



Meet & Confer Update

008

Civil Rights Case Comment Template

On May 11, 2022, UPE and DHA met and conferred over the Department's plan to implement a case comment template for certain state-mandated civil rights questions.

In addition, the Department appears to be preparing to require workers to begin asking these questions in a number of circumstances where they have never before been required. UPE sees the new mandated template as yet another step our already overburdened workers must complete. A step that will add more time to every phone call, interview, and face-to-face interaction without improving, in any way, the administration of benefits.

During all office and phone interactions, workers must ask and case comment a client's preferred language and whether a special skills worker or language line service was used. Another set of questions and case comments must be asked and added if the interaction is during intake or recertification. The Department is planning to require workers to use the case comment template for all these interactions. UPE questioned just how often the questions need to be asked and commented on. The Department stated that they must be asked any time a client's case is discussed. The Department could not clearly answer what interactions fell into this category. Do HSA's need to ask these questions when helping clients at a lobby kiosk? Do 005 workers have to ask these questions when providing an EBT card? The Department was not sure. UPE requested copies of the state audit leading to these changes, all state laws requiring the questions be asked, and copies of all training materials.

The parties will be meeting again so UPE can continue to ask questions and offer proposals to mitigate the negative impact on our workers.