

Adam Crum
Commissioner

dhss.alaska.gov



**Department of Health
and Social Services**

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media contact: Matthew Wichorek, DHSS, 907-350-0176, matthew.wichorek@alaska.gov
Public inquiries: DPA Virtual Call Center 800-478-7778

New Virtual Call Center reduces processing time for Alaskans seeking public assistance

April 22, 2021 ANCHORAGE – The Department of Health and Social Services’ Division of Public Assistance (DPA) launched a new Virtual Call Center (VCC) on April 5, 2021. The VCC, which is confidential and secure, streamlines the application and eligibility process and makes access easier for Alaskans statewide who need assistance with Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for needy families, Heating Assistance, Senior Benefits, General Relief Assistance and other assistance programs.

In the short period the VCC has been operating, it is already transforming the client experience – during the VCC’s first week of operation, it received over 3,500 calls. The VCC uses a statewide workflow, instead of calls being directed to regional offices, and allows clients to choose a callback option holding their place in the queue without the need to wait on the phone. This reduces processing time for applications and allows DPA to redirect staffing based on call volume. Clients have more opportunities to provide information digitally and quickly resolve discrepancies and requests for more documentation without the need to schedule a physical visit to the office, resulting in a quicker turnaround time on applications.

The VCC takes calls weekdays between 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 1-800-478-7778, offering applicant interviews from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The VCC supports all requests except those for the Long-Term Care program which will be redirected to the individual’s caseworker for further assistance.

“There is no longer a need to wait in a crowded lobby or even wait on the phone; the VCC offers the opportunity for a callback without losing their place in queue. I’m excited that DPA is now able to offer this tool which will help us to achieve the best possible outcome for each Alaskan who is in need of assistance.” said DPA Director Shawnda O’Brien.

For more information about DPA and the services it offers visit dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/.

###