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MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 12, 2007

TO: Regional Workforce Board Executive Directors

FROM: Lois A. Scott, Program Manager, One-Stop and Program Support 

SUBJECT: Making a Welfare Transition Case Mandatory

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) determines the eligibility of public assistance applicants. Data entered on the Florida Online Recipient Integrated Data Access (FLORIDA) system is sent in the form of a record at night through a communication process called an “interface.” This information is interpreted and generates specific notifications or actions in the One-Stop Service Tracking (OSST) system. This may include notification that a case is open and receiving assistance, or this may include notification that a case is no longer getting assistance and should be closed by workforce.

Work eligible individuals receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) are referred to the Career Centers to be engaged in work activities to move the individual towards self-sufficiency. The FLORIDA system indicates that a case should be created or opened in the workforce data entry system through information in the record sent through the interface. This information is sent to the responsible Regional Workforce Board (RWB) or associated provider. The responsible party engages the participant in the Welfare Transition (WT) program. Information regarding participant engagement and compliance is recorded in the system.

Recently, the RWBs have reported that work eligible individuals receiving time limited assistance and referred to the WT program based on FLORIDA’s screens are not being referred to the correct RWB. The interface is either rejecting the record, or the FLORIDA system is not sending the record to the OSST system in the interface. As a result, the RWB cannot record participation in countable work activities in the OSST system. The inability to record participation data is negatively impacting both the RWB’s and the State’s performance.

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First, the memorandum includes steps the RWB or provider can take to ensure cases that are not updated by the interface are located. The memorandum also includes changes in OSST that have been made to help RWBs in the case of an interface error.

Steps to Find Missing Cases or Cases Not Referred in the Interface

The best method for ensuring cases are referred timely by the interface is by monitoring applicant cases. Work eligible applicants of cash assistance are sent to the Career Centers to complete the local work registration process. Applicants are required to comply with work requirements established for applicants prior to receiving assistance.

1. The RWB should enter the applicant's information in the OSST system. All WT support services provided to applicants and activity engagement must be recorded in OSST.
 - a. If the applicant has a record in the OSST system, the RWB can reopen the case and enter applicant services. Closed cases located in a different region can be moved through the Work Registration process. The Work Registration process can be started using the Work Registration link on the user's Desktop. The user enters the applicant's social security number (SSN). The OSST system will search for the participant's information. If the information is in the system, the next screen will populate with the basic information. The user will be allowed to move the case to the user's Region/County/Unit.
 - b. If a case does not exist in the OSST system, the individual's information may be entered in the system through the Work Registration process located on the user's Desktop screen. Once the user enters the applicant's Social Security Number, a data entry screen will populate. All required information must be entered and saved. The case will be created under the user's caseload.
2. The user should set a To-Do using the Case To-Dos link on the menu (left of the screen under the open case folder emblem).
 - a. Select Re-opened Case or Special Alert from the Type dropdown box.
 - b. Enter a Start Date and End/Due Date. This date should be 20 to 30 days from the date the participant comes in to start the work registration process.
3. The To-Do will appear under Case To-Dos on the user's Desktop. This is a reminder to go to the FLORIDA screens and review the case status. If the case is referred to the WT program and receiving cash assistance during the month, the case may be mandatory for participation in the WT program.
4. Take the steps indicated under the following section to request a review of the case status. If the participant is a cash assistance recipient and required to participate in the WT program, the RWB contact can request that the case be made mandatory through the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI).

Making a Case Mandatory in OSST

1. The RWB should ensure supervisors and front-line staff are trained to review cases in the FLORIDA system to determine if a case that should have been sent in the interface record is missing. A local operating procedure should be developed outlining the process

for front-line staff to report a possible error. The local operating procedure should identify the staff responsible for contacting the AWI. Front-line staff should not be contacting the AWI directly. To ensure staff report all problems to the appropriate party, the contact listed in the local operating procedure should complete the following steps:

- Receive notices from front-line staff regarding cases that may be missing because of an interface error;
 - Review the cases to determine the family is receiving cash assistance and required to participate in the WT program; and
 - Send requests to Erica Mott via email for a case review. If the family is receiving cash assistance and required to participate in the WT program, the adult or minor head(s) of household will be made mandatory. The RWB contact will be notified of all actions taken.
2. To ensure consistency, the contact provided to the AWI for programmatic and system questions should be designated as the party that will send all requests regarding missing cases to AWI. If the RWB needs to update the WT programmatic contact, please email Erica Mott at Erica.mott@flaawi.com
 3. The designated contact must send the last name, first initial, last four digits of the SSN and the FLORIDA case number to Erica Mott and request a review. The case will be reviewed. If the participant is receiving TCA and is referred to the WT program, the case will be made mandatory back to the date that the participant was both referred to the WT program and receiving TCA. This is based on the date the FLORIDA driver was run for TCA receipt after the case was referred to the WT program. Please note: this may be after the date entered on the FLORIDA's referral screen. If the case is not required to participate in the WT program, a notification to the contact will be sent.
 4. Once the case is mandatory, the RWB will be responsible for ensuring
 - a. The participant is eligible for support services each time a participant is provided support services;
 - b. The participant is receiving cash assistance and required to participate in the WT program prior to requesting a sanction on the OSST system;
 - c. The participant's case is transferred, terminated or the case status is changed appropriately.

Because the interface may not update the case, the RWB must review the FLORIDA system before implementing **any** changes in employment, case status, penalty, services, etc. The FLORIDA system should be reviewed before **any** action is taken on the case.

Many requests for making a case status mandatory are not the result of an error in the interface but the result of a data entry error. Often, the RWB provider changes the case status from mandatory to transitional too early. As a result, the user cannot enter participation hours for the last month(s) of cash assistance receipt. The ability to make a case mandatory is not designed to resolve data entry errors (i.e., changing the case status to transitional too early). The RWB should train staff locally to close cases timely. Staff should also be trained to change the case status from mandatory to transitional **after** the last month of cash assistance is received. This will allow staff to enter participation hours through the last month of cash assistance, improving participation performance.

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A Microsoft PowerPoint about closing WT cases and changing WT case status has been included with this memorandum. This Microsoft PowerPoint should be shared with all WT staff entering data in the OSST system.

If you have any questions regarding these changes, please contact Erica Mott by phone at (850) 245-7429 or by E-mail at Erica.mott@flaawi.com

LAS/oem

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