

Time Study General Overview & Instructions

Federal regulations for the establishment of IV-E Foster Care rates include the requirement for staff performing social services activities to participate in a time study each year at a prescribed time. North Carolina conducts the time study annually during the month of February.

The purpose of the time study is to separate and document time spent performing foster care services activities which are allowable from time spent performing social service activities which cannot be included in IV-E Foster Care rates. Federal guidelines emphasize that it is “not the title or position of the performer”, but rather “the activity being performed” that determines the staff who should participate in the time study.

The Division of Social Services’ Definitions of Foster Care Service Activities are utilized for the time study. Agencies must use these definitions to determine the staff who are required to participate and the tasks and activities that must be documented. If an agency has questions about the staff who should participate in the time study, they should request consultation from the Division of Social Services.

The month long time study entails the completion of the Workers Report of Services Provided to Clients, provided by the DHHS Office of the Controller. These forms must be completed in accordance with the Specific Line Item Instructions provided to ensure accuracy and thoroughness.

The Controller’s Office facilitates the compilation of the data through the use of an Excel time study workbook that computes the percentage of time spent performing allowable foster care activities and non-allowable social services activities. This worksheet also prorates paid lunches and absences according to the calculated percentages. A report for each worker, for the month will be created showing the percent of each worker's time which was spent in activities defined as allowable foster care services activities and non-allowable social service activities.

Using the Workers Report of Services Provided to Clients, each worker will complete reports to account for 100% of the worker's time spent performing foster care and social services activities. One hundred percent of paid time allocated or expensed as foster care activities or social services is logged. If the employee performs duties other than foster care service activities and social service activities, such as houseparent/child supervision, time spent performing those duties is not recorded on the time study, and labor expenses for that time is not recorded in the Foster Care Activities/Social Services Salary Expense section of Schedule C. Labor expense for time spent performing houseparent/child supervision duties would be entered in the Daily Supervision Salary Expense section of Schedule C.

- * Lunch time is not coded unless it is paid lunch. If lunch time is paid, the Program Code A = Other Activity / Absences would be used.
- * For paid time off (such as vacation, sick leave, medical appointments, etc) the Program Code A = Other Activity / Absences would be used.

When time studies are completed and submitted to the Controller's Office on blank paper forms rather than using Excel, each Workers Report of Services Provided to Clients page must have the total minutes for that page for each of the program codes A, Z and O, and the total for all 3 program codes combined for that page clearly written on the bottom margin of each page.

One time study reporting workbook is on the web site. To download the workbook, click on the Time Study Excel Workbook link then chose to either open or save the file. The workbook contains the Agency Totals worksheet and 15 Workers Report of Services Provided to Clients worksheets, named employee (1) through employee (15). Agencies that need more than one workbook can create multiple copies of the workbook. If multiple worksheets are necessary, the Rate Setting Branch will link the workbooks after they are submitted.

To eliminate many of the common errors on the time studies, the values have been restricted in some cells and cells containing formulas have been lock and the worksheets protected. Acceptable value tables have created in the workbook and drop down lists of acceptable values are linked to these cells. To complete the Workers Report of Services Provided to Clients, users need only to enter their last and first names, then select the date, minutes and description of activity. The service and program code will be entered automatically based on the description of activity selected.

If paper time studies are used, instruct employees to limit entries to the list of services, program codes and description of activities provided in the specific instructions. For example, if the employee had a paid absence for a doctor's appointment, the employee would enter "other activity/absence", not "doctor's appointment" or "sick leave", service 000 and program code A.

Both Excel and paper submissions require that the agency staff collect the reports, verify all entries are complete and that service and program codes are correct. If paper time sheets are submitted, each worker must indicate the total number of minutes worked by program code A, Z, and O, and the total minutes worked on that page for all program codes combined, on each page. **If more than one page is used for a worker, then the totals for that worker for that page and the totals for all pages for that worker for the month must be clearly written on the last page.**¹ This information is needed for the data entry staff² to verify that all minutes worked, have been coded and accounted for. In order to keep an individual employee's time study intact as well as the agency time study, paper time sheets need to be stapled together by worker for the entire month.

Agencies submitting paper time studies are requested to submit the original time sheets as a one time batch to be received in the Controller's Office no later than **March 16, 2009**.

¹ The Excel Time Sheets automatically add and carry forward all minutes as well as allocate the "A" minutes between "Z" and "O" minutes.

² Some agencies submit the Excel version of the Time Study; others submit the paper version. Submitted Paper Time Studies are entered into an Excel Time Study Workbook by Information Systems staff.

Agencies using the Excel time study workbooks are requested to submit a one time electronic copy of the entire month's completed time sheets to the Controller's Office via email, disc or CD to be received by **March 17, 2009**.

Retain a copy of the workbook(s) for your files and audit purposes.

Mail to:

DHHS Foster Care Rate Setting, Rm 441
Office of the Controller
2019 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2019

Or

Email to: mike.thompson@ncmail.net

The Controller's Office compiles the data and computes the percentage of time spent performing allowable foster care activities and non-allowable social services activities. This percentage is then utilized in the cost report analysis to determine the agencies allowable portion of Foster Care Activities/Social Services labor expense.