

DSS Administrative Letter No. Family Support & Child Welfare Services 03-03

Attention: County Directors of Social Services

SUBJECT: TANF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FUNDING

Date: June 4, 2003

The purpose of this letter is to share information regarding the Domestic Violence/TANF appropriation for FY 2003 – 2004. The Division is currently unable to provide you with a definitive allocation figure given that the General Assembly is still in session however, we anticipate that the final allocation will be close to 1.2 million.

In order to ensure that we maximize TANF/DV spending we must acknowledge the fact that funding can and should be used to serve any family that meets the 200% of poverty guidelines. In the past some counties have exercised a narrow interpretation of the 200% of poverty to simply include Work First, however it is critical that we expand this eligibility to be inclusive of any child welfare family that meets the 200% guidelines.

The co-occurrence of child abuse and domestic violence has been documented in many reports however, as child welfare administrators charged with the protection of children we must do more than simply recognize that there is a direct correlation between the two service entities. It is important that we recognize the dynamics of domestic violence in abuse or neglect and take aggressive steps to facilitate positive outcomes to ensure the safety of women and children in the family.

Given what we currently know, a variety of DV services can play a crucial role in helping to protect children and families such as the development of safety responses and service plans; counseling, referral to community programs; short term emergency services that ensure client safety such as housing assistance, domestic violence shelter costs, and relocation assistance to a safe place within or outside the state. We also want to share that service areas such as transportation, work-related expenses and legal fees are allowable expenditures under the TANF/DV guidelines.

This year we really want to emphasize the fact that these funds can be used for expenditures beyond emergency services. The Divisions DV/TANF staff will be providing technical assistance throughout the grant cycle to ensure that each grantee fully uses their allocation.

We recognize that, in the past, spending has been greatly affected by the short turnaround time between receipt of funding and the remaining time left in the grant cycle. Hopefully we will be able to correct this problem for this fiscal year as we are

already moving forward to provide these program guidelines and request your proposals by

June 30, 2003. Not long after this date the controller's office will notify you of your exact allocation.

The funding formula will remain primarily the same and as such each county shall receive a base allocation of \$5,000. Counties will receive an allocation of the remaining funds based on the county's proportion of the statewide total of the Work First caseload as of July 1, 2003, and the county's proportion of the statewide total of the individuals receiving domestic violence services from programs funded by the Council for Women as of July 1, 2003. Funding authorizations will be sent from the DHHS controller's Office. Reporting costs on the use of these funds remain the same. (Reference Dear County Director Letter September 9, 2000, Fiscal Reporting Procedures for "TANF Domestic Violence' & TANF CPS&FC/Adopt" Revision.)

There is considerable common ground between child welfare services and women's advocacy services. Both systems are interested in the safety and well being of the child and mother. Interventions by Department of Social Services and Domestic Violence Programs can be strengthened through collaborations with each other. Collaborative relationships among these programs should include developing referral procedures that allow follow-up to occur by the DSS and at the same time provides the Domestic Violence Program with pertinent information to facilitate positive intervention. The law requires county department of social services and the local domestic violence shelter serving the county to jointly develop a plan for utilizing these funds. We strongly encourage that you meet with your local domestic violence program in the next two weeks to examine your 2002-2003 DV/TANF plan to ensure that you are meeting service requirements, planning measures, collaborations, etc., as outlined in this directive. If you have confidence as to what you have done in the past and are achieving the desired outcome for your community you may make any minor changes necessary and submit this plan for 2003/2004. Please understand that this decision does not preclude you from submitting a dramatically different plan from this year if you deem it necessary. This year it is especially important that you not only focus on how you provide program services (process) but also the results of the services (outcomes). By focusing on outcomes you will eventually have specific information that can be used to make improvements in existing services. This process will also be useful in planning new services.

As in the past, the county plan must be signed by the county social services director or the director's designee and the domestic violence program director or the director's designee and submitted to the Division of Social Services no later than **June 30, 2003**. Counties will not receive an allocation letter until an approved plan is in place. Counties are encouraged to utilize the Children's Program Representative and the Work First Representative to provide consultation in reviewing plans.

As directed by the law, the Division of Social Services, in consultation with the Council for Women, will review the county plans. Once your plan has been approved, the Division will give its approval to move forward with your plan.

You may not spend any of the county allocation until your plan has been approved.

The plan should be submitted to:

Family Support and Child Welfare Services

Attn: Ed Evans,,

MSC 2410,

Raleigh, NC 27699-2410.

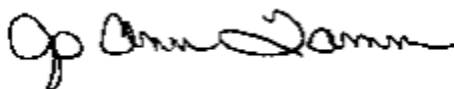
Please submit two copies.

In the past a significant number of counties have not spent their allocation. We recognize that funding was not available until December however, spending patterns continue to be of concern in some instances. Effective FY 2003–2004, the Division plans to institute a reallocation process beginning mid year in order to ensure that the statewide allocation is being utilized. We will begin working on a plan to accomplish this with the Association in the fall. Again, it is our hope not to institute such a plan, however historical spending patterns demonstrate a need for such a plan. Work First and Child Welfare consultants will be providing technical assistance throughout the year to support counties who have historically underspent.

The General Assembly has directed the Department of Health and Human Services to report on the uses of these funds no later than March 1, 2004. In light of this requirement, please keep statistics on the number of clients served with these funds and the types of services. We will request this information from you in January 2004.

If you have questions regarding any instructions issued in this letter please contact Ed Evans at 919-733-2279 or your Work First Representative or your Children's Program Representative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JoAnn Lamm". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

JoAnn Lamm, Program Administrator
Family Support & Child Welfare Services Section

JAL/dw