sent a mail in Eligibility Review.

**EXAMPLE:**

Jim is 70 and receives a pension from Germany. Jim did not provide verification of his current monthly pension amount with his eligibility review. Jim will need to complete an interview for Basic Food and provide current verification of his income.

**EXAMPLE:**

Kay and her two kids receive Basic Food and medical benefits. They are certified for these benefits through November. In October, she loses her job and applies for TANF benefits. Kay will need an interview for TANF and to recertify her Basic Food benefits.

**EXAMPLE:**

Mary applies for cash, food, and medical and is scheduled for an interview. Later, Mary withdraws her request for cash and food and only wants medical. Mary's worker denies the

request for food and cash based on her request and can process the application for medical as there is no interview required.

### 1. Phone interviews

People do not need to claim a hardship in order to have a phone interview. We can interview anyone by phone regardless of their circumstances.

## Worker Responsibilities - [WAC 388-452-0005](#)

### 1. First contact resolution

Attempt to complete a face to face interview when a client submits their application in person at a CSO. Follow the procedure for screening applications in the [CSD Procedure Manual](#) if the application doesn't meet same day service criteria.

### 2. Scheduled interviews

For scheduled interviews, set up the interview enough in advance to allow the person 10 days to give us the information we need before the end of their certification period or 30-day processing period. When possible, set up an interview time that fits with a person's work or other circumstances, including offering a phone interview.

#### **EXAMPLE:**

Marissa turns in her eligibility review form for Basic Food on June 12th. Her certification period ends on June 30th. Schedule the interview to be done by June 20th, so she has 10 days to give us the information we need before her certification period ends.

#### **NOTE:**

Schedule the interview in ACES in order to ensure that households receive the required Notice Of Missed Interview (NOMI) letter overnight if we don't complete the interview function on the date of the scheduled interview.

### 3. Missed Interviews

If a client misses a scheduled interview, they will receive the notice of missed interview informing them to contact us to reschedule the interview. If they contact us to reschedule, use the time to complete the interview rather than rescheduling another appointment.

#### 4. Offices that do not use scheduled interviews

Always attempt to complete an interview before sending out a letter to the client as stated in "first contact resolution above". If you cannot interview the client on the day they apply, send them a general correspondence letter using the interview template containing the following information:

##### NOTE:

Schedule the interview ~~on the MISC screen~~ in ACES for the 7<sup>th</sup> day from the date of application request. This will ensure that households receive the required Notice Of Missed Interview (NOMI) letter overnight if we don't complete the interview function on the date of the scheduled interview.

- The benefits they applied for;
- That they must have an interview by the 7th day after the date of application for all cases;
- That they can come in or call Monday through Friday between 8:00am and ~~23~~ 23:00pm for their interview;
- The location of your office;
- The number(s) to call in for phone interviews; and
- That they can call or come into the office during regular walk-in hours within 30 days of their application date even if they miss the deadline of the 7th day; and
- That if they do not have their interview within 30 days, they will need to reapply for benefits.

#### 5. Interpreter Services

If someone has Limited English Proficiency, arrange for interpreter services as allowed under Chapter [388-271 WAC](#). See: [Limited English Proficiency \(LEP\)](#).

#### 6. Conducting the Interview

- a. Review all completed forms with the person as described below:
  - i. Make sure they have correctly filled out all the forms you need;
  - ii. Confirm the information in the application – Resolving any unclear, incomplete, or inconsistent information with them; and
  - iii. Get the proof you need about their circumstances as described in [VERIFICATION](#).
- b. See [APPLICATIONS - Information Needed to Determine Eligibility](#) to decide if the person completed all the forms you need

c. Review the [DSHS 14-113\(X\), "Your Rights and Responsibilities"](#) with the person and give them a copy of the form. Document that you reviewed the form with the person and gave them a copy. See: RIGHTS for information.

d. [Inform Mandatory ABAWD clients of their work requirements per WAC 388-444-0030 and review Form DSHS 11-034b.](#)

e. Inform household of their reporting requirements per [WAC 388-418-0005](#).

f. Inform household if they are required to complete a mid-certification review at 6 months.

**NOTE:**

The Rights & Responsibilities form submitted with an online Application or Eligibility Review Form is considered electronically signed. Another paper form **does not** need to be sent to the client.

f.g. **Client Demographics on Race / Ethnicity**

- i. Inform clients that we must collect racial & ethnic information for statistical reporting requirements and that the information has no impact on eligibility. Ask clients to self-identify their racial and ethnic group.
- ii. If the client chooses not to identify a race / ethnic group, make a visual determination where possible and record this information in the demographics. This is required under federal regulations.
- iii. Allow the household to update this information by self-identifying if they choose to do so.

## 8. Referrals

Based on the household's circumstances, make referrals to the appropriate resource or specialists including:

- o [ABAWD Navigator referral - see ABAWD](#)
- o Incapacity Specialist - see [Incapacity](#)
- o FRED Worker - see [Fraud](#)
- o Refugee Caseworker - see [Refugee Assistance](#)
- o Teen Parent Caseworker - see [Teen Parents](#)
- o First Steps Caseworker - see [Pregnancy and Women's Health](#)
- o Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs - see [Veteran's Referrals](#).

