

Case File Training

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Case File Training:



Best Practices for Case Files



How Long to Keep Files






What Documents Belong in Files



Case Notes – Requirements and Suggestions

Best Practices for Physical Case Files

- Case files should be kept secure 
- Case files should be updated and maintained regularly 
- Files should be kept for at least 5 years from eligibility date, or longer if the client received a service within the last contract year 
- Scenario: A client who arrived in February of 2017 got services from your agency in December 2021. This year, the client is considered “time-expired”, and you close the case in February 2022. In May, your agency is monitored, and this client’s file is selected for review.

Virtual Files

- Virtual case files are an acceptable alternative or addition to physical files
- The same security and privacy standards are required for virtual files as they would be for physical files
- Documentation should be scanned/uploaded and signatures should still appear on paperwork

CASE FILE DOCUMENTS

What documents do you need?

Policy/Manual

Title

- [Chapter I: Refugee Service Programs](#)
- [Chapter II: Refugee Medical Assistance Program](#)
- [Chapter III: Refugee Cash Assistance Program](#)
- [Chapter IV: Refugee Social Services](#)
- [Chapter V: Refugee Assistance Monitoring](#)
- [Refugee Appendices](#)

REFUGEE MANUAL

<https://policies.ncdhhs.gov/divisional/social-services/refugee-assistance/policy-manuals>

File Documentation

- Regardless of funding source, certain things ALWAYS need to be in files
- Eligibility Documents (I-94, Visa, Green Card, Asylum letter, etc.)
 - For full details see: [Status and Documentation Requirements for the ORR Refugee Resettlement Program | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](#)
- Benefits Documentation*
- Signed DSS Paperwork (DSS-6231, DSS-6236, etc.)
- Case Notes

*if your agency was responsible for helping the client apply for benefits, it is helpful to keep a copy of the benefit forms on file (such as DSS-6247, DSS-5022, DSS-8113)

- [DSS-6228: NC Vocational Skills Training and Skills Recertification Plan \(DSS-6228\)](#)
- [DSS-6229: NC Vocational Skills Training And Skills Recertification Agreement Plan of Action Requirements \(DSS-6229\)](#)
- [DSS-6230: NC SRO Family Self-Sufficiency Plan](#)
- [DSS-6231: NC State Refugee Office Service Plan](#)
- [DSS-6232: NC State Refugee Office Employability Plan](#)
- [DSS-6233: Client \(ELT\) Service Plan](#)
- [DSS-6234: ELT Learner Initial Assessment Form](#)
- [DSS-6235: Quarterly Review Form](#)
- [DSS-6236: Informed Consent For Release Of Information](#)
- [DSS-6237: DSS Refugee Client Rights Form](#)
- [DSS-6238: Refugee Cash Assistance Eligibility Monitoring Guide](#)
- [DSS-6239A: Refugee Mutual Responsibility Agreement](#)
- [DSS-6239B: Refugee MRA Plan of Action Requirements](#)

WHERE CAN YOU FIND THE DSS FORMS?

[Forms — Policies and Manuals
\(ncdhhs.gov\)](#)

DSS Forms

What DSS forms should you *always* include, regardless of program or funding source?

- DSS-6235 North Carolina State Refugee Office Quarterly Review Form
- DSS-6236 North Carolina State Refugee Office Informed Consent for Release of Information Form
- DSS-6237 North Carolina State Refugee Office Client Rights Form

ONGOING ASSESSMENT AND DOCUMENTATION

Case Records are required for each client served in the NC State Refugee Office. At a minimum, all required forms outlined in this Chapter must be completed and confidentially maintained onsite at the service provider location. These files must be well organized and document all services received by the client through the NC SRO program. To demonstrate ongoing assessment and progress of each client, use the following forms:

A. Quarterly Reviews

The DSS-6235, **North Carolina State Refugee Office** Quarterly Review Form is a tool for the refugee service provider to evaluate the progress and current situation of the client receiving services in the Refugee Assistance Program. The form shall be completed 90 days after the client's arrival or the date the client enrolls in the program and every 90 days thereafter, as long as the client is being actively served under the Program. The refugee service provider's case manager, employment counselor, and/or ELT instructor assigned to the client shall complete the form. This form shall be kept in the client's case file.

