

Providing Phone Assistance with MI Bridges

We have extended the Phone Assistance guidance to assist community partners with working remotely when possible. MDHHS understands that many MI Bridges Navigation Partners will continue to work remotely for a period of time, have moved away from providing in-person assistance with MI Bridges, and are providing assistance to clients over the phone to comply with the guidance on remote work. In an effort to better support our MI Bridges Community Partners who still are providing services via the phone, we have developed the below guidance on how to provide this assistance with MI Bridges account creation and online applications for benefits. **The COVID Public Health Emergency is scheduled to end May 11, 2023. We have received a final phone assistance extension through June 30, 2023.** MDHHS will provide updates as processes/policies are changed.

Helping clients over the phone who have internet and computer/mobile device but have low tech skills

1. Community partner staff may create a MI Bridges account in the client's name over the phone and assist the client with the Identity Proofing step (if they'd like)
2. Once the account is created, community partner staff must provide the client with the account information they created (username and password)
3. Client logs in to the account and fills out an application for benefits while the staff provides guidance/walkthrough over the phone
4. Ultimately, the client is the one who submits the application in MI Bridges

Helping clients over the phone who have no internet and/or computer/mobile device access

Scenario 1: Receive written consent first (should be done whenever possible):

1. Obtain written consent from the client to provide over the phone assistance for submitting an application for benefits.
2. Maintain record of written consent and provide to MDHHS when requested.
3. Complete account creation, if applicable. Provide username and password to client.
4. Assist with the application. At the end of the application, before submission, indicate in the comment box the following information:
 - a. The application is being submitted by a navigator over the phone
 - b. The name of the navigator, organization, and contact information
 - c. That written consent was obtained and the date it was obtained

Scenario 2: If written consent cannot be obtained first, receive verbal consent:

1. Obtain verbal consent over the phone and indicate written consent will need to be provided after assistance.
2. Maintain internal record of verbal consent including date and time, to be provided to MDHHS when requested.
3. Complete account creation, if applicable. Provide username and password to client.
4. Assist with the application. At the end of the application, before submission, indicate in the comment box the following information:
 - a. The application is being submitted by a navigator over the phone
 - b. The name of the navigator, organization, and contact information
 - c. That verbal consent was obtained and the date and time it was obtained
Language to use is as follows: I, _____, a MI Bridges Navigator with _____ received permission of _____ granted by telephone on _____(date) at _____ (time). I will follow up with a letter indicating what was done and have the client send back authorization to submit the application.
 - d. That written consent has been requested
5. Follow up with the client to receive written consent.
6. Maintain record of written consent to provide to MDHHS when requested.

Scenario 3: Other forms of over the phone assistance for Medicaid and Food Assistance:

1. Medicaid: Direct the client to apply for Medicaid by phone at 1-855-276-4627. If they already have Medicaid and have general questions about their benefits, they should call the Beneficiary Help Line at 1-800-642-3195.
2. Food Assistance Program (FAP): Direct the client to call the Food Bank Council of Michigan, a SNAP Outreach partner, to apply by phone at 1-888-544-8773.