

VOLUNTARY SERVICES PROGRAM

Voluntary Services Program Overview

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Policy

The Department of Children and Families shall administer a Voluntary Services Program to provide, on a voluntary basis, case-work, community referrals and treatment services to children who are not committed to DCF and who do not require child protective services intervention but who may require, due to emotional or behavioral difficulties, any of the services offered, administered by, under contract with or otherwise available to DCF.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-11; R.C.S.A. §§17a-11-1 through 17a-11-27

DCF is not required to seek custody or protective supervision of a child who needs or is receiving Voluntary Services. If a child is eligible for Voluntary Services, legal commitment or protective supervision of the child shall not be made a condition of receiving those services.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-129.

Purpose

The purpose of the Voluntary Services Program is to encourage the preservation and enhancement of the family relationship and to ensure continuing responsibility of the child by the parents or guardian even when limited financial resources prevent the parents or guardian from providing required care and treatment.

Parent or Guardian Involvement

Admission to the Voluntary Services Program requires cooperation between the child, the parents or guardian and DCF.

The parents or legal guardian are expected to:

- be active participants in the case plan, with maintenance of the child in the home or reunification with the family as the anticipated goal;
- sign all necessary forms and provide all required documentation, including but not limited to, permissions to treat and placement admission forms;
- meet regularly with DCF staff and service providers, including facility staff or other caregivers if the child is in placement, to monitor the child's progress toward case goals;
- attend therapy or other treatment sessions with the child as appropriate;
- attend court hearings and case planning meetings; and
- provide transportation for the child to service providers, for leaves from out-of-home placement and to and from court hearings (DCF may assist with transportation as availability of resources allows and based on family financial hardship); and
- if determined capable by the Department of Administrative Services Bureau of Collection Services, make financial contributions toward the cost of the services and care for the child based upon an annual review.

Note: When a child who is receiving voluntary services in the home requires emergency medical or mental health treatment, the parents or guardian are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate professional sees the child. The Social Worker may assist with referrals.

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Role of DCF

DCF shall be responsible for:

- completing an assessment to determine eligibility consistent with state law and regulations;
- identifying the treatment needs of the child and family, taking into consideration their cultural and linguistic needs;
- developing, with the child and family, a case plan detailing time-limited measurable goals and objectives and the roles and responsibilities of each party;
- assisting the family in securing needed services;
- assisting the family in securing payment sources for services;
- providing casework services to the child and family;
- coordinating, if necessary, development of out-of-home placement referral materials;
- providing information and referral services and coordinating with other community services as needed;
- evaluating progress and planning for discharge from the Voluntary Services Program; and
- collaborating with other state agencies to support the child and facilitate the transition of the child's case to another state agency, where applicable.

Eligibility for Services

Except as listed in the admissions restrictions section below, a child may be deemed eligible for in-home services through the Voluntary Services Program if he or she:

- has an emotional, behavioral or substance use disorder diagnosable under the most recent edition of "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders" (DSM) (a child or youth with a "V code," developmental disorder or mental retardation, as defined in the DSM, shall only be eligible if the child also has an emotional, behavioral or substance use disorder and the alleviation of that disorder is the primary purpose of the request for Voluntary Services);
- has treatment needs that cannot be met through services currently available to the parent or guardian;
- has a disorder or disturbance that can be treated with services offered, administered by, under contract with or otherwise available to DCF at the time of application; and
- has not reached the age of 18 years at the time of the referral.

Cross reference: R.C.S. A. §17a-11-7.

Note: DCF shall not provide or arrange for the provision of any services which are a component of the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) except as otherwise provided by law. (R.C.S. A. §17a-11-9)

Eligibility for Placement Services

Except as listed in the admissions restrictions section below, a child may be deemed eligible for out-of-home placement through the Voluntary Services Program if, in addition to the criteria listed in the previous section:

- DCF has determined that out-of-home placement is the least restrictive alternative for treating the child's emotional or behavioral disorder;

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Eligibility for Placement Services (continued)

- an appropriate DCF-approved treatment program or facility is available;
- there is a reasonably healthy parent-child relationship, and there is reason to believe that the parent or guardian will continue to maintain a relationship with the child while he or she is participating in the Voluntary Services Program and will continue to be an active participant in all aspects of the planning and treatment process; and
- there is a reasonable expectation that the child will return to the parent or guardian when the case plan is completed.

