



Administrative Policies and Procedures: 23.20

Subject Family Focused Solutions (FFS)

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Approval Date: 01/29/2018

Effective Date: 02/15/2018

Authority Tenn. Rules & Regs. Ch. 1240-01-49

Application Families First Eligibility Counselors, Client Representatives, and Contractors.

Policy Statement

Families First shall provide FFS as a support service that is available to customers.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process for identifying customers who may benefit from FFS services and making referrals to Family Focused Solutions (FFS). FFS is designed to be a support service to aid customers in removing barriers to employment and/or education.

Procedures

A. Family Focused Solutions

1. FFS is available to all Families First assistance units (AU) that contain a child(ren) and/or an eligible adult who faces any barrier to work and/or education.
 - a) This includes both customers who are required to participate in a work and/or educational activity and customers who are exempt from the work and/or educational activity.
 - b) Children can also receive FFS simultaneously with their caretaker.
2. FFS will provide assistance to customers struggling with issues related to, but not limited to, any of the following:
 - a) Physical or Mental health,
 - b) Domestic violence,
 - c) Substance abuse,
 - d) Learning disability or other developmental disorders,

- e) Management of stress,
 - f) Teen/young adult pregnancy and parenting,
 - g) Children's health or behavioral problems, and/or
 - h) Legal issues.
3. FFS counselors are available to all county offices and to all Employment and Case Management Services (ECMS) providers. Some counselors may cover more than one (1) county, making them available to each county on a rotating basis.
 4. The eligibility counselor, client representative, and/or ECMS provider will inform All Families First AUs of the availability and content of FFS.

B. Referrals

1. Families First customers receive referrals to FFS on the [HS-2946 Family Focused Solutions Referral/Feedback](#) form when a barrier or potential barrier to employment is identified.
 - a) Eligibility counselors will refer customers who are exempt from the work and/or educational activity.
 - b) Client representatives will refer customers who are mandatory participants in a work and/or educational activity and have had a barrier identified on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Screening Tool
 - c) ECMS providers will refer customers with an active work and/or educational activity. ECMS must notify the client representative when a referral to FFS is made.
 - d) A customer can request a referral to FFS any time while receiving Families First cash assistance. The customer does not have to provide a reason for the request.
2. The customer must agree to receive the referral for FFS:
 - a) If the customer agrees to be referred:
 - The referral to FFS is completed,
 - The customer is given the option of receiving a short-term temporary crisis exemption until the assessment is complete, and
 - Participation in the work and/or educational activity will be evaluated upon receipt of the feedback from the FFS provider.
 - b) If the customer does not agree to an FFS referral or does not complete the assessment:
 - The refusal will be noted in the case file, and
 - Other possible exemptions must be explored. If no other exemptions exist, the customer will be referred to ECMS.

C. Appointments and Communication

1. Information needed to complete the Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP) and the Individual Career Plan (ICP) and/or the Family Empowerment Plan (FEP) for work and/or educational activity provisions is shared between the eligibility counselor, client representative, ECMS provider, and the FFS counselor.

2. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter and the confidentiality of the customer/counselor relationship, some information related to FFS will not be shared with the eligibility counselor, client representative, and/or the ECMS provider.

Federal law on substance abuse and mental health treatment contains rigid confidentiality rules that must not be violated. There may be some information on activities and barriers that will not be shared with the eligibility counselor, client representative and/or ECMS provider, unless the customer allows it by using the HS-2983 Family Focused Solutions Consent for Release of Confidential Information form. For example, if a customer needs treatment for a mental health condition, the eligibility counselor/client representative will know that the customer has two (2) hours a week of FFS, and may know that the person is in treatment, but may not know that the treatment is for a mental health condition.

3. FFS will:
 - a) Contact the customers and schedule an appointment upon receipt of the referral.
 - b) Provide feedback via email of the customer's initial appointment to the client representative or eligibility counselor within fourteen (14) calendar days of the referral. This feedback will include the scheduled appointment date and whether the customer attended the appointment, if that date has occurred.
 - c) Complete the "self-sufficiency assessment and matrix" with the customer and submit the results along with any recommendations to the client representative within thirty (30) calendar days of the referral.
 - The assessment results will include, but are not limited to:
 - i. identification of the customer's barrier(s) to employment;
 - ii. an assessment of the customer's ability to participate in the required work and/or educational activity and the number of hours the customer is able to participate per week;
 - iii. a determination of any accommodations that are necessary to enable the customer to successfully participate in their work and/or educational activity, if required;
 - iv. identification of the customer's and the family's short term and long term goals; and
 - v. identification of additional resources and services such as Vocational Rehabilitation or other community agencies based on the customer's assessment, the customer and family's goals, and length of services.
 - If the assessment cannot be completed within the thirty (30) calendar day timeframe as a result of the customer missing appointments, this must be noted on the [HS-2946 Family Focused Solutions Referral/Feedback](#) form.
 - d) Advise the client representative of the number of hours the customer will be participating with FFS, and if the customer's PRP

work and/or educational activity hours will require modification.

- e) Verify the customer's active Families First status monthly.
 - f) Advise the client representative, ECMS provider, and/or eligibility counselor within three (3) business days of termination of FFS services.
4. The client representative or eligibility counselor must notify FFS within three (3) business days of taking action to close the Families First case.
 5. All information needed to complete the PRP will be shared between the eligibility counselor, client representative, ECMS provider, and FFS counselor.

