



Human Resources Administration
Department of Social Services
Customized Assistance Services



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WeCARE Procedure

Sequential Evaluation & the Sequential Evaluation Tool

The purpose of this procedure is to provide Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, Rehabilitation and Employment (WeCARE) vendors both context and practical guidance as they implement the Sequential Evaluation (SE) process in the Biopsychosocial (BPS) assessments and Clinical Review Team (CRT) reviews. Although some of the general principles of SE have always been a part of WeCARE's program design, this bulletin, staff training and the Sequential Evaluation Tool (SET), will ensure that there is standardized and consistent application of SE at BPS and CRT. Consistent application of SE will assist in identifying clients that may be eligible for federal disability benefits and will produce enhanced documentation to support Supplemental Security Income (SSI) applications.

Sequential Evaluation

The SE is a series of steps/questions used by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to review applications for federal disability including SSI and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). The steps/questions are followed in a set order, and the answers to each of these questions determine whether the individual may be eligible for federal disability benefits, may not be eligible, or whether the evaluator must continue to the next question(s) until a final determination on potential eligibility for federal disability benefits has been made. SE questions can include whether an individual is working; whether the individual has a medical/mental health impairment that affects basic work activities and meets SSA's durational requirement; whether the condition(s) meets or equals one of SSA's criteria (listings) for disability; and whether the individual can perform past relevant work or make an adjustment to any other type of work.

Sequential Evaluation Tool

The SET is a an electronic application developed by HRA to be used by the relevant Qualified Healthcare Professionals (QHP) at WeCARE BPS and CRT sites to conduct the SE. The system guides staff in the process, records answers to each question, allows comments when applicable, documents functional limitations and SSA listings that may apply, and assists in determining applicable medical-vocational profiles. Note that if the Residual Functional Capacity (RFC) cannot be determined during a CRT, the vendor should refer the client for a new BPS.

Timing of Sequential Evaluation

QHPs should use the SET to determine each client's potential eligibility for federal disability benefits immediately prior to assigning the client an FCO following completion of a BPS Phase I or following a review by the CRT. The QHP follows the questions within the SET to determine if the client's condition(s) or limitations may qualify the client for SSI.

Sequential Evaluation Process

Initial Questions (Steps 1 through 3)

Step 1 determines if the client is engaged in substantial gainful activity (SGA) as defined by the SSA. If a client is earning income above SGA limits, the SE process is complete and the client is not eligible for federal disability benefits. If the client is not earning SGA, the vendor proceeds to Step 2.

Step 2 determines if the individual has a medical and/or mental health condition severe enough to result in exertional or non-exertional functional limitations that interfere with basic work activities. If the answer is "no", the SE process is complete and the client is not eligible for federal disability. If the answer is "yes", the vendor proceeds to Step 3.

Step 3 determines if the impairment has lasted or is expected to last for 12 or more months or is expected to result in death. If the answer is "no", the SE process is complete and the client is not eligible for federal disability. If the answer is "yes", the vendor proceeds to Step 4.

The screenshot displays the NYCWAY Federal Disability Sequential Evaluation Tool interface. At the top, there is a header with the NYCWAY logo and the title "Federal Disability Sequential Evaluation Tool". Below the header, there are four tabs: "1 Initial", "2 Impairments", "3 RFC Assessment", and "4 Grid Rule". The "1 Initial" tab is currently selected.

The "Client Demographics Information" section contains the following data:

Client Name:	Test, Test	Case Number:	1234567890-01-01	Appreg:	1234567890	Evaluation ID:	00005125
CIN:	A899999C	SSN:	A899999C	Gender:	Female	Age:	39 (Younger (18-44))
DOB:	12/31/9999	Ind Status:	07: Active	Primary Status:	FIA		
Case Type:	FA: Family Assistance	Emp Code:	MANDATORY EMPLOYMENT PROG	Secondary Status:	PENDING REBUDGETING		

Below the demographics section, there are three questions with radio button options for "Yes" and "No":

1. Is the client engaging in substantial gainful activity (for 2015 earning over \$1,090 per month or over \$1,820 per month if legally blind)? Yes No
2. Does the client have a physical and/or mental impairment that is severe enough to interfere with basic work activities? Yes No
3. Has the impairment lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of 12 or more months or can be expected to result in death? Yes No

At the bottom of the form, there are four buttons: "Prev", "Clear", "Save", and "Next".

