

24.4 LOCAL OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE WORK PROGRAM ASPECT OF WV WORKS

In addition to the responsibilities contained in other chapters of this Manual, the Worker has responsibilities related to the work program aspect of WV WORKS.

The Worker must assist the client in all reasonable ways to achieve self-sufficiency. To accomplish this, the Worker must assess the client's knowledge and skills, work with the client and make informed recommendations about courses of action appropriate for each individual to develop a plan that is expected to lead to self-sufficiency. In addition, he must enter into an agreement with the client concerning his involvement in the process of becoming self-sufficient, monitor the client's progress to determine changing needs and the need for support service payments and take appropriate follow-up action based on the client's actions.

The eligibility requirement of the Personal Responsibility Contract and **Self-Sufficiency Plan**, is detailed in Chapter 1. Other requirements, particularly those dealing with the client's continuing eligibility, are found throughout this Manual. Chapter 13 contains other information about the eligibility aspect of the work requirements. The following sections in this Chapter are devoted to work activities and follow-up actions and contain information necessary for the Worker to assist the client in becoming self-sufficient and in developing opportunities for him.

A. CASE MANAGEMENT

Work Programs (WP) in eRAPIDS assists the Worker in managing the work program aspect of WV WORKS.

To meet the goals of the WV WORKS Program, a Worker performs the following activities for WV WORKS families:

- Determines initial and ongoing case and individual eligibility. When the WV WORKS family also receives SNAP and/or Medicaid, eligibility for these Programs is also determined and maintained by the same Worker
- Negotiates the **SSP** with the client to determine the best means to achieve self-sufficiency and accept personal responsibility. The initial **SSP**, may be manually completed by the Worker **or in eRAPIDS**. **When the initial SSP is completed on a paper form, eRAPIDS must be updated as soon as possible. Completion of the initial SSP is required within 10 days of the initial contact when the client expresses an interest in applying for WV WORKS.** The Worker may complete WP information after that time, but must not require the client to visit the office again to be present during the WP enrollment process.

When the Worker determines that the client has a disability and wishes to participate in the WV WORKS program activities, the PRC must be negotiated in a way that is appropriate for that individual and his needs to help him move toward self-sufficiency. In these cases, PRCs must be developed to address not only tasks that lead to employment but also considers the disabled individual's need for health care. Referrals should be made for all services and benefits for which the AG may be eligible, including assessment testing, even if those services are available only through other agencies. These referrals are made on the DFA-WVW-ADA-1 and the outcomes of these referrals are tracked on the DFA-WVW-ADA-1A.

Changes to the initial **SSP** are made using WP screens in eRAPIDS. Such changes are attached to the initial **SSP**.

- Establishes for the client only reasonable and appropriate requirements related to the client's capability to perform the tasks on a regular basis, including physical capacity, psychological fitness, maturity, skills, experience, family responsibilities and place of residence. In addition, reasonable and appropriate requirements take into account the client's proficiency and child care and other support services needs.

NOTE: WV WORKS participants who have a documented disability must be placed in the AD component in addition to other component codes.

- Monitors compliance with the **SSP**
- Provides continuous assessment of the client's needs and goals and negotiates adjustments to the **SSP** as necessary
- Determines which clients are temporarily exempt from meeting the work requirement and assists the client in becoming able to participate
- Determines good cause for failure to comply with the **PRC and SSP**
- Applies sanctions as appropriate
- Develops employment and other work activity opportunities for the client within the community
- At the discretion of the CSM, WV WORKS staff may continue to carry the Medicaid and/or SNAP portion of the case once WV WORKS benefits are stopped, to allow for continuity and follow-up on the client's progress.
- Makes referrals to other community services

- Provides payment for support services, as appropriate
- Identifies potential resources and makes appropriate referrals to secure them
- Conducts a home visit or a work/activity-site visit a minimum of once each 12 months for cases requiring a **PRC and SSP**.

