Third Party Review – Interview Observation Manual

Introduction

To enhance the efficiency and accuracy of Local Office Eligibility Specialists (ESs), Knowledge Services facilitates a continuous quality improvement initiative consisting of Third-Party Reviews (TPRs) and Interview Observations (IOs). These processes are conducted by the Knowledge Services Quality Assurance (QA) Team.

The goal of these reviews is to provide meaningful, constructive feedback that supports you in your daily work. They are not intended to be punitive, but to strengthen learning, accuracy, and consistency across all local offices. By looking at real cases, we can recognize what you are doing well and share clear, practical guidance on where there is room for improvement. These reviews also help reinforce the importance of accuracy in case processing, ensuring benefits are calculated and issued correctly the first time to protect both program integrity and the families we serve. Ultimately, our aim is to partner with you to celebrate strong performance, identify opportunities for growth, and provide the tools and insight needed to feel confident and supported in your role.

This guide will give you an overview of who the QA team is, how TPRs are administered, and what to expect throughout the process.

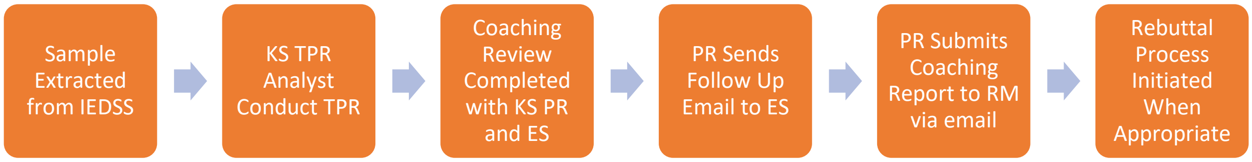
Quality Assurance Team

- Quality Assurance (QA) Manager – Shawnea Bell
- TPR Analyst – Team member who will be conducting the TPRs for the eligible Local Office ES Staff. Additionally, designated TPR Analysts will complete Interview Observations if requested by the RM.
- Peer Reviewer (PR) – Team member who will take the TPRs completed by the TPR Analyst and review with the respective Local Office ES Staff.
- TPR Team Leads – Works with TPR Analysts and Peer Reviewers to ensure TPRs are scored consistently and in accordance with DFR policy. The TPR Team Leads also serve as second party reviewers during the rebuttal process to ensure ESs receive a fair and unbiased re-evaluation of the work previously reviewed.

Who is eligible to receive TPRs?

Each month, the QA Manager submits to the DFR Regional Manager a roster of all ESs within the region who are eligible for TPRs. An ES at least 60 days post new hire training is eligible for TPRs. Any updates or changes to the roster will be communicated by the DFR Regional Manager to Knowledge Services. Once the roster is finalized, the QA Manager will share the approved list with the TPR Analysts. The analysts will then identify reviewable cases in alignment with the state-approved methodology. All reviews will be completed using the approved TPR Checklist.

Third Party Review Process



Third Party Review - Completion

Using the DFR-approved checklists, the TPR Analyst will complete a minimum of two TPRs per month for each eligible ES listed on the Regional Manager's approved roster.

Each TPR checklist focuses on five key elements, which together provide a comprehensive view of case quality and accuracy:

1. Non-Financial
2. Financial – Income
3. Financial – Resources
4. Financial – Expenses
5. Procedural

For each randomly selected case, the TPR Analyst will review one program and one case action. Every sub-element within these five areas will be evaluated based on current DFR policy and other approved DFR reference materials. If any sub-element is determined to need corrections, the Analyst will provide a clear, policy-supported explanation. This feedback is intended to promote understanding and growth by linking directly to the relevant policy or work instruction.

TPR Coaching

Peer Reviewers (PRs) play a significant role in supporting the professional growth ESs. Their primary responsibility is to deliver constructive coaching and communicate the results of TPRs in a timely and meaningful way.

To ensure timely feedback and continuous improvement, PRs are expected to complete each TPR coaching promptly. The goal is to have any identified errors corrected within two (2) business days of the completed TPR Checklist, and no later than five (5) business days.

When it is time for coaching, the PR will reach out to the ES via email to schedule a session. During the scheduled call, the PR and ES will review all items scored on the TPR Checklist. For any items determined to need corrections, the PR will clearly explain the necessary corrections, reference the applicable policy, and provide guidance on how to correct the issue. The ES will have the opportunity to make updates to the case during the session or after the call, whichever is preferred.