Impairments (Step 4)

Step 4 determines if the impairment meets the criteria for one of SSA’s listings of medical and mental health conditions that are considered so severe as to qualify an individual fully for SSI/SSDI. These can be found in SSA’s *Disability Evaluation Under Social Security Listing of Impairments* (“the listings”). A client may not meet the exhaustive criteria for a listing, but they may have a combination of conditions which, when taken together, the QHP believes would equal a listing. If the answer is “yes”, the SE process is complete and the individual may be eligible for federal disability. If the answer is “no”, the vendor proceeds to Step 5.

Client Demographics Information		1 Initial		2 Impairments		3 RFC Assessment		4 Grid Rule	
Client Name:	Test, Test	Case Number:	1234567890-01-01	Appreg:	1234567890	Evaluation ID:	00005125		
CIN:	AB99999C	SSN:	AB99999C	Gender:	Female	Age:	39 (Younger (18-44))		
DOB:	12/31/9999	Ind Status:	07: Active	Primary Status:	FIA				
Case Type:	FA: Family Assistance	Emp Code:	MANDATORY EMPLOYMENT PROG	Secondary Status:	PENDING REBUDGETING				

01.00 Musculoskeletal	(Please select the Impairments Information from the below list)
02.00 Special Senses and Speech	Please select Musculoskeletal from the below list.
03.00 Respiratory System	<input type="checkbox"/> 01.01 Category of Impairments, Musculoskeletal
04.00 Cardiovascular Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> 01.02 Major dysfunction of a joint(s) (due to any cause)
05.00 Digestive Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> 01.03 Reconstructive surgery or surgical arthrodesis of a major weight-bearing joint.
06.00 Genitourinary Impairments	<input type="checkbox"/> 01.04 Disorders of the spine
07.00 Hematological Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> 01.05 Amputation (due to any cause)
08.00 Skin Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> 01.06 Fracture of the femur tibia pelvis or one or more of the tarsal bones
	<input type="checkbox"/> 01.07 Fracture of an upper extremity
	<input type="checkbox"/> 01.08 Soft tissue injury (e.g.burns)

4. Does the impairment(s) meet or equal the listing? Yes No

Residual Functional Capacity Assessment (Step 5)

Step 5 first requires a review of exertional/non-exertional medical and/or psychiatric limitations and the resulting RFC, which is the most a client can do despite functional limitations. Step 5 determines if the individual retains the RFC to perform past relevant work. Past relevant work is defined by SSA as “work that an individual has done within the past 15 years, that was a substantial gainful activity, and that lasted long enough for him/her to learn to do it.” If the answer is “yes”, the SE process is complete and the client is not eligible for federal disability. If the answer is “no”, the vendor proceeds to Step 6.

Client Name: Test, Test	Case Number: 1234567890-01-01	Appreg: 1234567890	Evaluation ID: 00005125
CIN: AB99999C	SSN: AB99999C	Gender: Female	Age: 39 (Younger (18-44))
DOB: 12/31/9999	Ind Status: 07: Active	Primary Status: FIA	
Case Type: FA: Family Assistance	Emp Code: MANDATORY EMPLOYMENT PROG	Secondary Status: PENDING REBUDGETING	

RFC Assessments	
Are there any medical exertional functional limitations for the client, such as lifting, standing, walking, pushing, pulling or sitting, etc.? Examples	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Unknown
Explain	
Are there any medical non-exertional functional limitations for the client, such as sensory, postural, manipulative, communicative, or environmental? Examples	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Unknown
Explain	
Are there any psychiatric/cognitive limitations for the client in understanding and memory, sustained concentration and persistence, or social interactions and adaptation? Examples	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Unknown
5. Does the client retain the residual functional capacity (RFC) to perform past relevant work?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Unable To Determine

Grid Rules (Step 6)

Step 6 determines if the client retains the capacity to perform any type of work. If there are exertional limitations, then Step 6 takes into account the previously determined RFC or “occupational base” along with the client’s age, education, and work experience to determine if s/he meets any of SSA’s medical vocational profiles (“Grid Rules”) which may deem a client eligible or not eligible for federal disability. The SET compares the limitations and vocational/educational/age factors to the Medical Vocational Chart to see which, if any, Grid Rule may be applicable. If the Grid Rules determine a client not eligible, if there is no applicable grid rule, or if there are other non-exertional limitations to consider, the QHP has a final opportunity to decide whether the combination of medical exertional, medical non-exertional and psychiatric non-exertional limitations would still reduce the client’s RFC such that s/he could not perform other work. If the answer to this question is “yes”, the SE process is complete and the individual is not eligible for federal disability. If the answer is “no”, the SE process is also complete, but the client may be eligible for federal disability.

