

Regional Family and Community Support Policies and Guidelines

Effective: March 1st 2015

Program Purpose:

The Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities' (BBHFF) purpose for creating the **Family and Community Support Program** throughout West Virginia is to assist individuals to live at home and in the community by identifying resources and aligning processes aimed at supporting persons with disabilities in integrated settings, with emphasis on individualizing and maximizing community resources. Many of the challenges and opportunities experienced by people seeking to live a life of quality in the community are common, regardless of disability. Individuals and families want and need information about resources, access to services and flexible funding to address emergency and/or extraordinary needs, and support from peers and professionals.

Accessing Family and Community Support

Depending on meeting schedules of councils, please be aware that the process for Family Support can take one (1) to three (3) months from intake to conclusion.

Application Phase	Activities During Phase
Intake Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applications received, logged, and evaluated for completeness by FS coordinator• Initial brief contact with family to discuss needs and develop a plan for assistance. This includes information/referrals to other programs, requests for additional information, and estimated timelines for return information to be reviewed at the next council meeting
Review and Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All applications received and processed through the intake phase to be presented to the Family Support Council with details on referrals made/status of referrals• Additional information requests or recommendations can be made at this time, if deemed appropriate by the council• Flex Fund considerations are determined by the council at this stage.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council's decision will be communicated to the applicant, along with a brief summary of supports offered and further instructions.• A FCSP Feedback survey will be provided to the family during this time.

*Note- **Family and Community Support** resources are not guaranteed and are limited by the availability of resources and Supplemental Flex fund budgets.*

Important: *These policies and guidelines are in relation to access to Family Support related requests and services. Requests for Flex Funds from CES grantees will be addressed by predetermined policies between FCSP and CES grantees and will vary from region to region.*

Regional Family and Community Support Policies and Guidelines

Effective: March 1st 2015

Regional Family Support Council Policies

Council Membership:

1. Each Regional Family and Community Support agency shall establish a regional family support council comprised of at least seven members, of whom at least a majority shall be persons with developmental disabilities or their parents or primary caregivers.
2. Each Regional Family and Community Support agency will assure that there is a characteristic representation of age groups, disabilities, and counties serving as members of the Council.
3. Council members must sign a Privacy Agreement each year to ensure understanding of privacy/HIPAA/confidentiality. The grantee agency will keep a copy on file.
4. A chairperson and vice-chair will be elected from the body of Council members to serve Regional and State Council functions. Term limits are set by each council (1-4 years).
5. The chairperson or vice-chair is expected to represent the Regional Council at the State Family and Community Support Quarterly Meetings.
6. All Council members are expected to attend all scheduled Regional Family Support Council meetings and notify the Family Support Coordinator or chairperson if unable to attend.
7. Any Council member who misses 2 consecutive meetings will be given the opportunity to resign their appointment so that another representative can be appointed.
8. If any council member misses 2 or more consecutive meetings without giving notice, they will be removed from the council.

Recruiting New Council Members:

1. Prospective new members to the Family Support Council must attend one meeting to introduce themselves to the current Council.
2. The Council will make retention recommendations to the grantee agency on prospective new members.
3. The grantee agency has final decision on approving new members to the Regional Family Support Council.
4. Prospective members will be notified within 1 week of the next meeting. If they are selected, they will be invited back for an orientation period, and have a 1-meeting probationary period on the Council before becoming an official member.

Council Meetings:

1. Meeting of the Council will be held at a minimum of once quarterly for the purpose of considering applications for stipends. Meetings may be cancelled if a majority of all Council members cannot attend. Written or phone notices of all Council meetings will be sent by the Family Support Coordinator, or designee, at least (5) five days prior to the meeting. Members may participate by phone if needed.

Regional Family and Community Support Policies and Guidelines

Effective: March 1st 2015

2. Council members in attendance will constitute a quorum for purposes of approval of Family Support stipends. However, if the majority of the Council members are unable to attend a scheduled meeting, the meeting will be rescheduled and applicants notified of new meeting date.
3. All applications discussed will be kept confidential.
4. Applicants will be identified by number only to Council members; only Regional Coordinator will see the actual applications and have knowledge of the applicant.
5. The Regional FCSP Coordinator or grantee agency designee will facilitate the Regional Family Support Council Meetings.
6. When the Coordinator finds any reason to contact any provider in relation to the application, written consent must be given by the individual or family. This must be in a formal Consent to Release Information from the grantee agency.
7. Once the meeting is held the families will be notified of the decision by letter, for both approval and denials. The family or individual must complete a stipend award contract.
8. All applicants who are approved for Flex Funds must return copies of purchase receipts within 30 days of funds being dispersed. Failure to do this can result in future Flex Fund request denials.
9. Robert's Rules of Order are recommended for the facilitation of meetings.

