

**DATE ISSUED:** July 10, 2014

**FROM:** Kate Probert Fagundes  
DWP/MFIP Employment Services Division Mgr

**TO:** Ramsey County DWP/MFIP-ES Staff

**SUBJECT:** Home Visits and Meetings with families (participants) in the community

**PURPOSE:** To ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of the expectations and safety considerations when conducting home visits and off-site meetings

**BACKGROUND:** Families and participants may have good reasons that limit their ability to travel to their agency sites. Families and participants may find it more likely to attend an off-site visit in a place that is convenient for them. Off-site locations may include in-home visits. The same process should apply to employed participants and student participants who are unable to meet with a counselor in the office due to work or school schedule. Off-site locations and home visits provide a counselor more information about a participant and a better understanding of their families' situation.

**GENERAL  
GUIDELINES:**

- Review own internal agency home visit/personal safety policy prior to home visits or off-site meetings
- Do not transport a participant or their family members. Exception: participants (not family members) can be transported under extenuating circumstances; notify your supervisor in advance if this must take place. Check with your agency policy to ensure that you are able provide transportation
- Have a cell phone while on a home visit or off-site meeting
- Dress professionally and appropriately including comfortable shoes
- Always be aware of the surrounding areas and do not enter a vacant or seemingly unsafe building
- Sit in a chair instead of a couch as it is easier to get up from the chair
- Take a position closest to a door whenever possible
- Avoid having personal belongings along during visits or if it is necessary, lock them in the trunk of the car
- Do not accept any gifts from a participant
- You may choose to accept refreshments
- Do not ask to use a participant's bathroom

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Counselor determines whether a home visit or an off-site meeting is necessary to provide customer service for families and to develop an employment plan.
2. Counselor consults with supervisor if she/he is unable to make a determination regarding a home visit or an off-site meeting.
3. When a counselor needs to meet with new participants he/she is unfamiliar with, an off-site meeting is preferred instead of a home visit.
4. If the counselor is aware that a participant works with another service provider (child protection, mental health, home therapist), the counselor coordinates an initial home visit with the other provider if possible.
5. When necessary, the counselor schedules an interpreter to attend a home visit or off-site visit with the counselor.
6. Counselor reviews what is needed to accomplish at meeting, and if possible call/text participant to confirm the visit prior to showing up to their home.
7. Counselor notifies receptionist and supervisor or another staff member of their home visits/off-site meeting. Send an email and provide the following information:
  - Participant name
  - case number
  - location of the visit
  - date and time of the visit
  - expected return time
8. When possible, conduct home visits during mid mornings and avoid home visits during later afternoons or evenings except when a late afternoon or evening home visit is required.
9. Counselors are encouraged to use their experience; if they are uncomfortable about a home visit/off-site meeting, cancel and reschedule as appropriate.

**EFFECTIVE****DATE:** July 10, 2014**WFS CONTACT:** Your Agency Planner