Cross reference: R.C.S.A. §17a-11-7.

Admission Restrictions

The following types of cases shall not be accepted under the Voluntary Services Program unless the provisions of this section are waived by the Commissioner or designee.

Cases for which DCF has not been provided with sufficient information, including financial information, to establish eligibility;

Cases where the child is the subject of a pending petition alleging that he or she is neglected, abused or uncared for.

Cases where the child is or becomes the subject of an active Family Assessment Response, an active child neglect or abuse investigation or an active child protective services case.

Cases where the child is the subject of a pending delinquency petition; has been adjudicated delinquent and is awaiting disposition; is on probation; or is currently involved with the adult criminal justice system due to arrest, conviction, probation or parole.

Cases where out-of-home placement of the child:

- was made prior to the application for the Voluntary Services Program;
- was made in a program or facility not approved or licensed by DCF;
- was arranged without the prior approval of DCF; or
- was made in a program or facility that does not meet the treatment needs of the child as determined by DCF.

Cases where there is reasonable cause to believe that the child, or the parents or guardian, will not cooperate with the case plan.

Note: A prior substantiation of abuse or neglect of a child by the parent or guardian does not render the child ineligible for the Voluntary Services Program.

Cross reference: R.C.S.A. §17a-11-8.

Application, Assessment and Decisions

The Department of Children and Families may, in the Commissioner's discretion, admit to the Voluntary Services Program any child who, in the Commissioner's opinion, could benefit from any of the services offered or administered by or available to DCF. Any parent or legal guardian may apply on behalf of his or her child who is under the age of 18 years old. Any child who is age 14 to 17 years old may apply on his or her own behalf.

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Careline Responsibilities To begin the Voluntary Services application process, the parent or guardian, or a child age 14 years or older, must contact the DCF Careline to request services through DCF.

The Careline Social Worker shall:

- provide the caller with basic information about the Voluntary Services Program;
- record the details of the request on the DCF-3019, "Voluntary Services Initial Request";
- inform the caller that the biological or adoptive parents of the child may be liable for a portion of the cost on a sliding scale;
- inform the caller that the biological or adoptive parents will be required to provide a recent federal income tax return and related financial documents, if available;
- inform the caller that lack of citizenship or immigration status is not grounds for denial;
- ask the caller if the child has been denied insurance coverage for the services that are being sought from DCF; and
- ask the caller if the child has a primary diagnosis of autism and whether the family has Husky A insurance and, if so, refer the family to the Beacon Health Autism Unit supported through the Department of Developmental Services.

If the parent or guardian has been denied insurance coverage for the services being sought from DCF, the Careline Social Worker shall:

- educate the parent or guardian regarding the assistance that can be provided by the State of Connecticut Office of the Healthcare Advocate;
- provide the parent or guardian with the Office of the Healthcare Advocate's contact information; and
- ask permission to release the DCF-3019, "Voluntary Services Initial Request", including contact information, to the Office of the Healthcare Advocate.

Obtaining an application If the parent or guardian grants verbal approval to release the DCF-3019, including contact information, to the Office of the Healthcare Advocate, the Careline Social Worker shall email the caller's name and phone number to the Office of the Healthcare Advocate and attach the DCF-3019.

If the parent or guardian refuses to permit a verbal referral, the Careline Social Worker shall note this in the record and continue with the intake process.

Upon completion of the intake process, the Careline Social Worker shall immediately forward the completed DCF-3019 to the appropriate Area Office for follow up.

Immediate Services or Child Protective Service Concerns The Careline Social Worker shall determine whether or not the child's circumstances require immediate action. If immediate action is necessary, the Careline Social Worker, in consultation with the Supervisor and Program Supervisor, shall assist the family with arranging immediate services outside the DCF system (e.g., hospital, Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services).

Note: If immediate child protection issues are identified during the Careline intake process, the Careline Social Worker shall initiate a child protective services intake for further assessment in addition to forwarding the application to the Area Office.

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DCF Office Responsibilities A new Voluntary Services case, for purposes of eligibility assessment, shall be opened by the Area Office upon receipt of the DCF-3019 from Careline.