4. Confidentiality and Clients Rights

NC Refugee Service Provider Staff engage applicants in a non-judgmental explanation of roles and responsibilities resulting in a mutual, written understanding of expectations. At initial intake, clients receive and are helped to understand a written summary of their rights and responsibilities, including:

- a description of the client's rights, including the obligations the organization has to the client
 - basic expectations for the use of the organization's services
 - hours that services are available
 - rules, expectations, and other factors that can result in discharge or termination of services
 - a clear explanation of how to register complaints, grievances, or appeals.
- a. The DSS-6236, **North Carolina State Refugee Office** Informed Consent for Release of Information Form is completed to ensure that the refugee client has complete understanding of his or her right to not allow information about them to be released or obtained by outside entities without their written consent. After all signatures are secured, the form is included in the client file onsite with the NC Refugee Service Providers and a copy given to the client.
- b. The DSS-6237, **North Carolina State Refugee Office** Client Rights Form is completed at intake to help him or her understand rights afforded to them when enrolled in state funded social services. After all signatures are secured, the Form is included in the client file onsite with the NC Refugee Service Providers and a copy given to the client.

FROM THE MANUAL

How do you know what forms you use?

Are you providing the client with employability services?

YES

If you are providing the client with employability service(s), you must do an employability plan, self-sufficiency plan, mutual responsibility agreement, and plan of action *in addition to* the informed consent, client rights, and quarterly review forms.

NO

If you are not providing the client with employability service(s), you will do a service plan, ELT plan, or vocational training plan *in addition to* the informed consent, client rights, and quarterly review forms.

What are the employability services?

Code	Title
915	Employability Assessment Services
920	Pre-Employment
921	Job Development
922	Employment Follow-Up
924	Initial Employment
925	Current Job Placement
932	Vocational Skills Training (VST) and On-the-Job (OJT) Completion*
935	Vocational Skills Training (VST) and Vocational Education*
936	Automobile Drivers' Training*
940	Skills Recertification*

*When used as a part of employment services plan

Employability Services

- DSS-6232 North Carolina State Refugee Office Employability Plan
- DSS-6230 North Carolina State Refugee Office Family Self-Sufficiency Plan
- DSS-6234 North Carolina State Refugee Office ELT Learner Initial Assessment Form*
- DSS-6239A North Carolina State Refugee Office Mutual Responsibility Agreement
- DSS-6239B Plan of Action Requirements

Plus:

- DSS-6235 North Carolina State Refugee Office Quarterly Review Form
- DSS-6236 North Carolina State Refugee Office Informed Consent for Release of Information Form
- DSS-6237 North Carolina State Refugee Office Client Rights Form

*Only required if providing formal ELT program services

Vocational Services*

- DSS-6228: NC Vocational Skills Training and Skills Recertification Plan
- DSS-6229: NC Vocational Skills Training And Skills Recertification Agreement Plan of Action Requirements
- DSS-6230 North Carolina State Refugee Office Family Self-Sufficiency Plan

Plus:

- DSS-6235 North Carolina State Refugee Office Quarterly Review Form
- DSS-6236 North Carolina State Refugee Office Informed Consent for Release of Information Form
- DSS-6237 North Carolina State Refugee Office Client Rights Form

*If providing ONLY vocational services (932, 935, and/or 940) without additional employment services 14

If you are not providing the client with any employability services...