Following the coaching session, the PR will send a follow-up email summarizing the discussion, including all narratives, relevant policy citations, and any supporting work instructions. The PR will then forward the completed TPR to their DFR Manager for review.

Each TPR Checklist also includes space for the ES to share comments or reflections about the review and coaching session. These insights help DFR Managers identify areas for targeted training, additional coaching, and continued professional development.

Rebuttals

At Knowledge Services, we value accuracy, transparency, and open communication in every quality review. If an ES believes a citation on their TPR was made in error, they have the opportunity to submit a rebuttal for re-evaluation.

Before submitting a rebuttal, the ES should first review the TPR with their ES Working Lead, SEM, or Local Office Manager to ensure alignment and confirm the request for review. Once approval is granted, the ES should email DFRQA@knowledgeservices.com, CC their SEM, and include the following details:

- ES Name
- Case Number
- Date of Review
- Line Item in Question
- Correct Citation or DFR Expectation

Rebuttals should be submitted within 48 hours of the TPR coaching session.

After the rebuttal is received, it will be reviewed by a TPR Team Lead, who will carefully evaluate:

- The case and specific line item being challenged
- Policy cited by both the ES and the TPR Analyst
- Supporting documentation and relevant DFR expectations

Following this review, the TPR Team Lead will make one of two determinations:

- Uphold the original TPR scoring, providing a clear explanation and policy reference; or,
- Overturn the scoring, in which case an updated TPR Checklist will be sent to the DFR Manager.

A written response will be provided to the ES within one business day of the review decision.

Our goal is to ensure each TPR is fair, consistent, and rooted in policy. In turn, supporting both accuracy and professional growth for all ES staff.

Interview Observations
Interview Observations are an important part of our ongoing commitment to quality and consistency in client interactions. These observations are conducted by TPR Analysts at the request of DFR management to help ensure each interview is handled with professionalism, accuracy, and care.

Each Interview Observation checklist focuses on six key elements that together provide a well-rounded assessment of interview quality:

- Interview Preparation
- Non-Financial
- Financial – Income
- Financial – Resources
- Financial – Expenses
- Wrap-Up

When a DFR Manager requests an Interview Observation, it will be noted on the monthly roster. The QA Manager will then assign a TPR Analyst to complete the observation. Similar to the coaching process, the assigned TPR Analyst will contact the-ES to coordinate the Interview Observation based on the ES interview schedule. The TPR Analyst will be conferenced in as a silent observer, ensuring a smooth and unobtrusive experience for both the ES and the client.

During the interview, the TPR Analyst will complete an Interview Observation Checklist, marking each element as “Yes”, “No”, or “N/A” based on what is covered during the session. Additional comments may be included to provide context or clarification.

Once complete, the checklist will be electronically submitted to the DFR Manager for review. Please note that, unlike the TPR process, Interview Observations do not include a coaching session. The intent is to provide objective feedback that supports continued growth, quality assurance, and alignment with established standards.

Keeping DFR management informed
All completed TPRs and Interview Observations will be electronically communicated to DFR management daily. Additionally, by the 10th of the following month, DFR Regional Managers will receive a compilation of work completed by Knowledge Services in their region pertaining to TPRs and Interview Observations.

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Third Party Review Checklist

Non-Financial Elements:
Individual Information
Household Information
Non – Financial
Non – Custodial Parent
Case Notes
Non – Financial Other

Resource Elements:
Liquid Assets
Life Insurance
Real Property
Vehicles
Financial Resources Other

Expense Elements:
Shelter
Utilities
Medical
MAGI
Dependent Care
Payments to Dependents
Financial Expense Other

Procedural Elements:
Tasks closed
Redetermination module
SRED created
Electronic Case File
Correspondence

Income Elements:
Earned
Self – Employment
Unearned
MAGI
Income Deductions

Interview Observation Checklist

Interview Preparation:
Interview started timely
Correct case action used
Client authenticated
Correct application date used
Interview Preparation - other

Resource Elements:
Liquid Assets
Life Insurance
Real Property
Vehicles
Financial Resources Other

Income Elements:
Earned
Self – Employment
Unearned
MAGI
Income Deductions

Non-Financial Elements:
Individual Information
Household Information
Non – Financial
Non – Custodial Parent
Non – Financial Other

Expense Elements:
Shelter
Utilities
Medical
MAGI
Dependent Care
Payments to Dependents
Financial Expense Other

Wrap-up:
Interface reviewed
Correspondence - Reviewed with client
Correspondence - Proper verification requested
Case Notes
Scheduled appointment status updated
SRED Created
Electronic Case File