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I. APPLICABILITY/SCOPE

This policy applies to all U.S. Department of Labor Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) grant staff and program partners who are part of the service delivery model.

II.PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for documenting SWFI program case notes. There are five standard categories of case notes related to case management practices:

- a. Customer demographic information;
- b. Data element validation;
- c. Program eligibility and enrollment;
- d. Service planning, entry and tracking; and
- e. Performance and outcomes

III. BACKGROUND

The SWFI program adheres to a case management approach to service delivery. Integral to this approach is the maintenance of comprehensive services for each program participant. Case notes are one of the comprehensive tools that document the participant’s journey throughout the duration of the program.

IV. POLICY

Case notes are used as a tool to help program service providers organize and analyze the information gathered on participants’ strengths and needs in a range of areas to provide justification to specific services and to plan case management strategies. Recording case notes is critical because it weaves each service element into a comprehensive service plan. SWFI program staff and service providers utilize case notes to document the details, decisions, and service strategies that determine the assessment, planning, resources, support services, and follow-up that are designed to move participants toward his or her employment and educational goals.


A. TWO PARTS TO RECORDING CASE NOTES

1. Data - Facts You Learned About the Participant

The data recorded should summarize the essential information being gathered. Case notes should focus on the information that is most directly related to participant self-sufficiency and plan of action.

2. Strategies to Support and Enhance Self-Sufficiency

The Career Navigator case notes provide a record of the strategies developed to assist participants with follow through of the Individual Employment Plan agreed upon during enrollment into the SWFI program. These strategies can be adjusted as needed to address barriers identified during participation of program or as support services are needed.

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B. CASE NOTES GUIDELINES

1. Timeliness - Participant progress case notes must be updated a minimum of every 30 calendar days. Program notes that refer to an activity in the Service and Training Plan must be entered within 15 calendar days of the activity occurring. They should be entered every time something significant occurs with the participant, preferably while the information is fresh in the case worker’s mind to avoid forgetting things (i.e. new test scores, job interview, a period of absence from the training program, supportive services, new program activities, etc.).
2. Clear and Concise - Case notes must be clear and easily understood and should describe the reasons behind the actions taken. A review of the case file should show an accurate history of the interactions and activity with the participant while in the program. Good grammar and spelling should be used.
3. Consistency - There should be no more than 48 hours lapse in entering information in the case management system. Case notes should reflect the participant’s work and progress throughout their participation in the SWFI program. The case notes and the rest of the file should match and reflect the same information as the test scores, start dates, revisions, supportive services etc.

C. CASE NOTES

Case notes shall be clear, concise and used to document services and participant activity. Services can include comprehensive guidance and counseling, participation in group activities, phone contacts, or email exchanges. All case notes must be entered in AJC on a “real time basis” but no longer than an 48 hours lapse by the career navigators. Case notes should include all the following:


1. The first contact with a participant that results in their first service being received;
2. Contacts that involve the delivery of a specific service to participants;
3. Contacts with participants to assess their status or progress in an activity; and
4. Contacts that produce new information affecting the delivery of services (examples would be changes in health status, court/legal problems, driver’s license issues or changes in address).

Case notes cannot be edited. Once the case note has been saved in AJC, a new case note with reference to the case note you want changed will need to be entered.

D. CASE NOTE EXAMPLES

Registration or enrollment AJC Case Note: This case note is critical as it documents enrollment/registration into youth activities and as such will be reviewed during monitoring and data validation activities. This initial case note must have the following:

1. State whether youth is employed, not employed, justification for enrollment, assessment results if assessment provided;
2. AJC case note when significant activities occur or the IEP is modified;
3. Describe the specific IEP activities in the plan and reason;

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4. Describe the modified services that have been planned and how these services will help to achieve employment goals.

E. AJC CASE NOTES FOR OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Training activities may include Occupational Skills Training at approved post-secondary training institutions. Each time that a participant receives these services, a case note is required and must document the following information:

1. Summarize why the participant has been enrolled in training (i.e., a review of the skills gap or barriers to employment);
2. Describe the specific training program that will be attended and the training institution that will deliver the training;
3. Detail the status of any PELL grants and/or other sources of financial aid that is available to the participant (may be in case note or part of financial documentation). If the selected training is not PELL eligible, this fact should be documented; and
4. Describe the degree or certification that to acquire as a result of the training activity.

F. AJC CASE NOTES FOR SUPPORTIVE SERVICE

Support services are expenditure services that are designed to remove barriers that prevent the participant from participating in service activities and must be documented. Each time a service is provided it must be documented in a case note that includes the following information:

1. Document the need for the support service, including the specific barrier that the support service will address;
2. Document the efforts made to secure the needed support service from other community organizations;
3. Document the specific support service that is to be provided; and
4. Record the obligation amount in AJC attached to each support service (making sure an account is created in AJC)


G. CASE NOTES THAT DOCUMENT OR UPDATE PROGRESS

Often there will be new or progress information that is obtained and this information must be documented in a case note and must include the following information:

1. Briefly document any new information learned relative to the participants progress in their learning, job search, work, or any other planned service and activity.

H. AJC CASE NOTES FOR PROGRAM EXIT

When an enrolled participant completes the last day of service in an open activity, the participant must be exited from the activity and this exit must be documented in a case note that includes the following information:

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1. Document that the participant is no longer receiving this service and that the participant is being exited from this activity; and
2. Document the participant outcomes from having been enrolled in this activity (e.g. credentials, improved basic skills, better job search skills).

VI. POLICY MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the SWFI Project Manager and submitted to the Division Deputy Director and Human Services Director for review and approval. Administrative revisions to the policy may be made by the Phoenix Business and Workforce Development (PBWD) Board Executive Director, with notice to the PBWD Board’s Executive Leadership Committee. All other substantive revisions will go to the PBWD Board’s Executive Leadership Committee for review and recommendation to the PBWD Board for approval.