Support Services:

- DSS-6231 North Carolina State Refugee Office Service Plan

ELT Only:

- DSS-6233 North Carolina State Refugee Office Client (ELT) Service Plan
- DSS-6234 North Carolina State Refugee Office ELT Learner Initial Assessment Form*

Plus:

- DSS-6235 North Carolina State Refugee Office Quarterly Review Form
- DSS-6236 North Carolina State Refugee Office Informed Consent for Release of Information Form
- DSS-6237 North Carolina State Refugee Office Client Rights Form

*In lieu of the DSS-6234, may substitute an approved NC Department of Community Colleges ESL assessment, such as CASAS or BEST.

Services to Older Refugees

- DSS-6231 North Carolina State Refugee Office Service Plan

Health Promotion

- DSS-6231 North Carolina State Refugee Office Service Plan

Plus:

- DSS-6235 North Carolina State Refugee Office Quarterly Review Form
- DSS-6236 North Carolina State Refugee Office Informed Consent for Release of Information Form
- DSS-6237 North Carolina State Refugee Office Client Rights Form

Refugee Youth Mentoring (under 18 or no employment)

- DSS-6231 North Carolina State Refugee Office Service Plan
- Parental Consent *

Refugee Youth Mentoring (18+)

- DSS-6232 North Carolina State Refugee Office Employability Plan
- DSS-6230 North Carolina State Refugee Office Family Self-Sufficiency Plan
- DSS-6239A North Carolina State Refugee Office Mutual Responsibility Agreement
- DSS-6239B Plan of Action Requirements

Plus:

- DSS-6235 North Carolina State Refugee Office Quarterly Review Form
- DSS-6236 North Carolina State Refugee Office Informed Consent for Release of Information Form
- DSS-6237 North Carolina State Refugee Office Client Rights Form

Refugee School Impact (no employment)

- DSS-6231 North Carolina State Refugee Office Service Plan
- Parental Consent *

Refugee School Impact (w/ employment)

- DSS-6232 North Carolina State Refugee Office Employability Plan
- DSS-6230 North Carolina State Refugee Office Family Self-Sufficiency Plan
- DSS-6239A North Carolina State Refugee Office Mutual Responsibility Agreement
- DSS-6239B Plan of Action Requirements
- Parental Consent *

Plus:

- DSS-6235 North Carolina State Refugee Office Quarterly Review Form
- DSS-6236 North Carolina State Refugee Office Informed Consent for Release of Information Form
- DSS-6237 North Carolina State Refugee Office Client Rights Form

Parental Consent Form

- If your office has a parental consent form already in place, you can use this form
- It should explain that you/your agency will provide services to their children

- DSS-6236 Informed Consent for Release of Information will be edited to include parental permission for minors

Revisions to DSS Forms

- The expectation is that all agencies will use the official DSS forms starting SFY23 (July 1, 2022)
- Many of the DSS forms are undergoing revisions and we will be sure to send these out as they are finalized
- In-house forms are fine *in addition* but not *instead of* the required DSS forms



LET'S TALK ABOUT CASE NOTES

What are they, why are they important, and why do we require them?

Case Notes

- Case notes show what services are being provided for the client, and serve as a point of reference for future staff and for monitoring purposes
- Case noting and documentation of services has always been a requirement for any State Refugee Office-funded program

From Chapter 4, Section VI:

“CASE AND PROGRESS NOTES MUST BE COMPLETED AND KEPT CURRENT FOR EACH CLIENT THAT HAS ENTERED INTO A STATE FUNDED SERVICE. CASE FILE NOTES SHALL INCLUDE TYPE, LOCATION, DATE, TIME SPENT AND DURATION FOR EACH SERVICE PROVIDED. ADDITIONALLY, INFORMATION SHALL BE INCLUDED REGARDING THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE SERVICE OR ACTIVITY AND PLAN, IF ANY, FOR SUBSEQUENT FOLLOW-UP.”

Why is it important to document your services?

- What if you have staff out sick, on vacation?
- What if you have staff turnover?
- What if you get monitored?
- What if a client makes a complaint?
- Case notes are a historical record of the case progress. A person should be able to read through case notes and get an understanding of the progress on this case, and know what the next steps should be.