The Area Office Social Worker shall, within five business days of the referral from Careline, send the family or youth the following documents via certified mail:

- DCF-2175, "Voluntary Services Program Cover Letter";
- DCF-2177, "Voluntary Services Program Application";
- DCF-2236, "Notice of Privacy Practice" (HIPAA);
- DCF-3018, "Notice of Liability" (Legally Liable Relative);
- DCF-2131, "Authorization for Release of Information";
- DCF-449, "Permission to Place and Treat Child in Parental Custody (Voluntary Services)" (only if child is to be placed out of the home);
- Office of Healthcare Advocate brochure (available in several languages); and
- "Authorization for Use and Disclosure of Private/Protected Health Information" (Office of Healthcare Advocate release).

Note: If the child is age 14 years or older, the child and the parents or guardian must sign separate OHA Authorizations.

Family and Child Responsibilities

The parent or guardian, or a youth age 14 years or older, shall, within 60 days of the initial request:

- complete the DCF-2177, "Voluntary Services Program Application";
- sign all releases of information and other documents provided by DCF;
- gather the most recent federal income tax return and related documents, if any;
- submit a copy of the child's birth certificate and Social Security card;
- gather:
 - any written reports from service providers; and
 - a current psychiatric or psychological evaluation, if one exists, which addresses the child's treatment needs; and
- make all household members available to meet with a Social Worker during home visits conducted for the purpose of assessing the child's eligibility for Voluntary Services.

Note: The parent's or guardian's or child's inability to secure required documents does not render the applicant ineligible for services if reasonable efforts to secure the documents have been made. The case record must reflect the reason such documents are not available.

Face-to-Face Meeting

The Social Worker shall:

- contact the family by telephone within five business days of assignment to schedule a face-to-face meeting with the parent or guardian and child to review the Voluntary Services application and other forms and documents;

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Face-to-Face Meeting (Continued)

- inform the family that DCF will assist, upon request, with the application process, including assistance when English is not the primary language spoken;
- inform the family that it is their responsibility to submit a completed application packet within 60 days; and
- provide the family with information regarding community resources for crisis intervention services to ensure the safety of the child while the application is pending.

The Social Worker shall ensure that each required form is properly completed and signed by the parents, guardian or youth, as applicable.

Note: The family may be given additional time to secure documents not immediately available.

Time Frame for Submitting Application

The parents or guardian, or child over 14 years of age, shall have 60 days from the date of the DCF-3019 being sent from the Careline to the DCF Area Office to submit all required documents. The time frame may be extended for up to 30 days at the discretion of the Office Director or designee.

If the completed application and documents are not submitted within 60 days, the Social Worker shall contact the family to determine whether they required further assistance to complete the packet or wish to withdraw the application.

If the family decides to withdraw the application, then the Voluntary Services Social Worker shall send a DCF-2179, "Withdrawal of Application" advising that the application is withdrawn.

DCF Assessment of Application

The Social Worker shall complete a comprehensive eligibility assessment of the child within 14 days of receipt of the completed DCF-3019 and related documentation which shall include:

- collateral contacts with current and past service providers as appropriate;
- a compilation and review of all available diagnostic, medical, educational and social history material;
- a review of the material with the DCF Regional Resource Group (RRG) consultant, if appropriate;
- arranging for additional evaluations if necessary;
- conducting CPS background checks for all adult household members;
- an assessment of intimate partner violence or substance abuse issues in the household; and
- a discussion with the child and the parent or guardian about what services they believe are appropriate for the child's needs.

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Decision on the Application

The Social Worker and Social Work Supervisor shall review the application materials to:

- ensure the application addresses all eligibility requirements;
- ensure that all available documents have been gathered and all necessary releases have been signed;
- determine the service needs of child and family;
- determine if required services are available to DCF;
- make a final decision on whether or not to admit the child to the Voluntary Services Program, subject to approval by the Program Supervisor.

The Social Worker shall notify the parent or guardian of the child and the child, if he or she is age 14 years or older, of the decision within five days.

If admission to the Voluntary Services Program is granted, the Social Worker shall send the DCF-2178, "Voluntary Services Acceptance Letter," and document in the computer system that the case is open for all services.