## 7. TANF Family Violence Screening

Complete screenings for family violence on TANF households as described below:

**NOTE:** See [WAC 388-452-0010](#) for additional information about Family Violence

- a. Review the application or eligibility review form to determine if the person claims "good cause" for not helping the Division of Child Support (DCS) establish paternity and collect child support. This may be the first sign that family violence is an issue.
- b. Review the Family Violence Option with the individual.
- c. Explain WorkFirst work activities and eligibility requirements.
- d. Tell the individual about cooperation and referrals, including the right to ask for a referral at any time while receiving benefits.
- e. After the individual understands the Family Violence Option, screen the individual for family violence using the "Family Violence Screening/Evaluation" in eJAS.
- f. Tell the individual that they only need to answer "yes" or "no" to each question. The individual does not have to explain their answers.
- g. If the individual answers "no" to any of the questions, determine an appropriate work activity.
- h. If the individual answers "yes" to any of the questions, provide them with referral information to local resources and determine an appropriate WorkFirst approved activity. Referrals may include one or more of the following:
  - i. Shelters for battered individuals or families;
  - ii. Medical services;
  - iii. Family and domestic violence hot lines;
  - iv. Emergency help for individuals or families fleeing family violence;
  - v. Legal counseling and advocacy, including initiation of legal proceedings;
  - vi. Mental health care, counseling and support groups;
  - vii. Other available services.

---

## Clarifying Information - [WAC 388-452-0010](#)

Applies **only** to persons who receive TANF cash aid.

1. Additional requirements for persons fleeing domestic abuse: Additional requirements may be available for persons currently receiving TANF or Refugee Cash Assistance fleeing domestic abuse. See [EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE](#) for rules and procedures.
2. Family violence may be a barrier for work: Family violence victims face several hurdles in successfully moving from welfare to work because:
  - a. The physical and emotional effects of past or present abuse may hinder job performance or work search.

- b. The abuser may try to sabotage the victims'; education, training and employment to keep them dependent upon the abuser.
  - c. The abuser may threaten the safety of the victim's children or family members.
  - d. The demands of court intervention, criminal prosecution, safety planning, physical and mental recovery, or counseling may interfere with work, education or training.
  - e. The victim may need to move or disrupt work to escape a violent living arrangement.
3. Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP): Since the degree of family violence varies greatly, the intent of this section is to help the worker determine an IRP. The following levels may help to determine whether or not a deferral and/or waiver is necessary:
  - a. *Level 1* - This group identifies victims of family violence who do not want or need any referrals or deferrals and/or waivers from work requirements.
  - b. *Level 2* - This group identifies victims of family violence who want supportive services and/or referrals, but do not need deferrals and/or waivers from work requirements.
  - c. *Level 3* - This group identifies victims of family violence who need referrals to local resources and deferrals and/or waivers to gain stability before actively seeking employment.

See the WorkFirst- Handbook for more information on participation activities for family violence victims.

## Worker Responsibilities - [WAC 388-452-0010](#)

1. Screen all persons approved for TANF at the initial application interview and each eligibility review for circumstances of family violence.
2. Provide referral information to individuals in need of counseling and support services.
3. Delay work search activities when participation would:
  - a. Make it more difficult for the individual to escape family violence.
  - b. Penalize individuals who have been or are at risk of becoming victims of family violence, or who are at further risk of abuse.
4. You may waive the following:
  - a. Time limits on receipt of TANF, after the individual has received TANF for 52 months.
  - b. Paternity and child support cooperation requirements.
  - c. Other WorkFirst requirements that unfairly penalize victims or make it more difficult to escape family violence.
5. Keep information about victims of family violence confidential as required by RCW [74.04.060](#).



**Exception:** You must report incidents of child abuse or neglect to the proper law enforcement agency. This includes child rape, child molestation and sexual misconduct with a minor. RCW [26.44.030\(4\)](#) provides these guidelines.

6. Provide information about the Family Violence Option, both orally and in writing to all TANF individuals. Case Managers will provide the client with a copy of the **Open the Door** brochure at the initial application interview and at each eligibility review. The brochure tells the client about the Family Violence Option and how we can help.
7. Accept allegations of family violence by a victim as enough evidence to substantiate the claim of violence. Other evidence of family violence may include any of the following sources:
  - a. Police, government agency, or court records.
  - b. Documentation from a source from which the victim has sought aid in dealing with family violence.
  - c. Statement from any other individual with knowledge of the circumstances that provide the basis for the claim.
  - d. Physical evidence of family violence.
  - e. Other evidence that may help identify a victim of family violence.
8. Show sensitivity in handling situations involving a victim or potential victim of family violence.
9. Provide an environment in which the individual can disclose family violence. This includes interviewing the individual alone whenever possible.

---

## ACES Procedures

There are two procedures addressed in this section:

- See [Interview](#) for actions taken during the interview; and
- See [Scheduling](#) for scheduling in ACES.