

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

SUBJECT: Client Eligibility - Minimal Department Standards

EFFECTIVE: This policy shall become effective July 1, 1988, and shall be implemented immediately.

PROMULGATED: July 1, 1988

SUPERSEDES: Policy Circular P5.01, promulgated June 22, 1984.

The purpose of this circular is to set forth the basic criteria to be used in determining and redetermining client eligibility. Contracting Departmental Components have developed additional eligibility and admission standards in order to ensure that services are delivered to those individuals most in need. These additional eligibility and admission standards may not be inconsistent with applicable federal and State laws or with the criteria contained in this circular. These standards are included in the Manual as follows:

- P5.10 - Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- P5.20 - Division of Mental Health and Hospitals
- P5.30 - Division of Developmental Disabilities
- P5.45 - Division of Youth and Family Services
- P5.46 - Exception to Policy Circular P5.45, Client Eligibility, Division of Youth and Family Services

The standards outlined below and the eligibility standards of the contracting Departmental Component must be met for the applicant/recipient to receive/continue to receive service.

I. SCOPE

This policy circular applies to all social service Contracts regardless of the contracting Departmental Component. This circular does not apply to controlled research projects where client participation is determined by the research specifications rather than by these principles.

II. POLICY

A. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY PRINCIPLES

1. The Department is responsible for ensuring that services are delivered to those most in need; therefore, target populations have been established.

Priority for all Department services are listed below. The priorities are not in any significant order.

- a. Persons at risk of abuse, neglect, or abandonment;
- b. Victims of abuse, neglect, or abandonment;
- c. Persons experiencing emotional disorders;
- d. Persons at risk of institutionalization;
- e. Persons inappropriately institutionalized;
- f. Persons physically handicapped, visually or hearing impaired;
- g. Persons developmentally disabled;
- h. Underserved minority populations; and
- i. Low income persons.

2. Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals Applying for Services

At the time of application for service, applicants shall be informed of eligibility requirements and of their rights and responsibilities under the social service program. These rights and responsibilities are outlined below.

a. Citizenship and Residency

Any individual who resides in New Jersey may qualify to receive service regardless of citizenship or duration of residency.

b. Nondiscrimination

Applicants for or recipients of service shall not be discriminated against due to race, color, creed, religion, ethnic background, national origin, marital status, handicap, age, or sex, and may be subject only to conditions and limitations applicable alike to all persons.

c. Right to Administrative Hearing/Administrative Review

Applicants for or recipients of service or individuals acting on their behalf may appeal the denial, reduction, termination of service, the failure to act upon a request for service with reasonable promptness, or the level of quality of service. The individual shall be informed of the procedure for requesting an administrative hearing/administrative review at the time a

request is made for service or prior to a reduction or termination of service.

d. Confidential Nature of Client Information

The applicant for or recipient of service has a right to confidentiality regarding any information collected in determining or redetermining eligibility for service. If the documentation of eligibility requires contacting outside sources, (including employers) and the applicant or recipient wished to keep the nature of the service confidential, the applicant is entitled to request that such contacts be made by the Departmental Component administering the Contract.

e. Provision of Information

Applicants for or recipients of service or individuals acting on their behalf are obligated to provide or to obtain all information necessary to establish eligibility.

f. Reporting Changes

Applicants for or recipients of service or individuals acting on their behalf are obligated to report promptly any changes which may affect eligibility.

3. Application for Service

This section outlines minimum requirements that must be met in processing applications.

a. Timeliness

Individuals wishing to apply for service must be given the opportunity to do so without undue delay.

b. Decision/Notification

A decision must be made on each completed application and written notice given to the applicant within 30 Days from the date all necessary documents have been received.

c. Denial of Service

If a decision is made to deny service, the applicant must be notified in writing of the decision, the reason(s) why service is being denied and his/her right to and the procedure for requesting an administrative hearing/administrative review. (For exceptions to this requirement, see paragraph 7 below.)

4. Minimum Client Information Requirements

The Provider Agency will maintain written individual records, containing at least the following information for all applicants and recipients. This information will not be used as a basis for determining if service or what kind of service will be provided. It will be used for statistical purposes only.

- a. Name
- b. Address
- c. Social security number
- d. County of residence
- e. Age
- f. Race
- g. Date of eligibility determination or redetermination

5. Exceptions to Minimum Client Information Requirements

In the cases of two services - crisis intervention, and information and referral - exceptions to collecting the minimum information are allowable. This is due to either the emergency nature of the service (crisis intervention) or the duration of the service and the limited client contact (information and referral), which may make it impossible to obtain all the client information required. In these two services, an attempt should be made by the Provider Agency to obtain all client information as specified in paragraph 4 above. However, if all information cannot be obtained, the Provider Agency shall include as much information as possible. At minimum, a count of clients who receive services must be maintained. Exceptions to collecting minimal client information for other services is allowable only with prior written approval of the Department's Contract Policy and Management Unit.

6. Reduction or Termination

A recipient whose service is being reduced or terminated must be notified in writing at least 10 Days prior to such action by the Provider Agency. At this time the individual must be informed of his/her rights to an administrative hearing/administrative review.

7. Exception to Written Notice

In protective services cases, when the applicant/recipient's confidentiality and/or safety might be jeopardized, written notice need not be sent. Documentation of the circumstances which prohibit notifying the applicant/recipient in writing must be entered in the individual's case record. Documentation of how the applicant/recipient was notified, e.g., interview or telephone call, shall be noted in the case record.

Issued by:



Robert D. Pfunetti, Director
Office of Planning and Policy



Samuel F. Penza
Assistant Commissioner
Department of Human Services