If admission into the Voluntary Services Program is denied, the Social Worker shall use the DCF-3029, "Notice of Denial of Voluntary Services," which includes a short statement regarding the reason for denial and information about the right to appeal the decision.

Protocol when a Report to Careline is Made

An assessment shall take place regarding the appropriateness of Voluntary Services when the child is the subject of a report accepted by the Careline either before or after the request for Voluntary Services was made.

The FAR or Intake team shall notify the Voluntary Services team within 24 hours of receiving the report and a case conference shall be held within 30 days of receipt of the report at Careline to assess the appropriateness of Voluntary Services.

The conference shall be attended by the Voluntary Services Social Worker and Supervisor, the FAR or Intake Social Worker and Supervisor, and the Program Supervisor.

The conference shall determine whether the CPS case is likely to be transferred to Ongoing Services or referred for FAR services or is likely to be closed.

If the case will be substantiated and transferred to Ongoing Services, Voluntary Services shall cease or be denied. Existing cases may only be transferred if the criteria for termination has been met. Notification of the denial or termination of Voluntary Services shall be sent in accordance with this policy.

If the case will not be substantiated, or if the case will be substantiated but will not be transferred, child protective services are not required and all other eligibility criteria are met, Voluntary Services shall commence or continue.

Note: Existing Voluntary Services shall continue to be delivered throughout the investigation or assessment process if the Careline report is accepted after the child has been deemed eligible for services.

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Waiver of Requirement The Area Office Director or designee, in the case of unusual circumstances, may waive admission requirements and eligibility restrictions for the Voluntary Services Program.

Notice of Ineligibility for Services If the child is deemed by DCF to be ineligible for the Voluntary Services Program, the parents or guardian and the child, if over the age of 14 years, shall be issued a DCF-3029, "Notice of Denial of Voluntary Services," which provides the parents, guardian or child with instructions for requesting an administrative hearing if they wish to contest the decision.

Services Provided DCF may provide to all children who are found to be eligible for the Voluntary Services Program any of the services offered, administered by, under contract with or otherwise available to DCF.

Case Planning The Social Worker shall, together with the child and family, develop a case plan outlining the family and child's needs and the services to be offered by DCF to address those needs.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 20-1 "Case Planning"

Placement Any child admitted to DCF through the Voluntary Services Program may be placed in or transferred to any resource, facility or institution within DCF or available to the Commissioner.

At least ten days prior to the transfer, DCF shall provide written notice to the parent or guardian or a child who is over age 14 of the intent to make a transfer. Written notice may be waived by the parent or guardian or child.

An emergency commitment of a child may be made to the Albert J. Solnit South Children's Center – South Campus pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §17a-502, in which case prior written notification is not required.

The Social Worker shall, assisted by the Social Work Supervisor and the Regional Resource Group (RRG) consultant, complete the DCF-469 to access placement services on behalf of the child. Placement shall be made in accordance with the Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) protected classes guidelines, [including age, ancestry, color, gender identity or expression, transgender, genetic information, veteran's status, intellectual disability, learning disability, marital status, physical disability (including blindness), national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation] when considering the child's placement.

Out-of-State Placements The Interstate Compact Office shall be notified prior to any out-of-state placement. The parent or legal guardian shall sign the ICPC 100A, "ICPC Request and Instructions Form." If the child is placed out-of-state, contact and supervision shall be made by the institution or agency where the child is placed, in conjunction with DCF.

Visitation shall occur quarterly.

Cross Reference: DCF Policy 27-1 "Interstate Compacts"

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Community Services

Services to be provided by DCF may include referral to and utilization of public and private community services as needed to carry out the case plan. These services may include in-home services provided by community providers such as home-based services and extended day services.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 2-2 "Fiscal Services Division", DCF Policy 21-20, "Unique Service Expenditure Plans".

Referral and Transition to DMHAS and DDS

Referral to DDS: The Voluntary Services Social Worker shall determine, in conjunction with the Regional Resource Group staff, whether a referral to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is appropriate for the child. This shall be done as soon as the Social Worker has an indication that the child may be developmentally disabled.

The Social Worker shall assist the family with completing and submitting the DDS application and shall notify the RRG liaison that it has been submitted.

