

Social Services Block Grant Provider Policy Requirements

Policy 14.08

Effective: September 15, 2021

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](#)[14.11 SSBG Client Confidentiality](#)**Retention of Records**

Added by CQI

Definitions/Acronyms

Term	Definition
SA	Specific Assistance
SSBG	Social Services Block Grant
TDHS	Tennessee Department of Human Services
TDMHSAS	Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

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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Clarence H. Carter	Commissioner	09/01/2021	09/15/2021

Revision History

Date	Version	Location of Change	Description/Reason for Change
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