



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION
Economic Services Administration
Post Office Box 45440 Olympia WA 98504-5440

July 30, 2009

TO: CSD Regional Administrators
CSO Administrators

FROM: Leo Ribas, Director
Community Services Division

**SUBJECT: STRENGTHENING WORKFIRST DEFERRALS & EXEMPTIONS
(September 2009)**

We are changing the WorkFirst deferral and exemption process effective September 1, 2009. The changes will promote consistent, evidence-based decisions and better outcomes for WorkFirst parents with physical, mental or emotional disorders. We are also refining the process we use to help parents with chronic and severe disorders apply for SSI.

The following sections of the WorkFirst Handbook and the Social Services Manual have been updated to reflect these changes:

- WFHB 6.3, Participation while resolving issues.
- WFHB 6.6, Disabilities
- WFHB 6.8, Exemptions.
- Social Services Manual: SSI Facilitation - Process

The chart below shows key changes:

| | Strengthened Deferrals | SSI Track |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Population | Shorter-term physical, mental or emotional conditions that interfere with participation | Chronic (lasts 12 months or more) and severe (can participate 10 hours or less per week) |
| Goal | Focus on strengths, manage limitations & participate as full-time as possible | Help the parent make long term plans such as accessing DVR or SSI |
| Key Changes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarifies how to obtain, pay for and interpret medical evidence.• Uses medical evidence to determine who will manage the case and set participation requirements.• Requires participation up to the limits set by the medical evidence.• Uses EA screening or updated plans to determine needed accommodations.• Uses consent forms to tell WorkFirst partners and contractors about needed accommodations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourages DVR referrals.• Mirrors GAX/SSIF process, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Level of medical evidence & SSI referral criteria○ Use of contracted physicians (auto-assigned)○ SSI facilitation• Uses ICMS to track SSI application & status.• Eliminates case staffing to approve exemptions for chronic and severe disabilities. |

Strengthening Deferrals Training is available in an online format and will be released to the [DSHS Learning Center](#) on July 30, 2009. WorkFirst Program Specialists, WorkFirst Social Workers, Incapacity Specialists and SSI Facilitators are required to complete this training online, followed by the post course assessment. These requirements must be completed by August 31, 2009.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Sandy Jsames at jsamesm@dshs.wa.gov or (360) 725-4648.

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