The Social Worker shall coordinate with the RRG and DDS around transition planning to ensure that:

- DDS has information needed to plan for services;
- service providers and the probate court are notified; and
- the transition time frame is agreed upon;

Referral to DMHAS: At age 15 or older (if the child enters Voluntary Services after age 15) the RRG staff, in conjunction with the Social Worker, shall complete a screening to determine if the child may be appropriate for referral to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

The Social Worker, in coordination with the Regional Resource Group staff who is the liaison to DMHAS, shall complete a referral for DMHAS and submit it to the Office of Interagency Client Planning at DCF Central Office.

If the child is accepted for DMHAS Young Adult Services, the Voluntary Services Social Worker shall participate in transition and discharge planning with DMHAS prior to the child's 18th birthday to ensure that:

- DMHAS has current clinical information around which to plan for the child;
- a transition time frame is agreed upon;
- a Transition Action Plan meeting is held which shall include, at a minimum, the Social Worker, DMHAS, the child and, if appropriate, current service providers and family.

Referrals to both agencies: A child who is transitioning to DMHAS or DDS in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between DCF and those agencies must still receive the DCF-800 before termination of DCF services even if he or she agrees with the transfer to another agency.

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Ongoing Services

The Social Worker shall provide consultation to the child or parent or guardian in securing services appropriate to the needs of the child.

On a periodic basis, the Social Worker shall evaluate the progress of the child and plan for the termination of DCF's services or return of the child to the parents/guardian.

Visitation Standards

Once the case is accepted for services, the Social Worker shall make a minimum of one home visit a month with the child, parent or guardian and any other siblings in the home.

If the child is in placement, the Social Worker shall visit him or her once a month, while also maintaining monthly contact with the parent or guardian and any other siblings in the home. This monthly contact may include, but is not limited to the following:

- telephone contact;
 - meeting at placement facility; and
 - home visit.
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Collateral Contacts

The Social Worker shall:

- maintain a minimum of once a month phone contact with the primary service provider;
- attend meetings with other community service providers as necessary; and
- maintain contact with all service providers for the parent and guardian and any other siblings in the home.

As appropriate, the Social Worker shall convene teamings specific to the child for treatment and discharge planning purposes.

Cross Reference: DCF Policy 21-2, "Child and Family Permanency Teaming"

Education Contacts

For a child placed in a residential facility, the Social Worker shall remain in communication with the educational component of the facility. However, educational planning for the child is not the responsibility of DCF. The Social Worker may attend the PPT at the request of the parents to provide support, not as the guardian of the child.

Health Information

The Social Worker shall be responsible for documenting identified medical or dental issues for all children within the household.

Discharge Plan

When a child is discharged from a facility, being transitioned out of a treatment program or is otherwise terminated from services, the Social Worker shall formulate, collaboratively with the child and family, a discharge plan to assist in transitioning the child out of DCF services.

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Probate Court Review Within one hundred and twenty (120) days after admitting a child to the Voluntary Services Program, the Social Worker shall petition the Probate Court for a determination as to whether continuation in the Voluntary Services Program is in the best interest of the child and if the case plan is appropriate.

For any child in placement, the Social Worker shall file a petition for review of permanency plan on an annual basis.

Cross Reference: DCF Policy 6-7-5, "Probate Courts: Voluntary Services Review".

Request for Termination by the Parent or Guardian DCF shall terminate the admission of any child under the age of 14 years within 15 calendar days after receipt of a written request for termination from a parent or guardian, unless prior to the expiration of that time, DCF has sought and received an Order of Temporary Custody from the Superior Court.

Request for Termination by Child DCF shall, upon receipt of a written request for termination from a child age 14 years or older, convene a conference with the child and all interested parties to address the child's reasons for seeking termination.

Note: The termination must be granted within ten (10) calendar days unless, prior to the expiration of that time, DCF has sought and received an Order of Temporary Custody from the Superior Court.

Termination Initiated by DCF DCF may terminate the admission of any child admitted to the Voluntary Services Program if it is determined that:

- the child and his or her family have been provided services according to the case plan, can no longer benefit from continued provision of services, and/or have sufficiently achieved treatment goals;
- the child or parent or guardian is not cooperating with the case plan as agreed upon by DCF and the child and parent or guardian;
- the child no longer meets the eligibility criteria; or
- the parent or guardian of the child has failed, neglected or refused to contribute to the support of the child as required.

