



Adult Protective Services Collaborative Response to End Self-Neglect in Tennessee (CREST) Program

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I. Purpose

This document explains the procedure for the Collaborative Response to End Self-Neglect in Tennessee program.

II. Definitions

A glossary of terms for the document

| Term | Definition |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ACL | Administration of Community Living |
| APS | Adult Protective Services |
| ARPA | American Rescue Plan Act |
| CCR | Coordinated Community Response |
| CMS | Case Management System |
| DA | District Attorney |
| CREST | Collaborative Response to End Self-Neglect in Tennessee |
| HIPAA | Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 |
| HITECH | Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act |
| LEP | Limited English Proficiency |
| OIG | Office of the Inspector General |
| PII | Personally Identifiable Information |
| Self-Neglect | The result of an adult’s own inability, due to physical and/or mental impairments or diminished capacity, to perform essential self-care tasks including: obtaining essential food, clothing, shelter, and medical care; obtaining goods and services necessary to maintain physical health, mental health, emotional well-being and general safety; and/or managing financial affairs. |
| SSBG | Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) |
| TDHS | Tennessee Department of Human Services |

III. Procedure

Personnel Requirements

At minimum, the candidate must:

1. possess an undergraduate degree from a four (4) year college or university (preferred in a health or social service field).
2. have, at minimum, one (1) year of experience in social services, gerontology, or a related field. If the candidate has no experience in either of these fields, approval may be obtained from APS.
3. complete a background check before initial hire and as needed by the agency's policy/licensure rules. If candidate has convictions, consult with APS director.
4. have reliable transportation, as travel is required for this position.
5. meet all other licensure personnel requirements.

The Collaborative Response to End Self-Neglect in Tennessee (CREST) program will maintain personnel files as required by licensure for the CREST advocates and will notify an APS supervisor within two (2) weeks of any personnel changes or staff unavailability within CREST.

The CREST program shall attend all trainings as required by the State.

Program Eligibility

The individual must meet the Adult Protective Services (APS) age and vulnerability requirements and be a current APS client.

Program Referral Process

The CREST program will serve APS clients as referred by APS which may include clients who may be self-neglecting. Referrals other than self-neglect may be considered. APS staff shall complete the CREST Referral and send to the CREST advocate along with the latest APS assessment.

Face-to-Face Assessment

The advocate shall explain the CREST Participant Authorization and get them signed by the individual receiving services during the face-to-face visit.

The advocate shall develop, in consultation with the individual, an action and safety plan on what services are needed, what services can be provided, and which services needed were referred to other programs.

Case Handling Requirements

Upon receiving a referral for services, the advocate shall verify that the referred individual is eligible for services within ten (10) business days. Clients who are at crisis risk shall be seen as soon as possible. APS will accompany the CREST advocate on the initial visit after the referral is received and evaluated. The CREST advocate shall review the CREST Participant Authorization with the client and obtain written approval prior to discussing any client-specific personally identifiable information (PII), as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), with any outside entity or person.

Ongoing Contact Requirements

Contact must be maintained with the client at least every thirty (30) calendar days for the duration of the case. If any of the following circumstances exist, monthly contact must be completed in person:

- The client lacks, or is suspected to lack, capacity,

- The client does not have a working telephone,
- The client cannot communicate adequately by phone due to a speech or hearing impairment,
- There are environmental concerns, or
- Attempts to complete a visit by phone have been unsuccessful.

Attempts to complete a visit by phone should be made well before the thirtieth (30th) day. If phone attempts are unsuccessful, an in-person visit must be completed by the thirtieth (30th) day.

If an in-home service provider is assisting the client, the provider must be contacted to confirm the services are meeting the client's identified needs. If services involve improving the client's living environment, such as homemaker services, an in-person visit is required to confirm the services are adequate to meet the identified need. An in-person visit is required if the appropriateness of services being provided, regardless of the service type, cannot be confirmed by phone.