This case management process provides for substantial flexibility in administration of the work component of WV WORKS, but the mandates must be met for each Work-Eligible Individual to meet a work requirement and for the State to meet and maintain an established participation rate. The Worker has the discretion to tailor the work requirements to the needs and goals of each family. Therefore, there are no mandatory procedures or processes that must be applied to each family. Instead, the Worker's reasonable and appropriate guidance and discretion are used to assist the client in accepting personal responsibility and achieving self-sufficiency.

Self-sufficiency is defined as being able to provide for the family's basic needs without relying on WV WORKS monthly cash assistance. It is recognized that some families will not be able to become completely self-sufficient. For these families the goal is to reduce the reliance on cash assistance as much as possible and to find additional resources before the family reaches the 60-month lifetime limit.

B. OTHER WORK ACTIVITIES

The Other Work Activities (OW) component is to be used to track time spent on tasks leading to self-sufficiency. Individuals placed in this component may still be considered in the federal participation rate calculation. The OW component will document the extent in which individuals are involved in other work-related activities that do not count toward the federal participation rates, but lead to their self-sufficiency.

Allowable activities include all of the following, but may include other documented **Self-Sufficiency Plan (SSP)** activities, agreed upon by the Customer and the Case Manager:

- Appointments with local resources that may be assisting with barrier removal activities;
- Arranging for child care;
- Arranging for housing;
- Arranging for transportation or working with Good News Mountaineer Garage;
- Child Support meetings or hearings;
- Development of the **Self-Sufficiency Plan**
- Emotional Health Inventory;

WV WORKS Activities/Requirements

- Learning Needs Screening;
- Legal Aid appointments;
- Orientation;
- Self-Sufficiency Evaluations with Case Manager;
- TABE testing;
- Time spent with Case Manager during home visit;
- Work Keys testing;
- Working with CPS (MDT meetings);
- Working with Local Agencies such as KVC; and
- WVU CED Assessment Testing

Assignment of any of these activities must be recorded in eRAPIDS comments. All activities must be reviewed monthly. The Case Manager must update the case comments with the information on the status of the participant. Hours of participation **may** be documented using a Participation Time Sheet, DFA-TS-12 **or by the Workers notes**. The maximum amount of time a participant may be placed in the OW component is 60 days. Placement beyond the 60 day time limit will require DFA approval. Transportation will be the only allowable support payment associated with this component.

C. ASSESSMENT

The assessment of the Work-Eligible Individual's goals, skills, needs and challenges naturally centers on the participant. However, any assessment completed must be a family assessment since the participant is part of the family and is often considered head of the family. In addition, making life better for the family can be a motivational factor in the case management process. Assessment begins at application and does not end until case management stops.

If the applicant indicates he is disabled or has a disability as outlined in Section 1.25, the Worker must use the DFA-WVW-ADA-1 to make any appropriate referrals to agencies that may be able to provide appropriate services to the participant. The DFA-WVW-ADA-1A is completed to follow-up on the referral and records the outcomes and services received. The DFA-WVW-ADA-1A is placed in the client file.

A Family Assessment means evaluation of work skills, prior work experience, employability, education and challenges to becoming self-sufficient, such as, but not limited to, mental and physical health issues, lack of transportation and child care.

An in-depth assessment is necessary to discover the client's challenges to meeting his goals and to develop plans to overcome them.

The assessment is limited to producing information useful to both the client and the Worker in evaluating the client's challenges and in meeting his goals.

Rather than being a fixed process with mandated procedures, assessment is an ongoing activity. As the client's circumstances change, his goals and/or challenges may change, resulting in changes in the actions or activities necessary for him to succeed.

The assessment process necessarily includes a series of interviews/conversations with the client. It may also include educational and/or aptitude/interest testing and interpretation of this information; identification of the client's skills, abilities and interests; use of community resources; and research into possible employment opportunities.

The following eRAPIDS screens record the appropriate assessment results. Entries on these screens are mandatory.