Notice of Termination Initiated by DCF DCF shall discharge the child after giving 10 calendar days' notice to the parent or guardian or child age 14 years or older in their preferred language. If a hearing has been held in Probate Court prior to the child's discharge, DCF shall give the Probate Court notice of the child's termination from the program. If the child is in the process of transitioning to DDS or DMHAS, the Social Worker shall give the relevant agency written notice of its intent to terminate Voluntary Services as soon as practicable so that the other agency can provide necessary services.

Notification shall be provided utilizing the DCF-800, "Notice of Proposed Denial, Suspension, Reduction, or Discontinuance of DCF Benefits".

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Administrative or Judicial Relief Any parent, guardian or child, if 14 years old or older, who disagrees with DCF's decision to terminate voluntary services may:

- request a DCF administrative hearing; or
- request a hearing before the Probate Court.

The Probate Court shall determine whether services may be discontinued by reviewing whether the termination was in accord with the applicable regulations adopted by the Commissioner.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-11(i).

Continuation of Services Pending Review If the parent or guardian or child age 14 years or older seeks administrative or judicial review of DCF's decision to terminate voluntary services, within 10 days of the notification, DCF shall continue to provide services until the administrative hearing officer or Probate Court has decided that termination is appropriate.

Transition Plan If voluntary services are being terminated due to the age of the child, DCF shall provide a plan for the transition of the child from the Voluntary Services Program.

A child shall be eligible to participate in the Voluntary Services Program until he or she reaches his or her 21st birthday if DCF determines that the child will benefit from further care and support from DCF, and as long as:

- application was made prior to the child's 18th birthday; and
- all other criteria for the program continue to be met.

A child who has been in placement and has been enrolled in Title XIX Medicaid or state-funded medical coverage, shall be referred to the Department of Social Services for screening for on-going eligibility at the time that the placement ends. This referral shall be made by the Medical Assistance Unit. The child and the child's parents shall be responsible for completing any required application or for providing required documentation to DSS in order for this screening to be completed.

Children who have remained at home, but have enrolled in state-funded medical coverage by special approval shall not be referred to DSS for screening for ongoing eligibility once that special approval is discontinued. It is the responsibility of the child and the child's parents to initiate this screening with DSS.

If voluntary services are being terminated due to reasons other than age, the Social Worker shall work collaboratively with the child and parent or guardian for discharge planning by:

- developing a discharge plan outlining any services identified for the child after termination from the program; and
- discussing the discharge plan with the child and family in a conference to be held 30 days prior to termination from the program.

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Financial Contribution by Parent

The Department of Children and Families shall refer those parents who are deemed capable of contributing to the cost of Voluntary Services to DCF of Administrative Services Bureau of Collections.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §4a-12.

Legal Liability Relative (LLR), for purposes of this policy, means the adoptive parents or biological parents of a child under the age of 18 who is receiving or has received care or treatment from DCF of Children and Families.

Note: Legal guardians are not considered Legally Liable Relatives and are not responsible for any portion of the costs associated with the Voluntary Services Program.

Assessment of Parent as Legally Liable Relative

After a parent has presented the income tax return information required as part of the application process, the Social Worker shall follow the procedures set forth in Policy 2-2, "Fiscal Services Division" regarding Legally Liable Relatives.

Parent's Refusal to Cooperate with assessment for liability

If the parents refuse to provide the required financial information or refuse to sign the DCF-3018 per the required timeframe for submitting the application, the Social Worker shall refer the matter to the Voluntary Services Program Supervisor who shall attempt to work with the parent to access required information.

If the parent still refuses, the Program Supervisor shall inform the parent that DCF cannot open a Voluntary Services case and must deny the application. Before closing the Voluntary Services case, however, the Program Supervisor shall conduct an assessment to determine whether circumstances exist to refer the case for Family Assessment Response or child protective services.

Note: If the Program Supervisor determines that the Voluntary Services application must be denied, the DCF-3029, "Notice of Denial of Voluntary Services," shall be issued within five business days of the decision.

If Parent is Legally Liable

If it is determined that the parent may be legally liable for the payment of some Voluntary Services expenses, the Social Worker shall inform the parent.

DAS-BCS shall bill and collect from the legally liable relative.

