
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES CERTIFICATION
APPLICATIONS
Interviewing

FNS 310 Interviewing
Change #2-2012
May 1, 2012

310.01 APPLICATION INTERVIEW REQUIREMENTS

All applicant households, including those submitting applications by mail, must have **an interview prior to the issuance of FNS benefits. The interview may be either face-to-face or by telephone.** The face-to-face interview can be conducted in a FNS office or other mutually acceptable location, including a household's residence. **A face-to-face interview must be provided if requested by the applicant or authorized representative. A face-to-face interview must not be required if it would be a hardship for the household.** The interview must be conducted by a qualified eligibility worker and be held prior to initial certification. The individual interviewed may be the head of household, spouse, any other adult member of the household, or an authorized representative. If there is no adult in the household, an emancipated minor can complete the application interview. The applicant may bring any person he chooses to the interview.

310.02 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INTERVIEWER

The interviewer has several responsibilities during the interview process. Those responsibilities include the following:

- A. Advise households of their rights and responsibilities.
- B. Explain the appropriate application processing time standards.
- C. Inform households of their responsibility to report changes.
- D. Advise households that are also applying for or receiving Work First and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits that time limits and other requirements that apply to the receipt of Work First and/or SSI benefits do not apply to the receipt of FNS.
- E. Advise households that the termination of Work First and/or SSI due to time limits, employment, or for other reasons, does not affect FNS eligibility.
- F. Explain the Lifeline and Link-Up Assistance Programs to the applicant. Refer to FNS Manual Section 630, Lifeline/Link-Up Assistance Programs, for an explanation of these programs.
- G. Conduct the interview as an official and confidential discussion of household circumstances. Do not simply review the information that appears on the application form, but explore and resolve any unclear and incomplete information.
- H. Protect the applicant's right to privacy during the interview. Hold the interview in a location that ensures privacy and confidentiality during the interview process.
- I. Provide all households with the DSS-8227, Immigrant Access Notice.

310.03 PROCEDURES FOR SCHEDULING AN INTERVIEW

The agency must schedule an interview for all applicant households who are not interviewed on the day they submit their applications. The application may be submitted in person, by an authorized representative, faxed, mailed or by e-mail. All applications submitted must have the name, address, and signature. **The screener's guide section of the application form must be completed at each application and reapplication. Do not evaluate timely or untimely recertifications for expedited service. If the applicant will not be interviewed on the date of application, the prescreening section must be completed. For applications that prescreen for**

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expedited benefits refer to section 320, Expedited Service. Schedule interviews to accommodate the needs of households with special circumstances, including working households, if at all possible. The DSS-8650 must be used to schedule all interviews as promptly as possible to ensure eligible households entitled to normal processing standards receive an opportunity to purchase food within 30 days after the application is filed. The 30-day count begins the day after the date of application. The DSS-8650 must include a specific date, time and method of the interview (telephone or face-to-face), Schedule the interview, as soon as possible but no later than ten calendar days from the date the applicant files the application. Due to electronic benefits transfer (EBT) procedures, it is recommended that application approvals be processed by the 25th day. This should give households the opportunity to purchase food by the 30th day. For more details on time frames, see Section 315, Application Time Frames.

310.04 PROCEDURES WHEN APPLICANT FAILS TO ATTEND FIRST SCHEDULED INTERVIEW

The following procedures apply when an applicant household fails to attend their first scheduled interview:

- A. Mail the household a DSS-8650, Notice of Information Needed to Complete Your Food Stamp Application. Inform the household that they missed the scheduled interview and the household is responsible for rescheduling a missed interview.
- B. Deny the application on the 30th day following the date of application if the household fails to appear for the first scheduled interview and fails to contact the agency before or on the 30th day.
- C. Schedule a second interview if the household contacts the agency within the 30-day application processing period.

310.05 PROCEDURES WHEN APPLICANT CONTACTS AGENCY TO RESCHEDULE INTERVIEW

The following procedures apply when an applicant household contacts the agency to reschedule an interview appointment:

- A. The agency must schedule a second interview if the applicant contacts the agency within the 30-day processing period.
- B. If the applicant contacts the agency but chooses not to schedule a second interview, deny the application on the 30th day following the date of application.
- C. Determine if good cause can be established if a household is responsible for a delay in the interview process. Refer to Section 350.06 and 350.07 if good cause is established. Take the following actions if good cause cannot be established.
 - 1. If the first interview is postponed at the household's request and cannot be rescheduled until after the 20th day but before the 30th day following the date the application was filed, require the household to:
 - a. Appear for the interview,
 - b. Bring all needed verification, **and**
 - c. Register members for work by the 30th day.

If the household fails to comply with the above requirements, deny the application on the 30th day following the date of application. In this situation, the household is not entitled to

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the minimum ten days to provide verification. Refer to Section 350.05 for procedures to follow if the applicant provides the required verifications after the 30th day.

2. If the household failed to appear for the first interview, fails to schedule a second interview, and/or the subsequent interview is postponed at the household's request until after the 30th day following the date the application was filed, the delay is the household's fault. Deny the application on the 30th day following the date of application. Refer to Section 350.05 for procedures to follow if the applicant interviews and/or provides the required verifications after the 30th day.
 3. The household is also at fault if it missed both scheduled interviews and requests another interview. Deny the application on the 30th day following the date of application. Refer to Section 350.05 for procedures to follow if the applicant interviews and/or provides the required verifications after the 30th day.
 4. If the household was at fault for the delay in the first 30-day period but is determined eligible during the second 30-day period, provide benefits from the date the verification is provided. The household is not entitled to benefits from the original date of application if the delay was the household's fault and good cause is not established.
- D. If good cause is established and the agency cannot schedule the second interview until after the 20th day but before the 30th day following the date of application, do the following:
1. Schedule the interview as soon as possible;
 2. Allow the household ten days to provide all necessary verifications;
 3. Do not deny the application on the 30th day;
 4. Pend the application following the procedures discussed in Sections 350.06 and 350.07; **and**
 5. Provide benefits from the original application date if the household is determined eligible.
- E. If good cause is established and the agency cannot schedule the second interview until after the 30th day following the date of application, do the following:
1. Schedule the interview as soon as possible;
 2. Allow ten days for the household to provide all necessary verifications;
 3. Do not deny the application on the 30th day;
 4. Pend the application following the procedures discussed in Sections 350.06 and 350.07; **and**
 5. Provide benefits from the original application date if the household is determined eligible.
- F. Households who fail to contact the agency by the 30th day must reapply for benefits.