If the CREST advocate is unable to reach a client and has reason or should have reason to suspect the safety of the client or referred vulnerable adult could be at stake, the advocate shall take all appropriate actions including referring to/contacting APS or requesting a wellness check from the appropriate authorities.

Case Closure

APS staff will keep CREST cases open until the client's immediate and emergency needs have been met and shall notify the CREST advocate prior to APS case closure. If the APS case is closed, here are three reasons that the CREST provider may close the case without approval:

- The CREST advocate provided client-centered services until the client's risks were reduced/increased safety (verified services are in place)
- The client refuses services
- There is a waitlist of more than thirty (30) days for a service and the client is not at a crisis or vulnerable risk. For waitlists for clients at a crisis or vulnerable risk, the CREST advocate shall inform the APS worker to determine next steps.

Note: If the CREST provider is considering closing for any other reason than listed above, APS must be consulted.

Note: If the APS case is closed, APS staff can and shall continue to support the CREST advocate with brainstorming ways around obstacles in meeting clients' needs and addressing issues that may arise while the CREST case is open. A new report shall be assigned (open case) if there is:

- a need for APS staff to make any visits,
- request information (medical), or
- to make calls to others involved in the case that are not typical partners (CREST, district attorney (DA), law enforcement)

Changes in Client Circumstances

The CREST client may need additional previously unidentified services from the CREST program after the APS case is closed. If the additional need does not involve specific assistance, the CREST advocate can provide the additional services without APS approval. If the additional need requires specific assistance funding, the CREST advocate shall notify the APS worker and team coordinator of the client's need to obtain approval. APS may accept a new report if the client's situation changes that results in an increased risk.

Eligible Program Services

The CREST advocates will provide emergency, client-centered services and resources as specified through the State, APS, and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) policies and procedures as appropriate.

These services must be related to the identified needs of the APS client, and they may include but are not limited to:

1. Emergency housing assistance
2. Emergency food and clothing
3. Home modification
4. Transportation
5. Durable medical equipment
6. Medication
7. Personal care services
8. Homemaker services

The CREST provider shall give direct/specific assistance to APS clients in the CREST program as identified by APS. APS staff and CREST providers shall exhaust other possible payor sources prior to using CREST funds.

Program Data Collection and Monthly Reporting

The program will collect and document client information and services and report the data to TDHS on or before the fifteenth (15th) of the month for the preceding month. The CREST Monthly Report must be submitted to the Program Director, CREST Coordinator, Field Operations Director, and appropriate Regional Supervisor.

The CREST provider shall submit via email to fiscalcommsvs.dhs@tn.gov a monthly invoice for reimbursement on or before the twenty-fifth (25th) day of the month for the preceding month.

Program Records Retention

The CREST program will maintain all CREST records for six (6) years, which is consistent with the [record retention for APS](#). Paper records may be destroyed after uploading to the case management system (CMS).

Program Non-Discrimination

The CREST provider shall complete civil rights training within three (3) months of hire for each staff member paid or working, either directly or indirectly, on the CREST program, and annually thereafter per their agency licensure requirements.

The CREST provider shall take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in services, activities, programs, and all other benefits through CREST providers. All interpreters, translators, and other aids needed to comply with this policy shall be provided without cost to the person being served or their designee and shall be notified of the availability of such assistance free of charge.

Reporting Potential Fraud, Waste, and Abuse, and Similar Misconduct

Grantees who suspect potential fraud, waste, abuse, or similar misconduct shall be reported to the TDHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) as soon as possible at the contact information below:

- Human Services Fraud Hotline: 1-800-241-2629,
- Within the Nashville Area: (615) 741-7445, or
- Email your information to the InspectorGeneral.DHS@tn.gov

TDHS employees may also notify the State of Tennessee Comptroller's Office of any illegal acts or irregularities and/or proposed actual actions. Please notify the State of Tennessee Comptroller's Office Hotline at 1-800-232-5454 of any irregularities that occur. Illegal acts include, but are not limited to:

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- conflicts of interest,
- falsification of records or reports,
- misappropriation of funds or other assets, and/or
- fraud, waste, or abuse.