

PENALTY HOME VISIT STEP BY STEP GUIDE

This document compliments ATAP manual section 723-5 & the WSPM section 1017.

The purpose of a penalty home visit is to ensure that everything possible has been done to re-engage the family in efforts toward self-sufficiency. Before progressing to a 75% or 100% penalty the agency needs to determine if the reduction will have an adverse impact on the health & safety of the children.

The home visit is made any time after the initial penalty is imposed and before a further reduction is made. If the non-cooperation continues for more than 4 months, TA may be reduced by 75% of the maximum need standard for the family size. If the non-cooperation continues for more than for 8 months, the TA may be penalized 100% and the case closed.

In some cases, the family may not agree to or allow the home visit. They may refuse entry to the home, not respond to contacts to arrange a home visit, or not be at home at the pre-arranged time. In these situations, staff ensures that all attempts to arrange and to make the home visit are documented in the client notes and then proceed with the determination as to whether assistance should be reduced beyond 40% or 75%.

Case Manager - Due Diligence:

- Attempt to resolve the penalty via phone calls, letters, using office cell phone, having the supervisor call, doing an engagement home visit, etc.

Arranging the Home Visit:

1. Contact the client to try to arrange a home visit at a time agreeable to the family.
2. If the client cannot be reached, schedule a time and send EIS notice J011 or J201.
 - Inform the family when the home visit will be made and ask them to respond.
 - Explain the purpose of the home visit and the possibility of an increase to 75% or 100% if the penalty does not end.
3. Document each attempt to arrange the home visit in a Client Note (CLNO).

Prior to Leaving the Office:

1. MapQuest the directions to the clients address.
2. Research alternative resources for the client to include unemployment, child support, possible job leads, etc.
3. Research other household members and ages so you know what to expect when you arrive.
4. Research vehicles that may be in the driveway for identifying the home (many times houses do not have addresses on them).
5. Take a cell phone, blank Penalty Home Visit Field Notes, blank FSSP, budget, date and time for an appointment in the office, if needed, or any other documents that are attached to the penalty such as an employment application, etc.
6. Leave all personal belongings at the office or in the car.

7. Ensure your supervisor knows when you leave, where you are going, the client's name, and if applicable, a copy of the directions to the client's home.

Conducting the Home Visit:

1. Use the penalty home visit field notes as a guide.
2. Document household members present, living conditions, and behaviors. Remember to also list the household strengths.
3. Determine if the recipient understands why their cash assistance is reduced and what they have to do to end the reduction.
4. Ensure the family understands that they are using months of assistance that count towards the 60-month time limit at a reduced rate.
5. Explore the reasons the family gives for not complying with the activity for which they are penalized and what additional supports or services they think they need in order to comply.
6. Determine if there is good cause or an exemption for the client.
7. Make referrals for challenges so that the client can complete work activities if they are willing.
8. Revise the family self-sufficiency plan if appropriate.
9. Alternate activities may be assigned if circumstances have changed and good cause is not established.
10. Establish clear timeframes for activities to be completed so the client has goal dates to get the penalty ended.
11. Discuss the family's basic living expenses and how the client is covering the expenses.
12. Explain that the family's assistance may be reduced further if non-compliance continues.
13. Ask what the family how they would meet their needs if the penalty is progressed.

Deciding to Progress the Penalty:

1. Explain whether the family's income, resources, supports from other household members, family or friends, and available community services will provide for the family's basic living expenses or not.
 - a. **Example of not progressing:** There are no other resources to cover rent, the family may get evicted if the rent is not paid and this could affect the health and safety of the children
2. If basic living expenses are covered, explain in the CLNO how the increased penalty amount does NOT threaten the children's health or safety.
 - a. **Example of progression:** The client has unemployment available to pay the living expenses and further reduction would not affect health and safety of the children. Or, they live with their parents and they will not evict them even if they don't pay rent.