

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. **The WV Bridge Model is designed to emphasize Family Stability Well-being, Job Development and Job Readiness, Employment, Job Retention and Stronger Families. By using this model, it is a full family, holistic approach eliminating challenges and barriers and focusing on the family dynamic to promote job readiness and employment to lead to stronger families and 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.

WV WORKS Activities/Requirements

- When the Worker determines that the client has a disability and wishes to participate in the WV WORKS program activities, the SSP 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, 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. This screen must be printed for any changes to be saved in the system.

- 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 PRC and 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

WV WORKS Activities/Requirements

- 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. Results of these visits must be recorded in PIN comments.

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

As part of the Family Stability Well-being column of the WV Bridge Model, the Other Work Activities (OW) component is to be used to track time spent on tasks leading to self-sufficiency or family stability. 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 or family stability.

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 overcoming challenges;
- 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; or
- Any other family stability service needed to improve the families' circumstances.

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 suggested amount of time a participant may be placed in the OW component is 60 days. For placement beyond 60 days, DFA may be contacted for additional case management guidance. Transportation, vehicle repair and vehicle insurance will be the only allowable support payments associated with this component.

Every effort must be made to obtain countable hours for these PINS (contacting a school for educational hours, anticipating hours from employer statement, or JR for substance abuse or mental health treatment, etc.). When there are absolutely no countable participation hours to enter for these individuals, a minimum of one hour of OW should be entered and documented in comments for making these contacts to obtain countable participation hours.

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 become self-sufficient, 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
- Family Strengths and Challenges

The WV WORKS Self-Sufficiency Appraisal Form, DFA-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 DFA-WVW-3A form with the client during the home visit. Results of the initial home visit must be documented in PIN comments. 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. When the WV WORKS benefit is re-opened within 3 months of a home visit, a new initial home visit is not required. The DFA-WVW-3A must also be reviewed at site visits, applications, reviews, case staffing's and after any reported changes which would change a response. Those responses must be captured by updating WP screens including the Family Strengths and Challenge screen.

EXCEPTION: When the client is fully participating in an allowable work activity, the initial visit may be a site visit if the client agrees. The Worker must protect the client's confidentiality when completing any site visit.

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 DFA-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.

1. Learning Needs Screening

The Learning Needs Screening, completed at the time TABE is administered, is used to screen for possible learning disabilities. Based on the results of the Learning Needs Screening, referrals may be made to the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) for further assessment and diagnosis of possible learning disabilities and/or for accommodations to be made in an ABE/or high school equivalency class, training program, or work site.

Completion of the Learning Needs Screening by the client is voluntary. Clients declining to complete the Learning Needs Screening will be asked by the WV Department of Education Assessment Specialist to sign the waiver form, DFA-WVW-40. The original waiver will be returned to the Worker for the client's file with a copy being given to the client. The Worker will record in PIN comments that the Learning Needs Screening has been offered to the client but he has declined.

Should the client indicate to the Worker that he wishes to decline to have the Assessment Specialist or full-time ABE teacher complete the Learning Needs Screening, the Worker must ask the client sign the DFA-WVW-40. However, the Worker must explain to the client the importance of the client completing this screening and that the results of this screening could help provide further referrals and services to him. Refusal to sign the DFA-WVW-40 will not result in a sanction.

NOTE: If a part-time ABE teacher administers the TABE, the Worker must schedule the client in to have the Assessment Specialist administer the Learning Needs Screening. Besides the Assessment Specialists, only full-time ABE or TANF ABE teachers will complete the Learning Needs Screening. WV WORKS staff must not administer the Learning Needs Screening under any circumstances.

2. TABE

The purpose of TABE testing is to measure basic academic skills such as reading, math, language, and spelling.

All Work-Eligible Individuals are to be scheduled for TABE unless one of the exceptions listed below exists.