Best Practices for Case Notes

- At a bare minimum, case notes need to describe the type and duration of service that was provided, the consequence of the service, and plan, if any, for subsequent follow-up. This should also be reflected in RIS.
- “Best Practice” Case Notes should give a complete picture of the service. They should be clear, concise, and professional. Stick to facts and relevant details and leave out identifying personal information. Include any future plans for follow up.

Tools

- QUESTIONS (The 5Ws and an H)
 - Who, what, when, where, why, and how?
- SOAP
 - Subjective, Objective, Assessment, and Plan
 - S: What is being said? Thoughts, feelings, concerns?
 - O: What is the factual information? Actions, body language?
 - A: What can you identify after combining S and O? What are the problems, what is the progress?
 - P: How can you address it? What are the next steps?

Let's Practice With Some Scenarios!

Scenario 1:

A client had a job interview this week that you facilitated, with a new employer XYZ Factory. You hope to establish a long-term relationship with this employer. The client was driven to XYZ Factory by an interpreter and the manager decided to hire the client, pending a drug test.

Poor Example:

Date	Description
July 2, 2022	Client got job offer.

What's wrong with that case note?

- It lacks detail
- It is always good to ask yourself: If that was the last case note I wrote, and someone else came into this case, could they pick up where I left off based on the information provided?

Better Example:

Date	Service Codes & Units	Description
July 2, 2022	920 - .5 921 - 1.25 923 - 2 965 - 1	Client had job interview today. The client and interpreter met with a manager at XYZ factory. The manager offered client job and asked the client to do drug test prior to starting the job.

Most Thorough Example:

Date	Service Codes & Units	Description
July 2, 2022	920 - .5 921 - 1.25 923 - 2 965 - 1	The employment specialist established a connection with a new employer, XYZ Factory, and arranged a job interview for the client today at 1pm. The employment specialist coordinated with an interpreter who drove the client to the interview. The client met with the manager and was shown the aspects of the job. The interpreter helped the client successfully complete the interview and hiring paperwork. The manager wants to hire the client asked the client to complete a drug test. The client was happy and excited about the job. The client was then driven home by the interpreter. The employment specialist will arrange an appointment for the drug test and follow up with the XYZ Factory manager to finalize a start date for the client.

Let's Practice Again!

Scenario 2: A child gets into an altercation on the school bus with another student. Their teacher calls you to coordinate with the parent and an interpreter to have a meeting at the school.

Poor Example:

Date	Description
July 8, 2022	Set up school meeting

Poor Example:

Date	Description
July 8, 2022	<p>[Teacher] called me and told me about an altercation involving [child] on the schoolbus, and asked for [parent] to come for a meeting. I called an interpreter and I told parent about [child] got into a fight on the schoolbus. This was despite orientations to tell the family and kids that fighting is not allowed and there are punishments for this kind of thing, [child] still got into trouble for this kind of behavior. I don't know if it was [child's] fault or another kid. I told [parent] if it was their kid, they would be expelled if this kind of bad behavior keeps up. I arranged for the meeting along with an interpreter and hope that the family will learn something from this.</p>

Better Example:

Date	Service Codes & Units	Description
July 8, 2022	982 - 1 965 - 1	Case manager helped arrange meeting for client and interpreter with child's teacher at school following an altercation between client's child and another student on the bus. Teacher and family discussed the incident and potential resulting consequences. Case manager will follow up.

Best Example:

Date	Service Codes & Units	Description
July 8, 2022	982 - 1 965 - 1	The case manager coordinated a meeting with the client and an interpreter at the request of Teacher from Child's School. The client's child was involved in an altercation with another student on the school bus that morning and the teacher was concerned over the situation and wished to discuss with the family. The teacher explained the consequences of fighting to the family and the client and child both understood. The client asked if the child could be switched to another bus if the problems continue with the other student, and the teacher promised to look into that for the family. The case manager will also follow up.