Applications:

1. All support request applications must be filled out in their entirety. Incomplete applications will be returned to applicant with instructions on completing missing areas.
2. Applications must be completed by the individual, their parents, or guardian. If the individual, parent, or guardian is unable to complete the application, a representative may be selected to assist.
3. Applications must be accompanied by medical documentation indicating the applicant's developmental disability.
4. The family may request only one identified need per application unless the requested items work together, such as adaptive spoon, forks, cups and bowls.
5. All applicants who are approved for Flex Funds must return copies of purchase receipts within 30 days of funds being dispersed.
6. If an applicant is found to be ineligible the Family Support Coordinator will refer them to an agency that may be able to help them or back to their Service Coordinator for additional referrals.
7. Family and Community Support resources are not guaranteed and are limited by the availability of resources and Supplemental Flex fund budgets.

Appealing a Decision

1. In the event that an applicant is unsatisfied with the results of the Council's decisions, a grievance may be filed for further review of the request.
2. To file a grievance, the individual, parent, guardian or chosen representative must submit a letter to the Family and Community Support Coordinator within 10 days of receiving the decision with reasoning as to why they seek an appeal and include any additional information they feel may support their request.
3. The Family and Community Support Coordinator will present the appeal along with any additional information to the Council at the next meeting for re-evaluation.
4. The Council's decision will be communicated to the applicant in writing along with the contact information for the State Family and Community Support Coordinator, in the event the applicant is still unsatisfied with the council's decision and wishes to pursue a second level appeal.
5. The State Family Support Coordinator will contact both the applicant and the council and review all material's related to the grievance. A final decision will be made and communicated to the applicant via the Regional Family and Community Support Coordinator.

Emergency Requests

1. An emergency request is defined as a situation which poses immediate risk to health, life, safety, and property and requires urgent intervention to prevent a worsening of the situation.
2. Family and Community Support resources and flex funds are limited and cannot be guaranteed.
3. The Council's main concern for emergencies center's around the immediate well-being of the applicant.
4. When submitting an emergency application, the applicant or their designee must provide the following information:
 - a. Rationale for why the application is of an urgent need.
 - b. Explanation of why the request needs to be considered before the next scheduled council meeting.
5. The Family and Community Support Coordinator will contact the Council Chairperson and two members at random to review the request.
6. The Council members will determine if the application meets emergency criteria:
 - a. If yes, the committee will determine what resources can be made available to assist with the need with regard to available resources.

Regional Family and Community Support Policies and Guidelines

Effective: March 1st 2015

- b. If no, the application will be reviewed at the next scheduled council meeting.
- 7. A letter will be provided to the applicant or their designee with the results of the council's decisions along with any relevant follow up information.

Service Categories Definitions

Service Category	Definition
<u>Medical Related</u>	This category will cover any medical related requests that insurance/other programs do not cover. This area could include but is not limited to: vision, dental, co-pay assistance, medical bills, etc.
<u>Adaptive Equipment</u>	This category will cover any equipment needs an individual requires to adapt to their day to day life. This area could include but is not limited to: communication devices, mobility equipment, fine and gross motor devices, etc.
<u>Environmental Accessibility</u>	This category will cover all accessibility needs being requested. This area will include, but is not limited to: vehicle modifications, home modifications, ramps, various lifts, entry way modifications, fencing, etc.
<u>Attendant Care</u>	This category will cover all personal attendant care requests. This area will include but is not limited to: respite care, child care, home-maker services, adult companion, etc.
<u>Housing Maintenance</u>	This category will cover all areas related to housing maintenance. This area will include, but is not limited to: utility assistance, mortgage/rent assistance, home related repairs, furniture replacement, appliance repair/replacement, etc.
<u>Essential Well-Being</u>	This category will cover areas that are deemed essential to well-being. This area will include but is not limited to: food, clothing, specialized nutrition, personal hygiene items, etc.
<u>Integrated Activities</u>	This category will cover areas that integrate individuals into their community setting. This area will include but is not limited to: camp fees, registration fees for events, social interaction opportunities, etc.
<u>Transportation</u>	This category will cover all areas that involve transportation. This area will include but is not limited to: bus pass costs, fuel cards, vehicle repairs, etc. Travel to hospitals such as Columbus or Morgantown.
<u>Therapy/Training</u>	This category will cover all requests related to therapy and training. This area will include, but is not limited to: ABA requests, Occupational, Speech, Physical therapy, as well as training costs associated with the families care for individuals.

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Regional Council Guidelines

This section will be used for specific regional council guidelines as they pertain to various areas of Service Categories. These guidelines may vary from region to region based on identified needs and resources available. These guidelines should not contradict any of the above cited policies without express rationalization provided for specific circumstances that may arise.

Service Category	Regional Guidelines
<u>Medical Related</u>	•
<u>Adaptive Equipment</u>	•
<u>Environmental Accessibility</u>	•
<u>Attendant Care</u>	•
<u>Housing Maintenance</u>	•
<u>Essential Well-Being</u>	•
<u>Integrated Activities</u>	•
<u>Transportation</u>	•
<u>Therapy/Training</u>	•