- Education and Testing Assessment
- Employment History
- Self-Sufficiency Goals
- Job Readiness Assessment

The WV WORKS Self-Sufficiency Appraisal Form, OFA-WVW-3A, is essential to the assessment process and its use is mandatory for all Work-Eligible Individuals. The purpose of the form is to gather pertinent information about the client: work experience, what type of work the client desires, educational background, family information and family support system, individual and family health, client's finances, life situations, and goals. This information, along with testing and other assessment information, is used to negotiate the client's Self-Sufficiency Plan (**SSP**). It is expected that the **SSP** will be a step-by-step plan to lead the client toward his goal of self-sufficiency.

In order to gain as much information as possible prior to negotiation of the first full SSP, a home visit is required within 45 days of the date of application. At a minimum, the Worker must review the completed appraisal form with the client during the home visit. The first full SSP and the appraisal form must also be completed within 45 days of the date of application, so the home visit must not be delayed until the last day.

The form is designed for either the client or Worker to complete and may be completed in the office or at the client's home. Allowing the client to take it home to complete gives him the opportunity to think about his strengths, what he wants to change about his life and what he would like to obtain for himself and his family. If the Worker asks the client to complete the form at home and return it prior to the home visit, there is no penalty for failure to return the self-completed form. Instead, the Worker will take another form to the home visit and complete it at that time.

If desired, the Worker may complete the first full SSP in the client's home during the home visit, after reviewing the appraisal form and all other assessment information, **eRAPIDS must be updated with this information as soon as possible after this.**

Additional helpful information in the workbook “Making Case Management Work” may be used by the Worker and is available in each District office.

The product of the ongoing assessment process is a series of SSP’s that reflect the client’s changing circumstances and tasks that move him toward self-sufficiency. Failure, without good cause, to keep appointments to initiate or continue the assessment process indicates a failure/refusal to cooperate or participate. When the first home visit is scheduled in writing, a second appointment need not be made before imposing a sanction, unless the applicant has good cause or contacts the Worker to reschedule the appointment. When the first home visit is unscheduled, a sanction may not be imposed for failure to be available. Instead, the Worker must schedule a second appointment in writing. Failure, without good cause, to keep the second appointment or reschedule it results in imposition of a sanction.

The Worker may provide written notice of the appointment by including it on the initial **SSP** or by using any approved appointment forms. The written notice may be given to him during the interview or may be mailed. If no record of the issuance of the notice will be shown in RAPIDS or on a signed **SSP**, the Worker must record that such a notice was issued and include the date/time of the appointment. When a letter is mailed scheduling the appointment the Worker must allow no less than 7 calendar days. This period begins the day following the date the letter is requested in RAPIDS or when a manual letter is sent.

D. ASSESSMENT TESTING

In assessing the client's current situation and negotiating the **SSP**, the Worker must explore family situations, education, work history, skills, aptitudes, attitude toward work, employment potential, possible social services or other support systems including physical, mental and emotional fitness, and the need for support service payments. Form OFA-WVW-3A may be used as an interviewing guide, but the areas explored are not limited to those on the form. Individual circumstances may require varying degrees of exploration. The Worker may include educational assessment testing. Assessment testing consists of the Learning Needs Screening, Mental Health Screening, Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), and Work Keys. All Work-Eligible Individuals must be scheduled for assessment testing unless one of the exceptions exists under 2,a.

Assessment testing is administered by the Department of Education Assessment Specialists. Copies of assessment testing results will be forwarded to the Worker by the Assessment Specialist. However, under certain circumstances the assessment testing (TABE) may be administered by an ABE teacher, or other appropriate agency. An example of this would be expediting placement of a client in an activity such as an ABE class, training, or employment. In this situation the Worker must request a copy of the assessment testing results. Test results must be filed in the client’s record.

Worker must schedule clients for the appropriate assessment testing whenever possible. Workers making referrals to Workforce WV / BEP must forward copies of clients' TABE scores and Work Keys (if completed.)

