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Administrative Directive

Section 1

Transmittal:	03 ADM 2
To:	Local District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Division of Transitional Supports and Policy
Date:	February 24, 2003
Subject:	Desk Reference for DV Screening under the Family Violence Option
Suggested Distribution:	Temporary Assistance Staff Employment Staff TOP Coordinator Domestic Violence Liaisons Directors of Services
Contact Person(s):	Deb McArdle at (518) 474-2828 Ruth Ann Pickering at (518) 473-6661
Attachments:	Desk Reference For Domestic Violence Screening LDSS-4813
Attachment Available On – Line:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Filing References

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
98 ADM-3		18 NYCRR 351.2(l)	SSL 459 a-g		

Section 2

I. Purpose

The purpose of this release is to provide local social services districts (LDSS) with updated information on the domestic violence (DV) screening process for the Family Violence Option (FVO). The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, the Office of Children & Family Services, and the Professional Development Program, Rockefeller College, University at Albany has developed a desk reference for Temporary Assistance (TA) workers and other staff who screen for DV. This desk reference contains policy information and a sample guide for staff to use when screening TA applicants/recipients to insure that consistent and accurate information regarding the FVO is provided as part of the screening process.

II. Background

The Federal Wellstone-Murray FVO allowed states to address the safety needs of DV victims and their children under the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) plan. In March 1998, OTDA issued 98 ADM-3 that advised Local Department's of Social Services (LDSSs) of the new requirements to implement the FVO. This process involves identifying persons who are currently victims of DV and offering temporary waivers of TA program requirements where compliance with such requirements would place the victim and/or the victim's children at greater risk of harm or make it more difficult for them to escape from abuse. The regulations, which implement the FVO, require that:

- all applicants for and recipients of TA receive information about DV and the protections and services available;
- as part of the application and recertification process, applicants/recipients will be screened to determine those currently affected by DV;
- disclosure will be voluntary and confidential; and
- individuals who self-identify as victims must be referred to a specially trained domestic violence liaison (DVL) who will assess whether the DV claim is credible and whether it impacts the individual's ability to meet TA program requirements such as child support cooperation requirements, work activity requirements, and other TA requirements.

Research has shown that rates of disclosure of DV among TA clients increase when TA workers directly ask clients about DV during the interview process. Although some workers may have concerns about asking clients about DV, direct questioning has been shown to be the most effective approach. Research suggests that most workers are comfortable with direct questioning about DV if:

- The questions aren't too intrusive;
- the questions are presented in the context of agency concern about client safety;
- and there are supportive services available.

III. Program Implications

The TA worker performs an important function of screening for DV within a complex social services environment. Studies show that DV is a factor in the lives of a high percentage of women receiving TA. One study conducted by the Center for Impact Research claims that up to 80% of women receiving TA may be survivors of or attempting to escape violent relationships. DV may interfere with a woman's efforts to achieve TA program goals related to work and self-sufficiency.

Under the FVO, all applicants and recipients of TA must be screened for DV using the Domestic Violence Screening Form (LDSS-4583) during the application/recertification process, whenever the client requests a screening or anytime DV is indicated. The screening form is the means by which victims of DV, who apply for and/or receive TA, gain access to the DVL who can then work with them to assess the need for waivers and other services related to DV. Completion of the DV Screening Form is voluntary and confidential.

The "Desk Reference for Domestic Violence Screening under the Family Violence Option Form" (LDSS-4813) is an additional tool that was developed to assist staff that is responsible for DV screening. The form will assist the worker in providing the applicant/recipient with the information they need to make a decision as to whether they want to be referred to the DVL.

The DVL will determine if the individual is a victim of DV and determine the need for a waiver from TA program requirements. It is anticipated that providing TA workers with a sample guide to use when explaining the FVO will assist them to more clearly explain the purpose of the DV screening while ensuring that all requirements of the FVO are met.

IV. Required Action

State regulations require that all applicants for and recipients of TA receive information about domestic violence and the protections and services available. As part of the application and recertification process, applicants/recipients will be screened to determine those currently affected by domestic violence using the “Domestic Violence Screening Form” (LDSS-4583). Completing this form is voluntary and confidential. Individuals who self-identify as victims of domestic violence must be referred to a specially trained domestic violence liaison who will assess whether the domestic violence claim is credible and whether it impacts the individual’s ability to meet TA program requirements.

In addition to all requirements listed above, LDSSs are strongly encouraged to require all workers who are doing screening for DV to use the “Desk Reference for Domestic Violence Screening Under the Family Violence Option” (LDSS-4813) as an additional tool when explaining the FVO to TA applicants/recipients.

V. Systems Implications

None

VI. Additional Information

A supply of the form, LDSS-4813 “Desk Reference for Domestic Violence Screening Under the Family Violence Option” will be drop shipped to districts in the near future. Districts must distribute this form to the appropriate staff responsible for DV screening. Requests for future supplies of this form should be submitted on Form OTDA-876 (Rev. 2/00): “Request for Forms or Publications”, and should be sent to:

NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Document Services
P.O. Box 1990
Albany, NY 12201

Questions concerning ordering forms should be directed to Document Services by calling 1-800-343-8859, ext. 4-9522.

VII. Effective Date

Immediately

Issued By

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