If Parent is Not Legally Liable

If it is determined that the parent(s) is not currently legally liable, the Social Worker shall inform the family. The income tax and other financial documents shall be returned to the parent. The original DCF-3018 shall be filed in the child's case record in the event that the parent's income or assets increase significantly.

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Parent who is Receiving a DCF Subsidy If the parent/guardian is receiving a DCF subsidy on behalf of a child for whom Voluntary Services is sought, and a plan for out-of-home placement is formulated, the monthly subsidy payment may be suspended or reduced for the period of time the child is placed out of the home.

When a placement date has been set, the Social Worker shall notify the DCF Central Office Subsidy Unit. The Subsidy Unit shall contact the recipient of the subsidy to assess the ongoing contribution being made. If the subsidy is modified, the Subsidy unit shall issue a DCF-800, "Notice of Proposed Denial, Suspension, Reduction Or Discontinuation Of Department Of Children And Families Benefits."

If the parent/guardian objects to the reduction or suspension of the subsidy, he or she may request an administrative hearing.

Cross Reference: DCF Policy 6-5, "Administrative Hearings".

If the parent agrees to the reduction or suspension of the subsidy, the Central Office Subsidy Unit shall secure a signed copy of the DCF-800A, "Client's Agreement To Suspend, Reduce Or Terminate Department Of Children And Families Benefits" and provide a copy to the Social Worker. The Central Office Subsidy Unit shall also notify the DCF Fiscal Services Division so that the amount of the subsidy may be entered as an offset against any parental liability for contribution.

When the child returns to the home, the Social Worker shall immediately notify the Central Office Subsidy Unit so that the subsidy can be reinstated if applicable.

Referral to OHA Receipt of the DCF-3019 marks the beginning of OHA's involvement in the DCF Voluntary Services process.

Insurance Denial and Appeal If a healthcare plan or HUSKY/Medicaid claim is denied, OHA shall work directly with the parents or guardian to file an appeal.

If payment for services is needed during the appeal process, the DCF Area Office may pay for the services until a decision is reached on the appeal. The DCF Social Worker shall work with the Social Work Supervisor or Program Supervisor to arrange DCF payment. OHA shall be notified by the DCF Social Worker or DCF Health Advocate when DCF funding has been initiated.

If the parent or guardian declines to appeal a denial of treatment or service, the Social Work Supervisor or Program Supervisor shall meet with the parent or guardian in an effort to gain compliance. OHA will notify the Social Worker if a parent or guardian declines to appeal.

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Insurance Coverage for Out-of-Home Placement

If the decision is made by the Area Office to place a child who requires Voluntary Services out of the home, the DCF Social Worker shall:

- complete the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment (CANS) with the assistance of the DCF Regional Resource Group consultant;
- indicate on the CANS whether a healthcare plan or HUSKY/Medicaid is available (the healthcare plan policy or HUSKY/Medicaid number must be written on the CANS form in the last entry for Medical Review section on the form);
- submit the CANS to the State Contracted Administrative Services Organization (ASO) for a determination of the appropriate level of care;
- email OHA staff that a CANS has been submitted;
- ensure that a DCF-449 Form is signed by the parents; and
- complete a DCF MA1 when the child is placed out of the home to activate HUSKY/Medicaid insurance and record the child's placement address in the Medicaid system.

Upon receipt of the CANS, the ASO shall identify and approve the appropriate out-of-home level of care for the child and make recommendations for placement.

If the CANS form indicates an active healthcare plan is available, the ASO shall contact OHA to initiate a concurrent planning process and provide OHA with any supplemental clinical information used to complete the CANS process.

If the child is covered by a healthcare plan that will pay for an out-of-home placement, even temporarily, OHA will defer to the family's wishes regarding placement and lead the effort to get coverage for that preferred placement. If that option fails, OHA will pursue coverage for alternative placement recommendations, in the event that is denied by the healthcare plan.

OHA will remain involved and work collaboratively with DCF and the ASO to assist with the healthcare plan coverage process if there is a need to change the child's placement. The DCF Social Worker shall continue to update OHA throughout the period of out-of-home placement when services are denied.

The Social Worker shall continue to update OHA throughout the period of out-of-home placement when there are changes in a child's level of care, concurrent reviews, pre-authorization review or if services are denied.
