



## WHAT IF MY CASEWORKER WON'T CALL ME BACK?

Sometimes it is difficult for DHS recipients or applicants to reach their caseworker. There are many times when it is very important to reach a caseworker to report changes in income or other information on time. At other times, you may need something from your caseworker. Here are some tips for you if you are having trouble reaching your caseworker:

1. **Leave a message** telling WHEN and WHERE you can be reached, and give several different times. Then be where you say you will be.
2. If you have tried a couple times, or if the message is urgent, call **the caseworker's supervisor**. If the supervisor will not call you back after several tries, call the supervisor's supervisor.
3. **Send the information or request in writing**, but keep a copy if possible. In the letter, tell the caseworker how many times you called and left messages, and the times you waited for him or her to call you back. If there is a deadline, you may need to take the letter to DHS in person, rather than mail it. Make a photocopy of the letter at your post office or library, and keep the copy. Date and sign the letter, and put your case number on it. In the letter, be direct, be specific, and be polite.
4. See if the local **legal services or legal aid office** is able to help you.
5. **Schedule a walk-in appointment**.
6. If there is a time deadline involved, request a **hearing in writing**. You can use the DHS form for this, or simply write a note saying, "I request a hearing" and tell what you want the hearing about (such as "denial of Food Stamps" or "delay in paying Child Day Care"). Put the date and your case number on the hearing request, and sign your name. Mail or bring it to DHS. You must make sure DHS receives your hearing request **within 90 days** after you received notice that DHS is denying, stopping, or reducing any benefit or service. If DHS is cutting or stopping benefits or services, you must request a hearing **within 10 days** to keep benefits at their current level while you wait for a hearing.
7. **Go to the DHS office and apply**, if you need benefits or services that you do not currently receive (for example, you receive Food Stamps and need Medicaid). Do not delay. In general, the sooner you apply, the sooner you will receive benefits.

8. If you need to find out if payments have been issued to your child day care center, landlord, or utility provider, **call the Payment Information Unit at DHS: (800) 444-5364**. You will need to provide your DHS case number.
9. If you keep having trouble with a caseworker, you should send **a letter to the supervisor** explaining all the times you have tried to call and the problems you have had. Remember that it is very important to be somewhere the caseworker can reach you at certain times, especially if you don't have a phone.
10. If the supervisor and the supervisor's supervisor are not helpful, or you see continuing problems in the local DHS office's service to clients, **contact the DHS Zone Office** that covers your county or district (a list is in the Resource section below).
11. If both the caseworker and the supervisors do not return your calls, or you believe the worker and supervisor have made a mistake in applying policy in your case, **call the DHS Citizens Inquiry Unit: (517) 373-0707**. Be ready to give them your DHS case number. Ask them to call you back if this is long distance for you. Remember: Do not delay asking for a hearing if you have a close deadline.
12. Remember that if you are helping someone, DHS caseworkers are not supposed to talk to anyone about someone else's case unless that person has **signed a form giving DHS permission to release information** about his or her case.

## RESOURCES:

- **Your Local DHS Office Supervisors and District Office Manager or County Director**
- **DHS Payment Information Unit: (800) 444-5364** (for vendor payment information)
- **DHS Citizen Inquiry Unit: (517) 373-0707** (for eligibility and policy questions)
- **DHS Zone Offices:**

**Zone 1** (the U.P. counties, Charlevoix, Emmet, Cheboygan, Alpena, Presque Isle)  
**(906) 786-4400**

**Zone 2** (Antrim, Otsego, Montmorency, Leelenau, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Crawford, Oscoda, Alcona, Iosco, Ogemaw, Roscommon, Missaukee, Wexford, Manistee, Mason, Lake, Clare, Osceola, Gladwin, Arenac)  
**(616) 922-8240**

**Zone 3** (Oceana, Newaygo, Mecosta, Montcalm, Ionia, Barry, Eaton, Calhoun, Branch, Hillsdale, St. Joseph, Cass, Berrien, Van Buren, Kalamazoo, Allegan, Ottawa. Kent, Muskegon)  
**(517) 373-3893**

**Zone 4** (Bay, Midland, Isabella, Gratiot, Clinton, Ingham, Jackson, Lenawee, Monroe, Washtenaw, Livingston, Shiawasee, Saginaw, Tuscola, Huron, Sanilac, Genesee, Lapeer, St. Clair, Macomb, Oakland, Livingston)  
**(517) 373-1350**

### Wayne County Zones

**7:** (313) 875-7225

**8:** (313) 937-8900

**9:** (313) 361-7260

**10:** (313) 396-0276 (Childrens Services and Adult Protective Services)