**Section 121.10 Interviews**

a) All applicant households, including those submitting applications by mail, shall have face-to-face interviews in a local office with a qualified eligibility worker prior to initial certification and all redeterminations.

b) Interview Process

1) The individual interviewed may be the head of the household, spouse, any other adult member of the household who is sufficiently familiar with the household's circumstances to be able to assist in the determination of eligibility, or an authorized representative (see Section 121.1(e)(1) and (2)). The applicant may bring any person he/she chooses to the interview. Prior to beginning the interview, the applicant shall indicate which persons are not applying for SNAP benefits because they are unable or unwilling to provide alien status verification.

2) The interviewer shall not simply review the information that appears on the application, but shall explore and resolve with the household unclear and incomplete information.

3) Households shall be advised of their rights and responsibilities during the interview, including the appropriate applications processing standard (see Sections 121.2 and 121.7) and the household's responsibility to report changes.

4) The interview shall be conducted as an official and confidential discussion of household circumstances. The applicant's right to privacy shall be protected during the interview. Facilities shall be adequate to preserve the privacy and confidentiality of the interview.

c) Waiver of Office Interviews

1) The office interview shall be waived if requested by any household that is unable to appoint an authorized representative and that has no household members able to come to the local office because they are qualifying members as defined in Section 121.61.

2) The office interview shall also be waived for any household:

A) containing a household member who is employed; or

B) on a case-by-case basis for any household that is unable to appoint an authorized representative and that has no household members able to come to the local office because of transportation difficulties or similar hardships that the Department determines warrants a waiver of the office interview. These hardship conditions include, but are not limited to:

i) illness;

ii) care of household member;

iii) hardships due to residency in a rural area;

iv) prolonged severe weather;

v) training hours that prevent the household from participating in an in-office interview.

3) The Department will conduct a face-to-face interview if the household requests one.

4) The Department has the option of conducting a telephone interview or a home visit for those households for whom the office interview is waived. Home visits shall be used only if the time of the visit is scheduled in advance with the household. However, a home visit interview for redetermination of eligibility for financial assistance/recertification does not have to be scheduled with the household in advance.

5) Waiver of the face-to-face interview does not exempt the household from the verification requirements, although special procedures may be used to permit the household to provide verification and thus obtain its benefits in a timely manner, such as substituting a collateral contact in cases where documentary verification would normally be provided.

6) Waiver of the face-to-face interview shall not affect the length of the household's certification period.

d) The Department shall schedule all interviews as promptly as possible to ensure the eligible households receive an opportunity to participate within 30 days after the application is filed. If a household fails to appear for the scheduled interview, the Department will issue a Notice of Missed Interview that will inform the household that the household missed its scheduled interview and that the household is responsible for requesting another interview.

(Source: Amended at 39 Ill. Reg. 15577, effective December 1, 2015)