Client Demographics Information

1 Initial 2 Impairments 3 RFC Assessment 4 Grid Rule

Client Name: Test, Test	Case Number: 1234567890-01-01	Appreg: 1234567890	Evaluation ID: 00005125
CIN: A899999C	SSN: A899999C	Gender: Female	Age: 39 (Younger (18-44))
DOB: 12/31/9999	Ind Status: 07: Active	Primary Status: FIA	
Case Type: FA: Family Assistance	Emp Code: MANDATORY EMPLOYMENT PROG	Secondary Status: PENDING REBUDGETING	

Occupational Base: -- Select -- [Guidelines](#)

Education Level: -- Select --

Skill Type: -- Select -- [Guidelines](#)

Medical Vocational Chart: -- Select --

6. Based on the exertional limitations which meet one of the grid rule profiles, does the client retain the residual functional capacity(RFC) to perform other work? Yes No

Comments:

6a. Based on the non-exertional/Psychiatric limitations OR the exertional limitations that do not meet a grid rule profile, does the client retain the residual functional capacity(RFC) to perform other work? Yes No

Comments:

Prev Clear Save Next

Occupational Base: -- Select -- [Guidelines](#)

Education Level: -- Select --

Skill Type: Unknown [Guidelines](#)

Medical Vocational Chart: -- Select --

Occupational Base: -- Select -- [Guidelines](#)

Education Level: -- Select --

Skill Type: At least literate/limited ability to communicate in English [Guidelines](#)

Medical Vocational Chart: -- Select --

Occupational Base: -- Select -- [Guidelines](#)

Education Level: -- Select --

Skill Type: -- Select -- [Guidelines](#)

Medical Vocational Chart: -- Select --

6. Based on the exertional limitations which meet one of the grid rule profiles, does the client retain the residual functional capacity(RFC) to perform other work? Yes No

Occupational Base	Sedentary	Guidelines
Education Level	Limited or less (education at or above 7th but less than 11th grade)	
Skill Type	Unskilled	Guidelines
Medical Vocational Chart	-- Select -- 201.24: Younger (18-44)/ Limited or less/ Unskilled/ Sedentary/[Not Eligible]	

6. Based on the exertional limitations which meet one the of grid rule profiles, does the client retain the residual functional capacity(RFC) to perform other work?

Occupational Base	Sedentary	Guidelines
Education Level	Limited or less (education at or above 7th but less than 11th grade)	
Skill Type	Unskilled	Guidelines
Medical Vocational Chart	201.24: Younger (18-44)/ Limited or less/ Unskilled/ Sedentary/[Not Eligible]	

6. Based on the exertional limitations which meet one the of grid rule profiles, does the client retain the residual functional capacity(RFC) to perform other work? Yes No

Comments: test Remaining characters : 247/250

The Answer(s) to the above question(s) will lead to **NOT Eligible** evaluation outcome. Click NEXT to proceed with the outcome.

6a. Based on the non-exertional/Psychiatric limitations OR the exertional limitations that do not meet a grid rule profile, does the client retain the residual functional capacity(RFC) to perform other work? Yes No

Comments: test Remaining characters : 247/250

The Answer to the above question will lead to Potentially Eligible evaluation outcome. Click NEXT to proceed with the outcome

Prev Clear Save Next

For clients whose SE determines they are potentially eligible for SSI/SSDI, the FCO should be **Unable to Work**. For clients whose SE determination is not eligible for SSI/SSDI, one of the other four FCO determinations would be chosen based on each client's individual clinical circumstances.

Sequential Evaluation Report

Once the SE process is complete and the reviewer finalizes/submits the entries, the SET automatically generates a client-specific report based on the questions answered that includes a client's potential eligibility for SSI/SSDI. The SE report becomes part of the client record and assists in informing the client's Functional Capacity Outcome (FCO). The report should accompany BPS, CRT and other relevant clinical documents with applications for federal disability benefits. It can be accessed for review in the SE system and is automatically committed to HRA's imaging system.

Use of the Sequential Evaluation Report for SSI Applications

For clients that receive an FCO of *Unable to Work*, the SET report, along with the BPS or CRT report and other clinical documents in the case record relevant to supporting the SSI application, becomes the basis on which case managers construct or supplement the client's application for federal disability benefits. Case

managers should use the conditions and limitations as the outline of items that they should include in applications, and the commentary of the QHP as well as indicated limitations should demonstrate the impact on the client's ability to work. Case managers should also use the conditions and limitations documented in the SE, WeCARE clinical documents, and other relevant clinical documents as a guide to determining, what, if any, other clinical documentation they should request from the client or, at the client's request, assist in obtaining.

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