The release of information provided by the WV Department of Education Assessment Specialists at the time of the assessment testing (and filed in the WV WORKS record) authorizes the release of this information to the Workforce WV Centers. Release of assessment testing results to other agencies when appropriate requires completion of the OFS-Release-1.

8. Assessment Testing Participation/Support Service Payments

Assessment testing (Learning Needs Screening, Mental Health Screening – EHI, TABE, and Work Keys) administered by the Assessment Specialist in the local office or other designated testing location counts as Other Work Activity hours; transportation support service payments may be made for assessment testing attendance/completion.

9. Substance Abuse

If the client indicates substance abuse problems, referral for evaluation and counseling should be made prior to scheduling assessment testing. Any determination of substance abuse problems is based on statements made by the client, not on the feelings or perceptions of the Worker.

E. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRC **and** SELF-SUFFICIENCY PLAN

NOTE: See Chapter 1 for information about the PRC as an eligibility requirement and about completion of an initial SSP and the first full SSP.

eRAPIDS screen Self-Sufficiency Plan allows for the recording and printing the **SSP**.

The PRC contains information and requirements applicable to all Work-Eligible Individuals who are required to sign it. **The** Self-Sufficiency Plan which is the result of negotiations between the client and the Worker. The Self-Sufficiency Plan (SSP) is subject to renegotiation throughout the household's receipt of cash assistance. Initial and ongoing assessment produces information that allows the Worker to provide reasonable guidance to the client to attain his goals and forms the basis of the Plan.

The promotion of self-sufficiency is accomplished primarily through the use of the SSP. The SSP is completed during a negotiation between the Worker and the adult(s) and/or emancipated minor(s) in each AG or non-recipient Work-Eligible Individual. During the negotiation, the client must be encouraged to provide information about his goals for becoming self-sufficient and the means by which his goals may be achieved. If the client does not have defined self-sufficiency goals, the Worker must encourage him to consider such goals in consultation with his family before the **SSP** is updated. The Worker must explore all of the desires and work goals presented by the client to determine which are possible, which can be accomplished with the resources available to the client and to the Department, which can be accomplished in an appropriate time and, ultimately, which is most likely to result in self-sufficiency for the client. In addition, the Worker must explore other possibilities not presented by the client and offer these to the client as alternatives. At all times, the Worker is expected to balance the client's wishes with his need to achieve self-sufficiency and the Department's goal of meeting federally-established participation rates.

All requirements listed on the SSP must be reasonable and appropriate for the individual client.

The SSP must be specific enough to provide direction for the client and must reflect careful analysis of the client's needs and potential. It must also be flexible enough to change as opportunities and situations warrant. Changes in occupational goals or activities to meet the client's work requirement require revisions to the SSP. Each time the SSP is revised on a paper form, the client and the Worker must initial and date the changes. When a new SSP is completed, both must sign and date the form. **eRAPIDS must be updated as soon as possible after this.**

The client must be provided with a copy of the SSP each time a new one is completed or a revision is made to an existing one.

The SSP outlines the objectives and the steps needed to achieve self-sufficiency, as well as a time frame for the completion of program requirements. Specific duties are required.

It may be possible for the client to achieve self-sufficiency without a document defining specific activities. However, clarifying goals and actions to reach the goals helps the client and Worker to focus on the most appropriate actions. This makes their efforts more productive. Although the primary concern should be the development of a meaningful SSP, the form itself is helpful to the client in understanding the expectations. Committing the plan to writing also helps the Worker be more specific about his responsibilities. By signing the **PRC and SSP**, each party agrees to fulfill his respective responsibilities.

When the vendor notifies the Worker of approval or denial for participation in the program, the Worker must record the appropriate information in eRAPIDS. If the vendor notifies the Worker that the client is not a suitable candidate for the program, the vendor must provide a written explanation.

