

Spread the Word

Communicating Your County's New Phone Interview Policy

Why It's Important to Spread the Word

With only one-third of California's working poor enrolled in the program, phone interviews are a critical way to remove some of the barriers to receiving nutrition assistance. Individuals and households may only need to make one visit to their local county office to complete the process and begin receiving benefits. **The situation we want to avoid is someone making a trip to the office just to find out that they didn't have to come in.**

Developing and implementing a communication plan about your county's new phone interview policy will help you spread the word!



SAMPLE COMMUNICATION PLAN

- 1. Develop and distribute Policy Memo to all staff, including regional and satellite offices and plan to announce policy change and corresponding procedure at relevant staff meeting.**
- 2. Update Food Stamp Application Cover or Instructional Sheets, if applicable, replacing previous language with new policy information.**
 - Sample Language:** "To complete your application, you will need to have an interview with an eligibility worker. Your interview will be done over the phone. Once your application has been received, a county worker will call you at the phone number you provided on the application to schedule the phone interview on a date and time that is convenient for both of you. If you would like an in-person interview, you may request one by calling the county office."
- 3. Update county website and official voicemail message with news of new policy.**
 - Sample Language:** "New Policy: Effective immediately, all food stamp interviews will be done over the phone at initial application and recertification. No hardship is required. Once an application is received, a worker will call you to schedule a phone interview. If you would like an in-person interview, you may request one by calling the county office."
- 4. Update online food stamp screening and/or application portal, if applicable.**
 - Sample Language:** "New Policy: Effective immediately, all food stamp interviews will be done over the phone at initial application and recertification. No hardship is required. Once an application is received, a worker will call you to schedule a phone interview. If you would like an in-person interview, you may request one by calling the county office."
- 5. Develop and disseminate informational flier to all community partners, application assistor organizations, call centers, legal services organizations, relevant county departments, etc. Sample flier available at <http://www.cfpa.net/PhoneInterviewsCalifornia.html>.**
- 6. Place a Public Service Announcement in community newspapers, relevant publications and on related websites.**
 - Sample Language:** "Tired of waiting in long lines and missing work for an appointment at the county office? Now, you can complete the Food Stamp application process over the phone in [insert county name] county. In California, an interview must be done to complete the food stamp application process and to begin receiving benefits. Now, that interview is done over the phone. To apply, visit [insert county food stamp website] or call [insert toll-free number]. California has lowest food stamp participation than any other state in the country. This low participation means less for all Californians – less food on the tables of working families, less economic activity, and less sales tax revenue for the state and local governments. To learn more, visit our website at [insert county food stamp website] or call [insert toll-free number]."