Introduction
The Social Services Block Grant requires each contracting agency create and maintain specific internal policies.

Scope
The Social Services Block Grant has identified specific policy requirements to ensure that service providers maintain high standards.

Policy
The Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) requires each contracting agency create and maintain the following internal policies:

- code of ethics and conduct,
- electronic communications,
- customer relations,
- board of directors' responsibilities,
- client grievances,
- eligibility procedures,
- Specific Assistance, and
- client confidentiality and release of information.

SSBG requires certain policies contain specific elements as described below.

Client Grievances
Written policy must establish processes through which services applicants and recipients may express grievances related to SSBG programs. The grievance/complaint process must be explained to each customer:

- at application disposition
- upon service initiation, and
- any time upon request.

The policy also must specify that clients can appeal to the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) after exhausting the agency's internal process.

Eligibility Procedures
Written policy must establish admission procedures for SSBG services. The policy must:

- be non-discriminatory,
- describe the guidelines by which clients are approved/denied services,
- describe waiting list procedures, and
- identify client groups given priority.

The admissions policy must be approved by the board of directors or equivalent and must not conflict with 14.01 SSBG Eligibility Policy or Procedures.

No person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in admission to or performance of SSBG services on the grounds of handicap or disability, age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or any other classification protected by federal or state law.

Specific Assistance (SA)
Agencies are required to integrate the “Cases with SA to Individuals Only” section of the 14.02 SSBG Fiscal Accountability policy into their official policy documentation. This requirement was implemented by Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS), the licensing authority for personal support services.

Client Confidentiality and Release of Information
Agency policy regarding client confidentiality and release of information must not conflict with 14.11 SSBG Client Confidentiality policy.
Supporting Documents
14.01 SSBG Eligibility Policy
14.01 SSBG Eligibility Procedures
14.02 SSBG Fiscal Accountability

Definitions/Acronyms

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<td>SA</td>
<td>Specific Assistance</td>
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<td>SSBG</td>
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<td>TDHS</td>
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<td>TDMHSAS</td>
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Supersedes
Social Services Block Grant Policy and Procedures Manual
- Grievance Procedure, Page 17
- Admissions Policy/Customer Population, Page 34
- Confidentiality of Client Information, Page 24

Approval History

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<tr>
<td>Clarence H. Carter</td>
<td>Commissioner</td>
<td>09/01/2021</td>
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Revision History

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Approved By

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Clarence H. Carter

Authority

45 CFR 96.70 et seq. [Social Services Block Grants]
42 CFR §§ 1397

Application

Social Services Block Grant Provider Staff

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