



On-Demand Telephone Interview System Guidance for Community Partners



The availability of **On-Demand phone interviews** gives clients more flexibility as they do not have to wait for HRA to call them or go into a center to complete their eligibility interview!

Once a client submits their application via any of the available submission methods, they can call **718-762-7669** for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or **929-273-1872** for Cash Assistance (CA) anytime between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday, for a phone interview. We encourage all clients to complete their interview as soon as possible following their submission, especially if they have an emergency need.

- The best time to call for an interview is Thursday and Friday before noon. Currently, this is when wait times are the shortest.
- The call center is busiest on Mondays, after a Holiday, and 12 to 2 pm every day.

NOTE

Clients assigned to Benefit Access Center 90 and those in receipt of HASA or Domestic Violence Services should wait to receive their interview phone calls and do not have to call the on-demand phone lines.

The On-Demand phone numbers are reserved for clients to complete their interview requirements. Clients should call the On-Demand phone numbers directly instead of the OneNumber to allow for direct assistance and lessened wait times.

On-Demand phone lines are not inquiry lines and are not substitutes for the OneNumber. If after authenticating their information a client is found to not need an interview, their call will be rerouted to the OneNumber line for assistance with their inquiry.

HRA/DSS introduced the **On-Demand callback system** as a helpful alternative for community-based organizations and clients amidst the significant increase in applications and recertifications. Therefore, we encourage you to take advantage of this option when assisting clients with phone interviews. Your client could be interviewed without facing prolonged wait times on the On-Demand line!

If the current wait time is longer than 5 minutes, clients will have the option to receive a callback from an interviewer.

- » This option becomes available shortly after the client authenticates their information using a Social Security number, case number, or ACCESS HRA confirmation number and is in the queue waiting to speak with an agent.
- » The duration to receive a callback will vary for everyone, but clients are guaranteed a callback.

NOTE

Callbacks can take place after regular operating hours and on weekends, and callers who opted to receive a callback should be alert of incoming calls from unknown phone numbers.

If a client has designated an authorized representative, the representative can call On-Demand on the client's behalf to complete the phone interview as long as they've been authorized to act as their representative for this particular purpose. Cash Assistance clients must have a documented reason for being unable to complete the interview on their own.

An HRA interviewer will complete a reasonable number of interviews (3 to 4) with a single representative for different households, depending on the time of day, availability, and complexity of cases.

Authorized representatives should be prepared with client identifying information and be able to confirm and clarify the data provided on the application or recertification.

NOTE

All representatives must be authorized in writing by the applicant/recipient or other responsible adult household member.

It is recommended, but not required, that applicants/recipients use the [Authorized Representative Form](#) when designating an authorized representative to apply for or access their SNAP benefits. A written request is also acceptable for both programs.



What if a client's interview deadline is coming up soon?

It is recommended that clients call for their interviews as early in the process as possible and we encourage the use of the callback feature to avoid prolonged wait times, as needed. Waiting until the end of the authorization or application period to conduct the interview may result in their decision being issued beyond the regular timeframes.

Can the client receive a callback to a different number than the one they called from?

Yes. When clients choose to receive a callback, they will be registered for a callback with the phone number they called from but will have the option to enter an alternative phone number to receive a callback.

How many callback attempts will the client receive?

Interviewers will attempt to contact the client once. If the client misses the call, they must call the On-Demand line again to reenter the queue. The interviewer will leave a voice message with this information if that is an option. The call back by the interviewer is done through the on-demand system based on the caller's place in the queue.

Does the On-Demand callback system register requests made after hours?

No. Clients can call on-demand until 5:00 pm to request a callback and be added to the queue to receive a callback that evening or the next day. If they call after 5:00 pm, they will hear a message stating that our offices are closed and to call back during business hours.

Are there instances where a client won't have the option to request a callback?

The callback option will not be available in instances of reduced wait times or if the applicant is calling after hours.

What if the client receives a callback in a language different than what they prefer or previously selected?

If the available interviewer cannot communicate in the caller's preferred language, they can use Language Line to help accommodate the client's need.

Can clients visit a Benefit Access Center or a SNAP center for an in-center interview?

Yes. Clients have the right to visit a Benefit Access Center or SNAP Center and request assistance with an in-center phone interview or an in-person interview if there are reasons a phone interview will not work for the client. In-center phone interviews are not through the on-demand system.

Will the system notify clients if they don't have to complete an interview, or will they have to wait to speak to an agent to find out?

Yes. If the client has already completed their interview, has a closed case, or is otherwise ineligible for an interview, the system will play a relevant message to their scenario after authenticating their information.