D. Exceptions to confidentiality

1. There are exceptions to the confidential relationship between the FFS counselor and the Families First customer:
 - a) Incidents or suspicion of physical and/or sexual abuse or neglect of a child must by law be reported to the appropriate authority.
 - b) Incidents of direct threats of harm to self or others will be reported to the appropriate agency or persons.
 - c) Information can be disclosed as a result of a court order or subpoena.
 - d) Information can be disclosed to medical personnel in a medical emergency or to qualified personnel for research, audit, Medical Evaluation Unit (MEU) incapacity determination, or program evaluation.
2. When the FFS counselor discusses confidentiality during the initial assessment, he/she will present [HS-3229 Family Focused Solutions Services Informed Consent](#) for the customer to sign stating that he/she agrees with and understands these exceptions to the confidentiality policy.
3. FFS cannot be provided to a customer who will not sign the consent form. If the customer refuses to sign the consent form, the FFS counselor will notify the eligibility counselor, client representative, and/or ECMS provider who made the initial FFS referral about this refusal. The eligibility counselor, client representative, or ECMS provider will then remove FFS as a support service.

E. Post-Assessment Feedback

When the assessment has been completed, the FFS Counselor will provide the feedback information to the client representative who will:

1. Review the feedback results.
2. Make the final decision on a need for an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation.
3. Document the FFS assessment results in the case record.
4. Refer the customer to the ECMS provider within three (3) business days of receipt of the feedback.
5. Share the FFS feedback with ECMS as appropriate.
6. Indicate on the work and/or educational activity referral the type of accommodation needed, if appropriate.
7. Remove the Temporary Short Term Crisis and add the appropriate activity

code.

8. Document how the ECMS provider applied the ADA accommodation.

F. FFS Activities and Job Search/Job Readiness

1. If a customer is participating in FFS activities, up to two hours of FFS activities can be countable toward Job Search/Job Readiness hours. This option is allowable when he/she has not exhausted the four (4) consecutive week limitation or the twelve (12) week total within a calendar year beginning with the date of engagement with ECMS.
 1. If the customer chooses to count his/her FFS activity hours toward Job Search/Job Readiness hours and fails to participate in FFS, any non-compliance is subject to sanction.
 2. In order to receive supportive services from ECMS, the customer must be engaged with ECMS for at least one (1) hour in addition to the FFS activity.
2. If the customer is not participating in Job Search/Job Readiness or the Job Search/Job Readiness limitations have been exhausted, the FFS activity will only be treated as a supportive service.

G. Existing Treatment Programs and Domestic Violence Safety Plans

If a customer indicates that he/she is in a treatment program or has initiated a safety plan to escape domestic violence, the eligibility counselor, client representative, or ECMS provider should offer an FFS referral.

1. FFS counselors will not change a customer's existing treatment program or safety plan.
2. FFS counselors will assess the customer's situation to determine if other services are needed in addition to the treatment program or safety plan.
3. FFS will offer services in addition to the treatment program or safety plan without interrupting the existing plan.

H. Transitional FFS

The FFS provider may offer transitional services for up to six (6) sessions over a three (3) month period following the closure of the Families First Case for any reason to support the family's transition.

I. Documentation

The information that is documented concerning a customer's participation in FFS must be limited to information that is pertinent to the customer's Families First eligibility. The reason for the referral and/or specific barriers must not be documented. The documentation should be limited to:

1. Noting that FFS was discussed with the customer;
2. Whether the customer agreed to a referral to FFS;
3. When the referral was sent;
4. Who sent the referral;
5. Whether the customer is attending FFS as part of their activity, and the number of hours; and
6. General information from the FFS Assessment as it pertains to eligibility and participations.

Forms	HS-2983 Family Focused Solutions Consent for Release of Confidential Information
	HS-2983sp Family Focused Solutions Consent for Release of Confidential Information (Spanish)
	HS-2946 Family Focused Solutions Referral/Feedback
	HS-3229 Family Focused Solutions Services Informed Consent
	HS-3229sp Family Focused Solutions Services Informed Consent (Spanish)
	Families First ADA Screening Tool (internal use only)

Collateral Documents	Family Focused Solutions Procedures
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Additional Resources	None
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Retention of Records	Pending
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Glossary

Term	Definition
Treatment Program	A mental health, drug and/or alcohol, or process addiction therapeutic regimen.
Safety Plan	A personalized, practical plan that includes ways to remain safe while in a relationship, planning to leave, or after you leave. Safety planning involves how to cope with emotions, tell friends and family about the abuse, take legal action, and more.

Acronyms

Abbreviation	Expansion
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ECMS	Employment and Case Management Services
FEP	Family Empowerment Plan
FFS	Family Focused Solutions

MEU	Medical Evaluation Unit
PRP	Personal Responsibility Plan

Supersedes Families First Online Policy Manual Chapter 28
Families First Handbook PP 272-278

Bulletins

- #22, FA-10-11
- #9, FA-09-08 as it applies to Family Services Counseling
- #37, FA-08-28
- #29 FA-08-21
- #14, FA-08-10 as it applies to Family Services Counseling
- #10, FA-08-07
- #27, FA-06-21
- #28 FA-04-26
- #14, FA-03-12
- #08, FA-03-07
- #06, FA-03-05
- #1, FA-01-01
- FA-01-26

Memo

- FF-07-10
- FF-06-14
- FFS-05-01
- FFS-05-02
- FF-04-04
- FF-03-27
- FF-03-02
- FFS-03-02
- FFS-03-03
- FF-02-09
- FF-02-22

Families First/TANF Policy Q&A

- December 2015, Family Focused Solutions Section #1