3. Vendor Responsibilities

Upon receipt of the DFA-CARS-1, the vendor completes an evaluation process with the client, and if the client is determined eligible, the vendor completes the transfer of a roadworthy vehicle to the client within 10 days of the receipt of a completed written referral. The vehicle will be under a mandatory 30-day warranty period as required under State law.

K. PERIODIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY EVALUATIONS 12/24/36/48 MONTHS

These self-sufficiency evaluations are required to be conducted in either one of two ways:

- Face-to-face meeting with the client; or
- A Supervisor/Worker meeting to review the case.

NOTE: Failure, without good cause, of the client to attend or otherwise cooperate in the scheduled evaluations results in application of a sanction only when a face-to-face meeting is scheduled. It is suggested that the evaluations be listed specifically on the **SSP** to avoid questions about notification of the requirement. However, the general statement on the **SSP** form about keeping all appointments will usually serve for application of a sanction.

After a client has received WV WORKS for 12 months, a self-sufficiency evaluation must be scheduled. If a face-to-face meeting is chosen, the evaluation must include all Work-Eligible adults or emancipated minors in the household to evaluate the process of the self-sufficiency plan and to develop a new plan as needed.

The meeting must occur during the 12th or 13th month of receipt of WV WORKS benefits. The purpose of this meeting is to complete a mandatory case staffing which is to include the client, other parent in the household (even if the other parent is excluded from the AG), the Worker, the Supervisor, other DHHR staff as needed, any community resource person(s) directly working with the client, and a representative of the client's choosing.

At this meeting, any additional barriers to self-sufficiency should be identified and solutions to overcome those barriers explored. The client should be encouraged to make decisions regarding those barriers and the solutions. At this meeting, the **SSP** and assessment form must be reviewed and updated as needed.

EXAMPLE: An AG is closed effective August when the father finds full-time employment. He gets laid off at the end of September and reapplies for WV WORKS in October. The AG is due for a 24-month evaluation in October, but it is postponed until the 48th month because it is the next evaluation interval that is 3 or more months ahead.

EXAMPLE: An AG is due for its 48-month evaluation in November 2003, but the AG is closed effective November before the evaluation takes place. The AG reapplies in February 2004. The Worker does not back up and complete the missed 48-month evaluation. Instead the 55th month case review is the next required contact.

It is the decision of the WV WORKS Supervisor after a formal consultation with the WV WORKS Case Manager about whether or not a face-to-face meeting is required at the 12/24/36/48 month self-sufficiency evaluation point. At its discretion, the local office may choose to include the CSM in any decision about a face-to-face meeting. At a minimum, the Supervisor and Case Manager must meet and review the case, discuss the client's progress, barriers, other issues affecting the family's self-sufficiency, make necessary recommendations, and arrange appropriate referrals to other agencies and services as needed. The Worker must arrange an office visit or home visit with the client if the assessment and/or **SSP** forms need to be updated as a result of the 12/24/36/48 month evaluation meeting with the Supervisor. A full case recording must be made in comments with details of the face-to-face meeting or Supervisor/Worker consultation and recommendations from these 12/24/36/48 month evaluation.

L. VISION AND/OR DENTAL SERVICES

Providing dental and vision services are a cooperative effort between the WV WORKS Program and the Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health (OMCFH).

The WV WORKS staff's responsibility is limited to completion of form DFA-R-1 to refer Work-Eligible Individuals to OMCFH, to certify that the client is eligible to receive vision and/or dental services, and to explain to the client the importance of keeping his scheduled appointments and the deadline for obtaining services.

Referrals for both dental and vision services are made on a single form, the DFA-R-1, Pre-Employment Services Project Referral. The distribution of the color copies is shown on the bottom of the form. The Worker must insure that the bottom copy of the NCR form is legible when the form is completed. If it is not, the Worker must write over the information on the bottom copy and file it in the case record.

