

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (DSS)
CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

Work Rule; Confidentiality:

Employees shall comply with all Agency, State and Federal confidentiality rules, laws and regulations and are prohibited from access, use or disclosure of State of Connecticut service recipients' personal and protected health information without proper authorization. In addition, employees shall not access information of individuals who may not be service recipients of DSS but whose information may be obtainable on the systems used by the Department.

Policy:

All documents and all information (including, but not limited to, protected health information) concerning DSS applicants for and recipients of DSS programs are strictly confidential, and may be used and disclosed only for purposes directly connected with administration of DSS programs and in accordance with state and federal law. Except as required by law or court order, such information and documents shall not be used or disclosed for any other purpose without specific authorization from the applicant, recipient or participant.

All DSS employees, interns and volunteers who have access to State of Connecticut service recipients' personal documents and information, as well as systems that may have individual information of non-service recipients must comply with this Work Rule. DSS employees may only access and review State of Connecticut service recipients' records for the sole purpose of performing their assigned work. Accessing service recipients' records for personal or non-work related reasons are not permitted and subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. In addition accessing the Agency systems to obtain information on non-service individuals will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

Policy Guidelines:

All DSS employees, interns and volunteers shall treat all information concerning DSS service recipients and non-service individuals in a confidential manner at all times and commit to the following rules:

- Will be required to read and sign off on receipt and understanding of on all DSS HIPAA and security manuals, which are posted on the DSS Intranet site.
- Will use and disclose client information only in connection with performing assigned duties and only for purposes of administration of DSS' programs, except as required by law or court order or a client or applicant's authorization.

- Will access and use information from other state agencies, including, but not limited to, the Department of Labor and the Department of Motor Vehicles, about only applicants for and service recipients of DSS programs and only as necessary for purposes connected with administration of DSS programs.
- Will not access and use information from other state agencies, including, but not limited to, the Department of Labor and the Department of Motor Vehicles concerning individuals who are not applicants or service recipients of the Agency.
- Will not access and use information from other state agencies, including, but not limited to, the Department of Labor and the Department of Motor Vehicles for personal or non-related State business.
- Will request, obtain or communicate confidential information only to the degree that it is minimally necessary to perform assigned duties.
- Will complete all required privacy and security trainings provided by DSS or its contractor, including, but not limited to, initial and annual HIPAA privacy and security trainings, and training on data requirements for the Internal Revenue Services, Social Security Administration and Department of Revenue Services' data.
- Will comply with all applicable DSS and other state and federal privacy and security requirements, including, but not limited to, following all HIPAA and DSS policies and procedures for uses and disclosures and for reporting breaches of client information.
- Will comply with the access requirements and regulations set forth by other State Agencies systems.
- Will properly secure confidential information on computers and ensure that others cannot view or access such information.
- Will protect personal passwords and not give them to anyone without the express written permission from a department head and will not perform tasks using someone else's password.

Consequences of Failure to Comply with Policy:

This Work Rule is the minimum acceptable standard of conduct expected by all employees, interns and volunteers of the Department of Social Services. Any employee who fails to adhere to the above mentioned Work Rule or who violates the Work Rule shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Interns and volunteers who fail to adhere and comply with this Work Rule shall be terminated from their internship or volunteer program. Interns will have their sponsoring program notified of the termination and violation.

Employees, interns and volunteers may be subject to possible civil and criminal penalties for violation of State and Federal laws and regulations.

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT**

I have been provided with this Work Rule and Have had the opportunity to ask for clarification. I fully understand the Work Rule and agree to follow this Work Rule. I understand if I have any questions during the course of my employment regarding the items addressed here that I will seek out the opinion of management.

Please print or type name

Signature

Date