The referral for vision/dental services is time-limited. Services must be completed within one year of the referral date shown on the DFA-R-1. The Worker must enter the date (mm/dd/yy) on the form at the time the referral is made. Distribution of copies of the form in a timely manner is crucial.

The Worker must also enter the amount of the maximum dental service on an initial referral. This amount is \$3,300 and is shown as the balance following Dental Services.

After a referral expires, the Worker may issue the client another one, provided the client meets eligibility criteria as explained below and has not received the maximum allowable benefit. On a second or subsequent referral for dental services, regardless of the date of the first referral, the Worker must obtain the amount of the remaining balance from OMCFH by calling 558-5388 or 1-800-642-8522 and enter it on the DFA-R-1. Vision referrals may be made annually for qualified individuals.

To be eligible to receive vision and/or dental services, the client must be in either of the 2 following groups:

1. Participating

To qualify based on participation in an activity, the client must meet both of the following requirements.

- The client must be a Work-Eligible Individual in an active WV WORKS case, PL period, or EAP participant, when the referral is made. Receipt of DCA alone does not qualify the individual for these services. Once the referral is made, it is valid for one year whether or not the WV WORKS case remains open; and
- The individual is participating in an activity listed in Sections 24.6 through Section 24.13 or 24.16. The participation rate required to qualify for these services is the rate shown on the individual's **SSP**.

2. Sole Barrier to Participation

When the sole barrier to the client's participation in a work activity listed in Section 24.5 is the need for vision and/or dental services, a referral may be made. Once the referral is made, it is valid for one year, whether or not the WV WORKS case remains open.

OMCFH has signed agreements with service sites which detail the allowable services, reimbursements, scope of services, etc. In addition, OMCFH will provide a list of all providers to the appropriate county. The client may choose his own provider from this list and must make his own appointments.

There is a maximum lifetime limit on the payment for these services. This limit is monitored by OFMCH. Closure of the vision and/or dental services case by OFMCH occurs when services are completed or the maximum allowable benefit is reached. An appropriate notice is sent to the local office to file in the case record.

1. Vocational Assessment Referral Process

Referrals to the vocational assessment provider are made by completing form DFA-WVW-80 which must be signed by the WV WORKS Supervisor. The original goes to the provider and a copy is filed in the client's case record. A copy is given to the client.

For referrals to WVU CED, a chart listing the designated Vocational Assessment Specialist is found on the DFA Intranet under Desk Guides.

Completion of form DFA-WVW-ADA-1 is required for individuals referred to the provider. It is not necessary to send a copy to the provider. A copy is filed in the case record and a copy is given to the client. The Worker must also complete the follow-up form, DFA-WVW-ADA-1A, for the case record. Workers must advise clients that testing involved with the vocational assessments may take an entire day to complete. Copies of the appointment letters are sent to the Worker. Clients are scheduled by the provider for vocational assessments within 15 business days following receipt of the written referral. A written report with the results of the vocational assessment is provided to the Department within 30 days following completion of the testing. The Worker and the provider must maintain close contact throughout this process.

NOTE: In addition to meeting at least 1 of the conditions listed above, individuals referred must be able to sit for up to several hours at a time in order to complete the vocational assessment. The Worker must discuss this with the individual to determine if he is able to meet this requirement, and if so, the Worker must indicate this by checking the box "yes" on the referral form. Individuals should be encouraged to bring a lunch or a snack on their vocational assessment day.

Copies of the following documents, when available, must be attached to the DFA-WVW-80 upon referral:

- TABE results,
- Emotional Health Inventory (EHI);
- Learning Needs Screening (LNS;
- Work Keys;
- MRT packet;
- WV WORKS Initial Self-Sufficiency Appraisal, OFA-WVW-3A; and
- Most recent **PRC and SSP**.

NOTE: It is preferred that referrals for vocational assessments are made only after the TABE, EHI, and LNS have been completed. If the client has declined completion of the EHI and/or LNS, the Worker must indicate this